

COMIC LEADERSHIP AND POWER DYNAMICS IN ARISTOPHANES

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Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Faculty of Classical Languages and Literature
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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the concept of leadership in four comedies of Aristophanes.

In the first chapter (*Lysistrata*) I focus on the relationship of the female leadership with religious rituals and medical pathology, and I show that the power of women lies in their important biological role and their ability to conceive and (re)produce life in the context of marriage.

In chapter two (*Knights*) I examine the operation of leadership through the alimentary and sacrificial codes of the play. I argue that the Sausage-seller gradually manifests himself as the sacrificial cook Agorakritos who sacrifices Demos. In this way he puts an end to the politics of savage, raw consumption as they were employed by Paphlagon (and, occasionally, by Demos himself), and saves the day by inaugurating a new era of political practice.

In chapter three (*Birds*) I focus on the political competition between the former leader of the Birds, Tereus, and the newcomer Peisetairos. I argue that Peisetairos captivates his audience through the abuse of rhetoric and sophistry, and gradually adopts more brutal ways, by perverting the ritual of hospitality, committing cannibalism, and becoming sexually aggressive. In this respect, Peisetairos is assimilated to the tragic Tereus of the Sophoclean tragedy, but finally emerges as a more successful version of both the comic and the tragic Tereus.

In the fourth and last chapter (*Ecclesiazusae*) I discuss the women's disruption and overturn of the normal social order by focusing on the practice of cross-dressing and on love-magic rituals: the exchange of costume between the two sexes, as well as the control of magic practices by the women over men, empower women and, by contrast, disempower and ridicule men, who are finally reduced to a state of impotence, infertility and almost death.

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INTRODUCTION

I shall begin with what this study is not and, indeed, does not aspire to be: this is not yet another political or historical study of leadership in Aristophanes. The controversy about whether and in what ways Aristophanes articulates through his comedies the civic life, ideology, social and political roles, and the distribution of power in democratic Athens has generated a vast literature: this study will not add to it. It does not aim to reconstruct the political ideas of Aristophanes or seek an association with contemporary politics and the public opinions of the time;¹ nor does it attempt to identify real individuals underneath the veil of fiction and map out patterns of disguise and identity.² Rather than focus on Aristophanes' or the individuals' politics and ideology, this thesis concentrates on the concept of power in four comedies of Aristophanes: how it manifests itself, how it is

¹ There are two distinct stances with regard to the much discussed subject of Aristophanes and politics. There are those scholars who are agnostic about his political views or who believe his plays had little practical influence in Athens: Gomme 1938 first argued that Aristophanes was primarily a dramatist, not a politician, and it is not important to know his political views in order to understand his plays; Edmunds 1987 likewise believes that Aristophanes' plays had little practical influence in Athens. Halliwell and Heath have extended Gomme's contentions: Halliwell (1984) highlights the festival context in which the plays were presented and rejects any allegiance to serious standards or the truth; Heath (1987 and 1997) maintains that politics was the material of comedy, but comedy did not in turn aspire to be a political force. In contrast stand those who regard Aristophanes as a serious political dramatist and who believe his plays exerted socio-political influence beyond the theatre (Ste Croix 1972; Henderson 1990, 1993 and 1997). Other scholars place themselves in-between the traditional binaries and their views are informed by the criticism of Bakhtin (Goldhill 1991; Platter 2007). Sidwell (2009) recently proposed the model of "ventriloquial paracomedy", whereby plays are written as if by a rival, characters are comic poets in disguise and the intent is satire of those rivals and their political affiliations. See also Sommerstein 2009: 204-22, who suggests a twofold model of an alternative political system in the plays.

² See Süvern 1835; Katz 1976; Vickers 1997.

debated by the comic characters and is eventually seized and acquired by the most capable of them. In other words, what I am interested in is not so much the ideological and political identity of a given character (although this will also be relevant in many occasions), but what it is that renders him or her more accomplished in the struggle for power in order to assert his/her position and, finally, emerge as the winner in the highly competitive environment of Aristophanic comedy. Consequently, I examine whether the comic hero's ascent to power, which is usually accompanied by a disruption or total reversal of the established situation, brings about a better new world or, inversely, indicates a decline. In this context, I consider to what extent the results of the leaders' actions determine our evaluation of their leadership and I investigate the discrepancy between a successful and a good leader: although a leader may successfully rise to power, it does not necessarily follow that he/she will also bring prosperity in the community over which they preside.

In investigating the manifestations and (ex)change of power in Aristophanes, I focus on how the debate about power is intrinsically connected with important elements of the socio-religious order of contemporary Greek society, such as gender dynamics and sexual relations, sacrificial rituals, female rituals, rhetoric, medicine and the practice of love-magic. These specific elements represent general codes of civilization, such as the sexual, ritual, linguistic and familial codes, each one of which expresses, in its own terms, a microcosm of the social order. Insofar as leadership operates with these cultural codes, it is not a one-dimensional social category, it is not merely political: it is a culturally encoded

process, which evokes various elements of the socio-political structure familiar to the audience and shows, in effect, that power cannot be acquired outside wider institutional contexts within which society operates. A leader may manipulate multiple codes of the social order in order to ascend to power; they may push the civilized order to its extreme limits and question it in its most fundamental values; they may twist the cultural codes together for their complete destruction; or they may assert the unifying bonds of civilized institutions, and uphold and reinstate the civilized order. Thus, the social structure defines the comic leaders, but it is also confused, redefined or reinstated by them. Through this reading of comic leadership it emerges that, even when power and leadership disregard the normal societal order of things and bring about radical changes, they still form part of a normative process, as they operate with and within different codes of civilization.

The debate about power raises wide cultural implications in the tragic genre as well. Tragic leadership is often connected with violence done to various cultural codes, such as the linguistic, ritual, sexual and familial. Tragic leaders can be involved in bestial actions or aspire to some form of godlike power and thus they often function as the figures who must occupy both extremes at the same time.³ In this sense, tragedy is seldom far from the surface of the comic plays, and, as I will show, comic leadership often defines itself through

³ On tragedy and civilization see Segal 1981 and 1986.

tragic intertexts.⁴ However, the way leaders engage with the codes of civilization differs from tragedy to comedy: tragedy elicits not the stability, but the dangerous ambiguity and confusion of the human condition; it pushes back the civilized structures and introduces us to the painful possibility of seeing life as a chaos. Owing to the conventions of the tragic genre, the hero's problematical relation to civilized values often brings about the collapse of the social structure and the destabilization of the πόλις. It is only through an excruciating process of negation of civilization that the affirmation of the social order and the return to stability is achieved in tragedy.

In comedy, on the other hand, the idea of leadership, though often aware of its tragic intertexts, is expressed through and is inextricably linked with conventions inherent in the genre of comedy. The comic leader's engagement with the codes of civilization takes place within a carnivalistic context and, for that reason, the fusion of opposites is more affirmative than dangerous, even though it may retain some dark aspects. The idea of "carnival consciousness", according to which the hierarchies and restraints of everyday life are temporarily inverted or abandoned in favour of the urges of the body, has been used to

⁴ See Dobrov 2001 who examines how Aristophanes re-works the tragic material to produce a comedy that solves a similar problem in a very different way: he discusses pairs of certain tragic and comic plays (*Peace* and Euripides' *Bellerophontes*, *Birds* and Sophocles' *Tereus*, and *Frogs* and Euripides' *Peirithous*) and argues that the comic utopia rectifies the tragic irrationality and madness. See also Rosen 2005: 265 "it was left to comic poets therefore to serve as public commentators on contemporary tragedy, not so much because any of them – even Aristophanes – necessarily had anything resembling a coherent critical agenda or aesthetic mission, but because it has always been the business of comedy to poke and prod at precisely those aspects of a society which appear to be most stable and authoritative".

describe and explain some of the features of Aristophanic comedy:⁵ the reversal of normal life and liberation from the established order; the assertion of boundlessness and the dethronement of limit, of reason, and even of the gods themselves; the freedom of speech and the use of invective; and, lastly, the so-called “material body” principle, the emphasis on the lower stratum of the body, the life of the belly and the reproductive organs. I wish to argue that the idea of leadership in these four plays of Aristophanes embodies these comic conventions. The comic leaders, as typical comic heroes, transgress the existing boundaries in order to succeed: they challenge the authority of a former leader and/or disrupt and reverse the established order. Moreover, their ascendance to power is facilitated by and accomplished through the means of *logos* (persuasive rhetoric and invective), *eros* (aggressive or passive sexuality for men/ endorsement or rejection of marriage and reproduction for women), and the production of food (sacrifice). In this way, leadership proves to be intrinsically connected with essential comic features and conventions.

Although there are individual studies which touch on the question of leadership in certain plays of Aristophanes,⁶ no concerted effort has been made to date for a systematic investigation of power and leadership in Aristophanes. I have selected for analysis four comedies (*Lysistrata*, *Knights*, *Birds* and *Ecclesiazusae*), in which questions of leadership,

⁵ The carnivalistic model was developed by Bakhtin in *Rabelais and His World* (1968), as well as in the essays that constitute *The Dialogic Imagination* (1981), and has been often recognized that it explains some features of the Aristophanic comedy. See Carrière 1979; Rösler 1986; Goldhill 1991 discusses carnival culture in his chapter on Aristophanes, and it is the focal point in Edwards 1993. Von Möllendorf 1995 focuses on the Aristophanic grotesque. See also Platter 2007.

⁶ See the introductions of the individual chapters for bibliography.

(ex)change of power and restoration or reversal of the socio-political order are prominent. These plays feature two male (Sausage-seller and Peisetairos in *Knights* and *Birds* respectively) and two female (Lysistrata and Praxagora in *Lysistrata* and *Ecclesiazusae* respectively) comic heroes who ascend to leading positions. In each of these plays I examine the various techniques that these leaders use to overcome their rivals, assert their position and appeal to their audience. In the case of male leadership, the comic heroes manifest themselves as rivals of the already established male leader in the play: in *Knights*, the Sausage-seller fights the Paphlagonian slave for the position of Demos' steward, while in *Birds* Peisetairos competes with Tereus in order to become the leader and king of the new Bird society. The case of female leadership is quite different, as the female leaders, Lysistrata and Praxagora, do not compete with a certain female or male rival: they excite the rest of the female population and work with them as a unified group in order to lay claims on political power. In doing so, they disrupt and override the established male order.

Rather than reduce all the plays to a single schema with reference to the ways leadership operates, this study tries to see what different structures inform and illuminate the different plays. The sequence in which the plays are examined is not random, but is arranged according to the outcome of the leadership at the end of each play: I start with the play whose ending marks a return to normality and a reinstatement of the previous (male) ruling order (*Lysistrata*), and I move on to the plays which feature more radical

changes as an outcome of the change of leadership (*Knights, Birds, Ecclesiazusae*). In contrast with the first play and the beginning of my study, the last play (*Ecclesiazusae*) shows a total reversal of the societal order and the established leadership.

In what follows, I give an outline of the chapters of my thesis.

In *Lysistrata* I focus on the relationship of the female leadership with religious rituals and medical pathology. As I suggest, both methodological tools show that the power of women lies in their important biological role and their ability to conceive and (re)produce life in the context of marriage. The idea that women assume the role of ritual practitioners is not new,⁷ but it has not been pursued systematically nor has it been viewed in connection with the women's ascent to power. I wish to show that certain actions of the old women point to ritual practices, which celebrate and promote female fertility and the

⁷ Foley 1982: 8 compares the sex strike in *Lysistrata* to the cultic practice of the Thesmophoria, when married women used "temporary sexual segregation, neglect of domestic duties, and abstinence, as well as invective to promote fertility and the public welfare". Bowie (1993) explores the contradictions in the male views of women and their role in society, as constructed in the play between the rituals of Thesmophoria and Adonia. Moreover he makes comparisons between the women in power in *Lysistrata* and myths of gynaecocracy and relevant rituals, such as the myth of Telesilla and female domination in Argos, which is celebrated in the Hybristica festival, and the myth of the Lemnian women and the New Fire festival in Lemnos. For the connection of the women in *Lysistrata* with Lemnian women see also Bowie 1984 and Martin 1987. Goff 2004 elaborates further on the possibilities of the reading of the women in *Lysistrata* as adult female ritual practitioners, with special reference to the Thesmophoria and the Adonia. Reitzammer 2008 focuses on the alternative title of the play, *Adoniazusai*, and reads the women's capture of the Acropolis and their subsequent actions as the enactment of an Adonia festival. Finally, Gilhuly 2009: 145 considers the ritual of Adonia as "paradigmatic for the play as a whole, and as a sufficient explanation for the depiction of women in the image of the priestess and prostitute". Note also that, according to Papademetriou (1948–1949: 146–153) the name of Myrrhine refers explicitly to the Priestess of Athena Nike in 411 BC, while Lewis (1955) added that the character of *Lysistrata* is designed to call to mind *Lysimache*, the priestess of Athena Polias at the time of the production of play.

superiority of the female nature over the male with regard to the process of reproduction. The consideration of the old women's actions as re-enactments of different rituals which were perceived as fertility-oriented yields very productive results regarding the way the women claim and defend their leading position in the city, and highlights the importance of the women's contribution to civic welfare in the reproduction and provision of children.

The emphasis on a "biological" reading of the women's leadership is reinforced by the idea that the young women who perform the sex strike feature as Hippocratic patients who struggle with the symptoms of the condition of the "wandering womb". Although some scholars have noted the medical vocabulary with regard to male pathology in *Lysistrata*,⁸ there is no study to date which considers the female sex strike in the context of medical pathology. Medicine is, however, one of the many possible filters of the play: through the perpetuation of the women's pathological condition by means of the sex strike and the overt manifestations of this disease, men are forced to fully comprehend and appreciate the importance of the reproductive role of women in the city. In this way, the traditional medical idea of the female as an unstable object, always in need of being brought into equilibrium and stability, is manipulated in the play by the women, who make the men realize the dangers their war policy entails: far from just threatening them with suspension of sex, the women force the men to face the real danger, sterility and cessation of reproduction. However, the change of power is temporary, as at the end of the play the

⁸ Miller 1945; Byl 1990; Zimmermann 1992: 517.

normative situation is reinstated: the women put an end to their occupation of the Acropolis and the sex strike, and the men are allowed to take their wives back home and resume their normal lives.

In the *Knights* chapter, I examine the operation of leadership through the alimentary and sacrificial codes of the play. I argue that the political practices of Paphlagon and the Sausage-seller, the two rivals for the position of Demos' steward, are presented in terms which derive from the preparation, cooking and eating of food. The play can be divided into two parts, one before and one after the arrival of the Sausage-seller, each one of them defined by the application of a different political/alimentary model. In the first part, where Paphlagon features as the leading figure, the dominant model is that of consumption: Paphlagon performs politics in an animalistic way, by incessantly consuming everything, even raw, non-sacrificial meat, while leaving almost nothing for the people. In the second part, the Sausage-seller reveals his true identity as the *sacrificer* Agorakritos. By boiling Demos, as in the preparation of sacrificial meat, he emerges as a leader, and thus puts an end to the old political model of endless consumption. In this context, I argue that the position that sacrifice holds in the history of anthropology is mirrored also in *Knights*: just as sacrifice saved mankind from savagery by directing it away from an animal existence and towards civilized living, likewise the sacrifice executed by Agorakritos puts an end to the politics of savage, raw consumption which were employed by Paphlagon and saves the day by inaugurating a new era of political practice. As a consequence of

Agorakritos' sacrifice, Demos is restored in his old position as the master of the house (and the city): the political advisor of Demos has changed, but the power is now back for good to the lawful master.

As I shall argue, there are some important inner connections between this first pair of plays: the outcome of both is presented in a favourable light. The debate about leadership in both plays can be read as part of a cultural discourse on the transition from the wild to the civilized state of being: *Lysistrata* places emphasis on the institution of marriage, while *Knights* puts it on the institution of sacrifice. The analogous position of marriage and sacrifice has been repeatedly stressed by structuralist analysis.⁹ Marriage and sacrifice are complementary expressions of civilization: "marriage is to sexual consummation what sacrifice is to the consumption of meat: both assure continuity of existence to mankind, sacrifice by making it possible for the individual to subsist throughout his life and marriage by affording him the means of perpetuating himself after death through his child".¹⁰ The domestication of the unyoked virgin, who is felt to be part of the "wild" until she is "tamed" or "civilized" by marriage, can be paralleled to the civilizing function of the sacrifice. Both institutions serve to preserve the civilized order, one in the sexual code, the other in the dietary. Moreover, as King (1987) has shown, female

⁹ Hesiod's myth of Prometheus connects sacrifice with fire, woman, marriage and self-perpetuation through legitimate offspring in a family (*Th.* 535-616; cf. *Op.* 42-105). See Auger 1979: 74-5; Segal 1981: 35, 40, 61-2; Foley 1985: 36; Detienne 1989: 5; Vernant 1989: 70-3, 74 and Vernant's introduction to Detienne 1994 (esp. xiv, xxvi, xxxviii); Seaford 1994: 307-8; Redfield 2012: 178.

¹⁰ Vernant 1994 (introduction to Detienne): xiv.

blood-loss in the medical texts is often compared to sacrificial bloodshed. As the lochial discharge in childbirth was believed to be a flow of blood, it was comparable to the blood flowing from the neck of a sacrificial animal. Thus, animal sacrifice may be figured as an analogy for marriage and childbirth in that they both facilitate the transition from a wild to a civilized order. In this sense, the restoration of the normative order which is effected by the end of both plays (in *Lysistrata* with the handover of power from women to men, in *Knights* with the restoration of Demos to his former power and glory), is inextricably linked to the proper function of civilized structures in the city. In the end, the social order is affirmed; leadership becomes the safeguard of stability and fecundity.

In the next pair of plays (*Birds* and *Ecclesiazusae*) the plot moves deeper into the realm of fantasy, as we are dealing with a bird-world and a permanent gynaecocracy, and the end of each play is marked by a total reversal of power. In the *Birds* chapter I read the play as a battle of leadership between the former leader of the Birds, Tereus, and the newcomer Peisetairos, and I focus on the relation of leadership with the verbal, ritual, dietary and sexual codes. I set out to examine the distribution of power within the Birds' society before the arrival of Peisetairos and Euelpides and I suggest that, far from living free in a natural and idyllic utopia, the Birds are dominated and controlled by an appointed leader, the bird-man Tereus. After demonstrating the leading role of Tereus among the Birds, I move on to show how the arrival of the two men changes the dynamics in the exertion of power over the Birds. A new potential leader emerges, Peisetairos, who

challenges the authority of Tereus and manipulates the Birds with promises of leadership. In this context I examine the devices Peisetairos employs in order to exhibit his power and overthrow Tereus. Peisetairos first captivates his audience through the abuse of rhetoric and sophistry, which points to an application of violence, though not physical but verbal; he then moves on to adopt explicitly brutal ways, namely the perversion of the ritual of hospitality and of the dietary and sexual codes (by cannibalism and sexual abuse respectively). During the course of his ascent to power Peisetairos undergoes metamorphosis into a bird, but this process is not just a superficial change of costume: Peisetairos' metamorphosis is marked by the aforementioned transgressions of numerous civilized codes which makes him comparable to the king Tereus of the Sophoclean tragedy. The Sophoclean Tereus, as a typical tragic hero, functions as a figure who stands at two opposite poles: he is a king, a man of great power and authority, but becomes involved in animal-like actions (rape, perversion of the hospitality ritual and cannibalism); he reaches outside the civilized world to a destructive bestial violence and ends up transformed into a bird. Whereas Tereus as a tragic hero occupies boundary situations which result in the dissolution of the civilized order and the hero's punishment, his comic foil, Peisetairos, negotiates better his liminal status between divine power and bestiality: he too disrupts the forms of civilized life that maintain the mediation between god and beast, but he inhabits both the divine and bestial realm successfully, as he becomes a bird-man tyrant, and a god and a beast at the same time, and receives no punishment for his transgressions. In this

way, Peisetairos emerges as another, though more successful version, of both the comic and the tragic Tereus.¹¹ However, the tragic undertones of the ominous violations of the social order persist in the comic context and reveal a dark aspect of the new city of the Birds.

The end of this study of leadership brings us back to the beginning: *Ecclesiazusae* closes the circle of female leadership which began with *Lysistrata* by offering the opposite spectrum. In *Lysistrata* the women temporarily violate the sexual code (through sexual abstinence) and manipulate the ritual code (through re-enactment of certain practices of female rituals) in order to uphold the institution of marriage and finally restore the socio-political order. *Ecclesiazusae* presents us with the exact opposite situation: the women permanently disrupt the sexual code, as their expression of desire is not inscribed within the marital context but is the result of the abolition of marriage, and abuse the ritual code, by employing certain ritual practices, such as cross-dressing and love-magic rituals, which prove to be subversive for the community. I first discuss the women's disruption of the clothing code through the practice of cross-dressing: the exchange of costume between the two sexes, which is voluntary for women and involuntary for men, becomes a device which empowers women and, by contrast, disempowers and ridicules men, and finally reduces

¹¹ Dobrov 2001 discusses how in *Birds* the comic utopia rectifies the murder and madness of the Sophoclean tragedy: he notes that *Birds* starts from the end of the Sophoclean tragedy (Tereus in *Birds* is the hoopoe from the end of *Tereus*), but focuses on the transformation of the tragic into a comic Tereus without noticing that the *Birds*' criticism of and response to tragedy comes also from the figure of Peisetairos.

them to a state of impotency, infertility and almost death. Once the women assume power, they proceed to the abolition of the institution of marriage; this leads to a most terrifying exuberance of female desire, which, freed from any marital inhibitions and prohibitions, finds outlet in the discourse of love-magic and the subsequent suppression of men. In the second half of the play the women are portrayed as magical practitioners since their linguistic choices evoke the vocabulary of love magic. Aristophanes presents the women in a situation that would have been instantly recognizable to his ancient audience as typical of courtesans who try to get a lover by performing the sort of aggressive erotic magic that in real life was typical of men. In this way, Aristophanes offers an elaborate commentary on Praxagora's new world: the control of magic practices by the women over men in *Ecclesiazusae* and the subsequent inversion of their sexual roles illustrates the women's subversive activities and the overturn of the normal social order: βία turns out to prevail over νόμος and emotional excess over reason. The new world that emerges carries the implications of a dangerous gender inversion, death, infertility and savagery.

The preoccupation with both the clothing code and unrestrained female sexuality are elements also common in tragedy: men who don or are associated with female garments in tragedy appear to be weakened, emasculated and destroyed as a result of their female dressing (for instance, Pentheus in *Bacchae* and Heracles in *Trachiniae*); and magic practices are often associated in tragic contexts (for instance, in *Medea* and *Trachiniae*) with the male ambivalence towards the female sexuality and its captivating and dangerous

power. Thus, as in *Birds* before, the sinister aspects of leadership in each play are a result of their (more or less explicit) association with tragic features. The loss of boundaries and the dissolution of the social structure through transgressions of various codes of civilized behaviour in the comic plays evoke tragic intertexts and the general preoccupation of tragedy with situations where the division between civilization and savagery no longer seems to apply. It is noteworthy, however, that tragedy provides a background even in *Lysistrata* and *Knights*, the plays which present a less problematized leadership. For instance, in *Lysistrata* the young women's actions which are attributed to pathological conditions may recall the case of Phaedra, whose *eros* for her stepson has been read as a medical pathology involving physical and mental disturbance. Likewise, the function of the sacrifice in *Knights* invites us to consider its tragic counterpart rather than other cases of comic sacrifice: the sacrificial crisis in tragedy, as for instance in *Oresteia*, often reflects a social, political or moral crisis, as is the case with *Knights*. Yet, both of these plays keep their ironic distance from their tragic intertexts: in *Lysistrata*, the problematization of the women's excessive desire is neutralized, as the medical pathology is put to the women's service and facilitates their ascent to power, while the problematic aspects of human sacrifice which are very prominent in tragedy are largely suppressed in the comic context of the *Knights*; the comic human sacrifice is not a profane and violent murder, it does not raise any moral issues and there is no unhappy resolution either for the sacrificer or the sacrificial victim. Thus, tragedy remains an important intertext for the ways in which the

socio-political order is violated and/or restored in all the comic plays, although it leaves a more noticeable mark on the two comedies, in which the nature of leadership is more ambiguous and problematized.

Through this study of leadership I hope to show that, even though a single interpretative structure of how comic leadership operates in these plays cannot be applied, there is a unifying principle for the leaders of all four plays: the devices used by the leaders in order to ascend to power symbolize and correspond to important civic structures. The use and abuse of rituals, like female rituals (*Lysistrata*), sacrificial rituals (*Knights*), hospitality rituals (*Birds*) and magic rituals (*Ecclesiazusae*), medicine (*Lysistrata*), oratory (*Birds*), dress (*Ecclesiazusae*), sex (*Lysistrata*, *Birds*, *Ecclesiazusae*) and eating (*Knights* and *Birds*) are not merely isolated data, but elements of a structured message: when put together, they form the fabric of the society's value systems. Thus, by reconstructing the idea of comic leadership we also decode the structure of society and its modes of organizing reality. Comic leaders may manipulate and control a range of codes in order to succeed, so that we can see that the various codes of the social order - familial, ritual, dietary, linguistic, sexual and so forth - are homologous, and thus violence done to one has also an impact on another: in *Birds*, for instance, the sexual code is isomorphic with the dietary and the ritual, since Peisetairos becomes an aggressive lover, but also a cannibal and a disrespectful guest at the same time. Similarly, in *Knights* the disruption of the dietary code by Paphlagon is accompanied by the dissolution of civilized speech and the perversion of

the sexual code. On the other hand, different leaders may operate with similar codes but in a different way: in *Birds* Peisetairos stops all sacrifices to the gods and commits cannibalism, whereas Agorakritos reinstates the institution of sacrifice; the leaders in both *Lysistrata* and *Ecclesiazusae* are preoccupied with the familial and the sexual code, but, as we will see, they deal with them in a very different way.

By investigating the idea of leadership through these codes of civilization we are able to view the plays from the perspective of the πόλις and have no need to try to decipher the ideology of individual leaders, a proceeding which probably would not stand many chances of success. Moreover, we are able to examine how a heterogeneous mix of material is calculated to appeal to different social strata and to different levels of education, ability, and attention. Just as the potential leaders in Aristophanes' comedies attempt to overcome their rivals and appeal to their audience through various stratagems, so does Aristophanes: he seeks to impress his audience and beat his rivals by using different devices which would appeal to different people in the audience, depending on their learnedness and their education.

CHAPTER I

MORE THAN A SEX STRIKE: RITUAL PRACTITIONERS AND HIPPOCRATIC PATIENTS IN *LYSISTRATA*

1. Introduction

Lysistrata is the first among the “female” Aristophanic plays which invites us to consider the possibility of a female leadership, albeit temporary. In the course of the play *Lysistrata* excites the rest of the female population to abandon their houses and take action so as to force men to change the war policy they have been employing up to that time. The plan, as originally revealed by *Lysistrata*, is based on a female sex strike: the women must refuse to satisfy their husbands’ sexual needs in order to gain power over them and finally force them to sign a peace treaty. In the course of the play, however, women are shown to divide into two groups, of young and old women: the young women lock themselves up on the Acropolis and perform the sex strike, while the old women guard them and fight off the men who threaten to set them on fire. In the end, the women manage to wear the men down with (unsatisfied) sexual desire and get them to sign a peace treaty.

The key feature of *Lysistrata*’s plan and what determines its success is the fact that sex is pictured only as a legitimate heterosexual union;¹ the idea of sex outside marriage, though contemplated, is impossible: men and women can only satisfy their sexual needs

¹ See Henderson 1980:177.

with their wives and husbands respectively. In this context, the women are perceived as typical wives and mothers, who remain attached to the institution of marriage. Indeed, as I will show, the women's claim to leadership is made exactly on this basis, since it is strongly related to and relies on the rights of women as wives and mothers. As the play evolves and the plan is put into effect, it becomes obvious that more is at stake than mere satisfaction of sexual appetites. The women's claim to leadership takes on a serious tone as it is made to resonate with their vital contribution to civic welfare in the reproduction and provision of children. In the end, I suggest, women manage to prevail over men because they threaten men (and the city) with sterility and cessation of reproduction.

Multiple interpretations have been offered by scholars as to the role of the women in the play: they have been viewed as *ἐταίραι*,² a combination of priestesses and prostitutes,³ *παρθένοι* who renew their bonds of marriage⁴ and as ritual practitioners of Thesmophoria, Adonia and other festivals. I would like to build on the last analysis of the play, namely that of women as ritual practitioners, and corroborate it with a medical reading of women's leadership. I shall examine separately the role of the young and the old women and I will show that, although they undertake different tasks towards the realization of Lysistrata's plan, both groups are united in their intention of underscoring and promoting the superiority of feminine nature over men, especially with regard to

² Stroup 2003.

³ Faraone 2006 and Gilhuly 2009.

⁴ Loraux 1993.

fertility and productivity issues. I shall argue that the old women assume the role of ritual practitioners: their act of undressing in the parabolic debate and the subsequent choral interlude is similar to the practice of disrobing during certain rituals, which demonstrate and promote the important female role in the process of reproduction. Moreover, the ritual services they explicitly refer to, which are strongly connected with their roles as wives and mothers, are another indication of where their power lies. Lastly, the “nuptial/funerary” bath they give to the old men draws attention to the significance of the female reproductive role in two ways: it can be perceived, on the one hand, as pointing to the biological importance of humidity in women with regard to fertility and reproduction, and, on the other hand, as forming part of the ritual of the Adonia, which has been considered to celebrate the women’s biological power over men. In assuming the role of ritual practitioners, the old women stress the importance of women in marriage and reproduction, while undermining and ridiculing the men’s virility and short-lived potency.

The account of the old women as ritual practitioners who emphasize their reproductive role is nicely corroborated by the account of the young women as Hippocratic patients: I will suggest that the young women can be seen as suffering from the sickness which afflicts women long abstaining from marriage (i.e. sexual intercourse) and childbirth. In this context, the women assume the role of a typical female Hippocratic patient who struggles with the symptoms of the famous condition of the “wandering womb”. By performing the sex strike, the young women choose to remain in their

pathological condition, that of female patients. Through the side-effects of this condition men are forced fully to comprehend and appreciate the importance of the reproductive role of women in the city. In this way the women make the men realize the dangers their war policy entails: far from just threatening them with suspension of sex, the women force the men to face the real danger, sterility and cessation of reproduction.

Thus, the two accounts of the young women in *Lysistrata*, that of ritual practitioners and of female patients, albeit diverse, can be perceived as complementary, since they present us with a coherent view of the women's claim to leadership: their power relies on the fact that they have primary control over the processes of reproduction and that they are in a position to threaten men and mock them for the failure of their phalluses. On their part, the men finally acknowledge the women's power by being forced to take notice of the importance of women's reproductive system and the risks incurred by its malfunction.

2. OLD WOMEN

2.1 Ritualistic unclothing and the power of fertility

I shall begin with the group of the old women and their efforts to assert their authority over the old men. I will suggest that, through certain ritual practices, the old women display their superiority over men with regards to issues of fertility and

productivity and, thus, assert their claim to leadership.⁵ As mentioned before, scholars have drawn attention to the role of rituals in the play, with special reference to the Thesmophoria and the Adonia. The images of clothing, which are found in abundance in the play,⁶ have been considered as playing an important role, often as part of a supposedly enacted ritual: Bowie (1993: 190-1) considers that the dressing of the Proboulos first as a woman and then as a corpse points to the disappearance of the king Thoas in the Lemnian myth; he also sees the women's intention of making a *χλαῖνα* for the demos (570-86) and the re-clothing of the men by the women in the end as a reference to the robe as a prize in mythical games: in both instances, in the myth and the play, the donning of the robe marks the return of normal human family life.⁷ Reitzammer (2008) treats the references to female accoutrements and clothing in the play as central to the women's attempted re-enactment of the Adonia ritual. However, little attention has been drawn to the scene of the old men's and the old women's undressing, which takes place during the fighting between the two semi-choruses: both men and women gradually remove their clothing, one after the other.⁸

⁵ For the paradox of the association of old age with fertility see further below in 2.4.

⁶ See Bowie 1993: 193 "Lysistrata's great image for what the women are doing is the extended one of making a *chlaina* for the demos (574-86), and the reunion of husband and wife begins when the women put clothes on the old men of the Chorus (1019ff.). Lysistrata reminds the Athenians how the Spartans once helped them to replace the servile *katonake* with the free man's *chlaina* (1155f.)."

⁷ See Bowie 1993: 193-4.

⁸ 615 ἀλλ' ἐπαποδυώμεθ', ἄνδρες, τουτῶι τῷ πράγματι, 637 ἀλλὰ θώμεσθ', ὧ φίλοι γρᾶες, ταδὶ πρῶτον χαμαί, 662-3 ἀλλὰ τὴν ἐξωμίδ' ἐκδυώμεθ', ὡς τὸν ἄνδρα δεῖ/ἄνδρὸς ὄζειν εὐθύς, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐντεθριῶσθαι πρέπει, 686-7 ἀλλὰ χήμεῖς, ὧ γυναῖκες, θᾶττον ἐκδυώμεθα/ὡς ἂν ὄζωμεν γυναικῶν αὐτοδᾶξ ὠργισμένων.

The women start undressing in line 637,⁹ threaten the men with more stripping later on (682-6) and, finally, express their intention of exposing their genitals (823-8). Even though it has generally remained unnoticed,¹⁰ the nudity of the women in this passage is very important. With reference to comedy and the comic costume, female nudity is limited to divine or semi-divine figures and professional sex workers.¹¹ *Lysistrata* is the only case in Aristophanes where respectable women of citizen status appear to get undressed. As Sommerstein (2009: 240) notes, women “should not even be seen by men not of their family except on certain well-defined, mostly religious occasions”. Thus, the women’s undressing cannot be explained away as a stereotypical practice in the *parabasis* or as a mere indication of a bellicose mood; it certainly suggests more than that.

Indeed, Greek nudity in general marks a contrast between men and women.¹² The naked male body appeared early in art,¹³ while male athletic nudity was natural in Greece and revealed the male valour.¹⁴ As Bonfante argues (1989: 549), male nudity was considered as heroic, divine, youthful and athletic and, when displayed, it amounted to “the corporeal manifestation of those virtues that defined Greek masculinity”.¹⁵ By contrast, female nudity manifested no such virtues and was to be avoided. The female naked body was an

⁹ Pace Carey 1993 who does not accept that the women take off their outer garments at this point. For a contrary view, see Sommerstein 1990: 816 and 2009: 1-7.

¹⁰ Sommerstein (2009) has stressed the importance of the women’s gesture in asserting their independence and control, but does not draw any comparison with relevant female rituals.

¹¹ See Sommerstein 2009: 239-40.

¹² See Bonfante 1989: 544.

¹³ Cf. the artistic nudity of the *κούροι* in the Classical period.

¹⁴ See Scanlon 2002: 207-8.

¹⁵ See Bassi 1998: 100.

unexpected and startling sight; it reflected the implicit acknowledgment that what is revealed should not be, that it is αἰδοῖον and should have remained covered. It is precisely this forbidden quality of the exposure and the powerful emotions aroused by the sight of the naked female body that invest it with a special kind of power: due to the important role of the female genitals in reproduction and preservation of the human species, their power was related with fertility and they were from earliest times enveloped in sacred taboo.¹⁶ In art, the female nude appears briefly in the early Archaic period as a religious fertility motif and later on it is often used for magic or erotic appeal.¹⁷ I therefore wish to argue that the women's intention of exposing their naked bodies in *Lysistrata* is strongly related to their power of fertility and their reproductive role: the way in which the women expose their bodies is reminiscent of the act of disrobing in the course of certain female rituals which were perceived as fertility-oriented. Thus, the objective of the old women's disrobing in *Lysistrata* is to exhibit the power of female fertility and manifest women's indispensability for the city with regard to matters of reproduction. Moreover, by displaying their bodies in public the women wish to bring shame and discomfort over men and, thus, assert their equality with or perhaps their superiority over them.¹⁸ Consequently, the ritualistic gesture

¹⁶ Cf. the divine nudity of the goddesses Astarte, Ishtar (regularly shown in frontal nudity), Aphrodite, Venus, and others which signifies fertility, fecundity, and power. See Bonfante 1989: 544-5; Suter forthcoming.

¹⁷ Robertson 1975: 390-93; Boardman 1975: figs. 27, 38, 71, 122, 176, 224-25, 321; 1978: figs. 19, 23, 26; 1985: 238-40. See also Bonfante 1989: 558-9.

¹⁸ The fact that respectable women should not display their bodies in public shows, according to Sommerstein, that the women in *Lysistrata* resort to extreme measures in order to make themselves heard. This suggestion is an excellent response to Carey's (1993) claim that the women in *Lysistrata* do not strip off simply because public nudity for women was not acceptable in Athenian society. However, it must be noted

of undressing yields very interesting results regarding the way the women claim and defend their leading position in the city.

I will first examine the disrobing scene of men and women in *Lysistrata* and then I will move on to discuss the relevant rituals and their implications for the Aristophanic scene. The women start undressing in line 637 (ἀλλὰ θώμεσθ', ὧ φίλοι γρᾶες, ταδὶ πρῶτον χαμαί) and, immediately after they perform this gesture, they make two important statements: first, they boast of their services as participants in various female rituals (638-47) and second, they claim that they are fully entitled to express an opinion about the city, since they contribute men to it (648-55). The rituals the women refer to are strongly related to their roles as wives and mothers. I shall return to this issue in due course; on this occasion, I just wish to point out that the women's gesture of disrobing is accompanied by, and thus connected with, references to the important role of women as wives and mothers in the city. This is a first indication that the women's act of undressing may be related to issues of fertility and reproduction.

The men react to the women's gesture with indignation, as they call it utter insolence (658-9 ταῦτ' οὖν οὐχ ὕβρις τὰ πράγματ' ἐστὶ πολλή;). Most importantly though, they perceive the women's action as threatening to their manliness, since they repeatedly show their concern that their virility is under threat: they have to prove that they are men ἐνόρχεις (661 ἀλλ' ἀμυντέον τὸ πρᾶγμα, ὅστις γ' ἐνόρχης ἔστ' ἀνὴρ), thus that they are

that the women's parts were played by men (and, thus, practically female nudity would not be practised anyway) and that the whole plot of *Lysistrata* is based on the subversion of normal female behaviour.

sexually virile,¹⁹ and that they smell like a man (662-3 ὡς τὸν ἄνδρα δεῖ/ἄνδρὸς ὄζειν εὐθύς); they must regain their potency as when they were young (666-70 νῦν δεῖ νῦν ἀνηβῆσαι πάλιν κάναπτερωσαι/πᾶν τὸ σῶμα κάποσεύσασθαι τὸ γῆρας τόδε); and they must not let themselves be deprived of their manliness (664 ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐντεθριῶσθαι πρέπει).²⁰ They go on to claim that the women threaten their superiority by picturing them as occupying the position on top during the sexual intercourse (673-5 κάπιχειρήσουσ' ἔτι/ναυμαχεῖν καὶ πλεῖν ἐφ' ἡμᾶς), which means that they are dominant.²¹ Thus, they perceive the women's gesture to have a sexual meaning, which is deeply insulting and threatening to them.

The women retort with more stripping off and threaten with even more stripping (683-7):

εἰ νῆ τὸ θεῷ με ζωπυρήσεις, λύσω
 τὴν ἐμαυτῆς ὅν ἐγὼ δῆ, καὶ ποιήσω
 τήμερον τοὺς δημότας βωστρεῖν σ' ἐγὼ πεκτούμενον.
 ἀλλὰ χήμεϊς, ὧ γυναῖκες, θᾶττον ἐκδυώμεθα,
 ὥς ἂν ὄζωμεν γυναικῶν αὐτοδᾶξ ὠργισμένων.

The women warn the men that, if they irritate them further, they will release the power of their ὅν (682-3 εἰ νῆ τὸ θεῷ με ζωπυρήσεις, λύσω/τὴν ἐμαυτῆς ὅν ἐγὼ δῆ). The word ὅν is a

¹⁹ Cf. *Ar. Eq.* 1835, *Av.* 568-9; *Pl. Com.* 64.4, *CA* 90, 592. See also Henderson 1987: 158.

²⁰ Henderson 1987: 159 notes that the verb here refers to the foreskin. Indeed, if we take into account that ἀποθριάζω means “draw back the prepuce in preparation for sexual activity” (Henderson 1991: 118; see also Henderson 1991: 110-1 and *Ar. Ach.* 158 and *Ec.* 708), ἐνθριάζω may refer to an opposite action, the refraining from sexual activity.

²¹ For ναυμαχεῖν and πλεῖν as signifying the sexual position on top, as well as dominance, see *Ar. Ra.* 4343, *Th.* 803-4, *Lys.* 59-60, 773). See also Henderson 1987: 160.

double entendre for the female genitals.²² Thus, the women's response shows that they invest their female genitals with some kind of power, which will help them prevail over men. They go on to utter a threat against the men's genitals (691-5):

ὥς εἰ καὶ μόνον κακῶς <μ'>ἔρεϊς, ὑπερχολῶ γάρ,
αἰετὸν τίκτοντα κἀνθαρός σε μαιεύσομαι.

The women remind the men of the fable of the beetle and the eagle: the beetle was angered at the eagle because the eagle disregarded the beetle's entreaty to spare the hare, who had sought refuge with the beetle. In order to take revenge, the beetle broke the eggs of the eagle.²³ The women use most suggestive language: they assimilate the men to a pregnant eagle and themselves to the beetle, who will offer the services of a "midwife"; namely, they threaten to break the men's "eggs", i.e. their testicles.²⁴ Since the women speak figuratively of a pregnancy and a most unwelcome midwifery and unsuccessful delivery, their threat concerns the men's potency and capacity for reproduction, which, though being old, they may have not lost yet.²⁵

After scoffing at the men's virility and potency, the women repeat once more their intention of revealing their own genitals. They first threaten the men with hitting them on

²² Cf. *Ach.* 739-41, where the Megarian claims to have piglets (ie. his daughters) for sale: χοίρους γὰρ ὑμὲ σκευάσας φασὼ φέρειν./περίθεσθε τάσδε τὰς ὀπλὰς τῶς χοιρία./ὅπως δὲ δοξεῖτ' ἤμεν ἐξ ἀγαθᾶς ὑός. The obscene sense of the word becomes explicit later on (781-2 νῦν γε χοῖρος φαίνεται./ἀτὰρ ἐκτραφεῖς γε κύσθος ἔσται). See Olson 2002: 261. In general, words which denote the pig (like χοῖρος, δέλφαξ, δελφάκιον, cf. χοιροπῶλαι for the prostitutes, fr. 578) most frequently point to the female genitals. For many examples see Henderson 1991: 131-2, who argues that in *Lysistrata* "the older women threaten the men with the power of their cunts". See also Stehle 1997: 167-8.

²³ Cf. Aesop fab. 3 Perry. The same fable is mentioned in *Ar. V.* 1448 and *Pax* 129-34.

²⁴ See Henderson 1987: 161; Sommerstein 1990: 193. Cf. *Lys.* 362-3.

²⁵ Cf. *Lys.* 594-7.

the jaw, to which the men reply with mockery. Thus, the women retort with a stronger threat, that of exposing their genitals (821-8):

{Γυ.} τὴν γνάθον βούλει θένω;
{Γε.} μηδαμῶς ἔδεισά γε.
{Γυ.} ἀλλὰ κρούσω τῷ σκέλει;
{Γε.} τὸν σάκανδρον ἐκφανεῖς.
{Γυ.} ἀλλ' ὅμως ἂν οὐκ ἴδοις
καίπερ οὔσης γραδὸς ὄντ' αὖ-
τὸν κομήτην, ἀλλ' ἀπεψι-
λωμένον τῷ λύχνῳ.

As Henderson (1987: 173) explains, σάκανδρος, used only here, refers to (hairy) female genitalia.²⁶ Sommerstein believes the women to be totally naked at this point and notes (1990: 199) that “even a naked woman is still, in a normal standing pose, concealing something vital”. The women at this point are, of course, dancing, so the possibilities of revealing their genitals are even greater. We have no way to know whether the women do reveal their genitals in front of the men, the audience or indeed among themselves; perhaps when they comment proudly on their neatly trimmed genitals (contrary to the hairiness associated with old women), the women turn to one another and expose their feminine region. This of course, although possible, is just a hypothesis. Yet the fact remains that the women do take off their clothes and twice state their intention to reveal their genitals; that their disrobing takes place within a highly sexual context, as they proudly evoke their important roles as wives and mothers (648-55) and degrade and ridicule the

²⁶ See also Sommerstein 1990: 199.

men's virility and reproductive capacity (691-5); and that their intention of revealing their genitals is formed as a threat against men.

The disrobing of the old women as an act of control over the men stands in sharp contrast with the disgrace and degradation that the men's undressing brings upon them. Whereas the men are evidently affected by the women's undressing, the women do not seem to notice or be interested in the men's act of undressing, but for a single derisive and derogatory comment (800 τὴν λόχμην πολλὴν φορεῖς). Thus, the men, by removing their clothes in order to exhibit their manliness and superiority over the women, succeed in doing exactly the opposite: they make fools of themselves and undermine their masculinity. It is their wives who put their clothes back on, because, as they claim, the men without them look stupid and they are not real men:

1019-21

νῦν δ' οὖν οὗ σε περιόψομαι
γυμνὸν ὄνθ' οὕτως. ὄρα γὰρ ὡς καταγέλαστος εἶ
ἀλλὰ τὴν ἐξωμίδ' ἐνδύσω σε προσιοῦς' ἐγώ

1024

πρῶτα μὲν φαίνει γ' ἀνὴρ, εἴτ' οὐ καταγέλαστος εἶ.

The men can only meekly admit their defeat and apologize for their behaviour (1023 ἀλλ' ὑπ' ὀργῆς γὰρ πονηρᾶς καὶ τότε ἀπέδυν ἐγώ).²⁷ The degradation of the men's masculinity is emphasized further below, when the Ambassadors have to cover themselves up so that

²⁷ See Sommerstein 2009: 240-2.

their erections do not show (1072-96).²⁸ Thus, in *Lysistrata* the men's nudity underlines their failure to assert their position, whereas the women, in stark contrast, appear to be greatly empowered in their naked state: this power is strongly linked to their fertility and their reproductive role, as the evidence of certain rituals, which I shall now discuss, shows.

Reckford (1987: 464-5), in his treatment of the women's public self-exposure, briefly refers to the ritual of the ἀνάστυμα. Indeed, the elements which define the women's disrobing scene are present in the case of the ἀνάστυμα: the ἀνάστυμα is the gesture a woman performs when she lifts her dresses in order to expose her private parts, her αἰδοῖα, in a ritualistic context.²⁹ There are some accounts of this gesture which show that, if performed among women, the ἀνάστυμα relates to fertility and has a positive effect; on the contrary, when performed in front of men, it is perceived as an aggressive gesture with shaming and discomfiting effects.³⁰

The Homeric Hymn to Demeter recounts how Demeter arrives at Eleusis in mourning for her daughter, but a nursemaid, Iambe, makes her give up her mourning and

²⁸ See also below section 3.3.

²⁹ Only the verb ἀνασύρομαι is attested; the noun derived from it is variously formed as ἀνάστυμα (pl. ἀνάστυματα) or ἀνασυρμός (pl. ἀνασυρμοί).

³⁰ See Suter forthcoming; O' Higgins 2003: 194. In this quality, ἀνάστυμα must be connected to the head of the Medusa when used by goddesses so as to frighten and destroy men. For this connection see Zeitlin 1982: 145 and Suter forthcoming. Cf. also Zeitlin's similar treatment of Medusa's genitalized face which turns men into stone (1982: 145) and Vernant 1991: 113-4. Early psychoanalytical interpretations of Medusa also echo this tradition of gynophobia: Freud argued that the decapitated head/castrated genitals of the Medusa are so terrifying because they represent "the terrifying genitals of the Mother"; the Hungarian psychoanalyst Sándor Ferenczi believed that the Medusa head represents the female genitals and the Jungian psychologist Erich Neumann also associated the head of Medusa with "the womb in its frightening aspect". For these references see Garber and Vickers 2003: 84-97.

burst to laughter by means of licentious language, insults and obscene jokes.³¹ Yet, the best known occurrence of the ἀνάσυρμα is found in the Orphic version of the Demeter/Persephone story.³² The Orphic hymn recounts a similar story to that of the Homeric Hymn, although this time it is Baubo who performs this service to Demeter, not by verbal means but by action: she comes up to the goddess and lifts up her dress to expose her genitals (Clem. Al. *Protr.* 2.20.2 ἀναστέλλεται τὰ αἰδοῖα καὶ ἐπιδεικνύει τῇ θεῷ).³³ The unexpected and outrageous gesture cheers Demeter up, and she begins to plan the tactics by which she will secure Persephone's return.

One way of explaining Baubo and the meaning of her gesture is to interpret it as an apotropaic device: mockery, scoffing and acting indecently have apotropaic powers which are meant to protect and promote fertility.³⁴ The vulgar mockery of Iambe and the indecent gestures of Baubo towards Demeter may work in a similar way: the laughter of Demeter, instigated by these indecent acts, signals the end of her despair, which, in its turn, heralds the return of the fertility of the soil and, presumably, also of the people.³⁵ As Halliwell (2008: 171) argues, if the story of Iambe and Demeter represented a psychological pattern that meant something to the worshippers themselves, then “various forms of ritual

³¹ *Dem.* 100-205.

³² Kern frag. 52. For the Baubo figurines discovered in various sites of the Greek world see Pfisterer-Haas 1989: 71-2 and section 2.4 below.

³³ The Orphic material has survived mostly in two Christian polemics of Clement of Alexandria (*Protr.* 2.20.1-21.2) and Arnobius (*Adversus Nationes* 5.25-6). In a fragment of Philochoros (FGrH 328 F 103), Iambe performs both acts: she both speaks and gesticulates.

³⁴ See Fluck 1931: 24-33; Deubner 1932: 53; Olender 1990: 94-7; O' Higgins 2003 : 51-3; Halliwell 2008: 165.

³⁵ See Calame 1977: 246 “de même qu'elle favorise la fertilité du sol cultivé [...] Déméter est la garante de la fécondité de la femme dont la sexualité obéit aux norms civique du statut d'épouse”.

laughter [...] may have conveyed a subliminal sense of a religious journey in which earthly affirmative life-forces would triumph over the power of grief, sterility and even death”.³⁶

Indeed, vulgar jokes and gestures are attested in the context of many rituals in honour of Demeter, with which Baubo can be associated, like Thesmophoria, Stenia and Haloa.³⁷ During the Thesmophoria women indulge in indecent speech;³⁸ in the course of the nocturnal ceremonies of the Stenia women exchanged mockery, insults and blasphemies,³⁹ whereas during the Haloa, apart from similar vulgar mockery, women also carried indecent representations of male and female genitals.⁴⁰ There is a similar testimony of mockery and insults in the course of the Eleusinian mysteries, another festival in honour of Demeter, but not exclusively female: in the fifth and last day of the festival, during the Eleusinian procession, which escorted the “Holy things” of Demeter and Persephone from Athens back

³⁶ See also O’ Higgins 2003: 52 who states that “while they [i.e. the Church fathers] clearly wish to emphasize the ludicrous and obscene nature of the pagan rites, the described events conform to fertility myths elsewhere”.

³⁷ See Wilamowitz 1932: 53; Burkert 1985: 278; Olender 1990: 95-6. A lot of figurines of women have been found in various sites of the Greek world, dating from the seventh century B.C. to the Hellenistic period, which have been connected to the cult of Demeter: they appear to hold various cultic objects (such as vessels, baskets, piglets), make apotropaic gestures (raising an open hand with fingers spread), indecent gestures (sticking their tongue out of their mouth) or hold phalloi. See Peredolskaya 1964; Pfisterer-Haas 1989; O’ Higgins 2003: 27-30 and section 2.4 further below.

³⁸ Apollod. 1.30; Cleomedes 2.1; Diod.Sic. 5.4.7; Ar. *Thesm.* 539. See also Burkert 1985: 244; Parker 2005: 275. Nixon 1995: 91-3 makes the point that the festival did not celebrate fertility pure and simple, but a fertility that the women controlled and managed. It has been argued that the women perform the ἀνάστυμα too. For a summary of the controversy see Olender 1991: 90-7. Graf 1974: 169 and Clinton 1992 find no evidence for an ἀνάστυμα either performed in the course of the Eleusinian rituals or in the iconography of the Mysteries. Since there is no clear ancient testimony for the performance of the ἀνάστυμα during the Thesmophoria, I shall not discuss it.

³⁹ Hesychios s.v. Στήνια and Στηνιῶσαι. See Fluck 1931: 15-7; Parke 1977: 88; Olender 1990: 94.

⁴⁰ Sch. to Lucian, *Dial. Meretr.* 7.4. See also Parke 1977: 98-100; Olender 1990: 95; Winkler 1990: 194-5; Parker 2005: 281.

to Eleusis,⁴¹ the Mystai crossed a bridge over the river Kephisos. This bridge was the scene of a custom, the so-called γεφυρισμοί, according to which people sat on the bridge and hurled insults and obscenities at the people in the procession.⁴² In various accounts, the performers of the obscenities are given a veiled man as a prostitute.⁴³ In this way, the exposure of Baubo's genitals in front of Demeter can be considered as falling within the wider tradition of similar indecent gestures and/or exchange of vulgar mockery (αἰσχρολογία) which took place within the context of the aforementioned rituals that were strongly related to fertility,⁴⁴ and which probably functioned as apotropaic devices which protected and enhanced the fertility of the soil and the people.

The connection between αἰσχρολογία and fertility is found also in Herodotus 5.82-3.

The Epidaurians, following the advice of the oracle at Delphi, set up images of the fertility

⁴¹ See Parke 1977: 65-6.

⁴² Hesychios s.v. γεφυρισταί: οἱ σκῶπται· ἐπεὶ ἐν Ἐλευσίνι ἐπὶ τῆς γεφύρας τοῖς μυστηρίοις καθεζόμενοι ἔσκωπτον τοὺς παριόντας; Ammon. p. 128 Valck γεφυρι{α}σμός δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ τοῖς Ἀθήνησιν ἐπὶ τῶν γεφυρῶν ἐπιγράφειν ἦτοι ἔμμετρα ἢ καὶ δίχα μέτρων διασυρμούς τινων περιέχοντα; Plu. *Sulla* 2.8-9. See Fluck 1931: 52-9; Parke 1977: 66; Olender 1990: 95-6; Halliwell 2008: 169-71. A reference to γεφυρισμοί can be perhaps traced in Ar. *Ran.* 371-81 and 383-92 (see Rademacher 1923: 203; Fluck 1931: 55-8).

⁴³ Hesychios s.v. γεφυρίς: πόρνη τις ἐπὶ γεφύρας, ὡς Ἡρακλέων. ἄλλοι δὲ οὐ γυναῖκα, ἀλλὰ ἄνδρα ἐκεῖ καθεζόμενον <ἐπὶ> τῶν ἐν Ἐλευσίνι μυστηρίων συγκαλυπτόμενον ἐξ ὀνόματος σκώμματα λέγειν εἰς τοὺς ἐνδόξους πολίτας.

⁴⁴ I do not wish to argue that these female festivals are to be interpreted only along the lines of the promotion and manipulation of fertility and reproduction: they certainly raise wider questions and, as it is the case with most rituals in general, they cannot be interpreted in a single and definite way (see Lowe 1998). Yet, undeniably, fertility and reproduction constitute one of these rituals major concerns, not surprisingly, since female identity was inextricably bound with procreativity and reproduction. Unfortunately, primary sources for the festivals are quite scant. For the Thesmophoria and the emphasis on fertility see Sch. to Lucian, *Dial. Meretr.* 2.1. See also Olender 1990: 94-7; Winkler 1990: 193-8; Parker 2005: 275-6. For the connection between female rituals and fertility see McClure 1999: 215-7 who argues that comic obscenity derives from the practice of *aischrologia* associated with rituals intended to promote fertility and Goff 2004: 58, 121-2 and *passim* who argues that women's cultic roles often entail that they are identified not only with reproductive activity but also with desiring sexuality.

goddesses Damia and Auxesia⁴⁵ in order to restore fertility in their land, which bore no produce; and so it happened (καὶ ἦ τε γῆ σφι ἔφερε καρπὸν). But later on the Aeginetans stole the statues from the Epidaurians and established rituals during which the women of Aegina formed abusive choruses and danced around the statues, in order to gain their favour (ἰδρυσάμενοι δὲ ἐν τούτῳ τῷ χώρῳ θυσίῃσιν τέ σφεα καὶ χοροῖσι γυναικείοισι κερτόμοισι ἰλάσκοντο). Herodotus underlines that the women's raillery was aimed at the women and not at any man of the country (κακῶς δὲ ἡγόρευον οἱ χοροὶ ἄνδρα μὲν οὐδένα, τὰς δὲ ἐπιχωρίας γυναῖκας) and notes that the Epidaurians also held same rites (ἦσαν δὲ καὶ τοῖσι Ἐπιδαυρίοισι αἱ αὐταὶ ἱουργαί). Unfortunately Herodotus does not provide more information on these rituals. However, the combined evidence that a) the women abused only their female fellow dancers, b) the abusive choruses took place before the statues of fertility goddesses and c) the Epidaurians, whose sole purpose in manufacturing the statues was the restoration of fertility, held similar rites, allow us to suggest that the scoffing was meant to enhance the fertility purposes of the ritual.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ On Damia and Auxesia see Macan 1895: 227-8. Calame 1977: 247-8 notes that Damia and Auxesia are very close to Demeter and Kore with regard to the celebration of fertility.

⁴⁶ In his description of a celebration of an Artemis festival in Egypt (2.60) Herodotus gives an example of spoken vulgarities (τωθάζουσι: for τωθάζειν as ritual mockery see Halliwell 2008: 167-8) combined with ἀνάσυρμα (ἀνασύρονται): in the course of the festival the women speak vulgarities and ἀνασύρονται. We do not know the exact meaning of the described ritual; yet, if we take into account that one of the cultic names of Artemis was Ἄρτεμις Λοχία, protector of women in labour (IG II² 4547; see also Guarisco 2000: 78) and Ἄρτεμις κουροτρόφος, nurse and protectress of young girls (there are statuettes or votive reliefs from many of her sanctuaries at Brauron and Corfu where she nurtures young animals; see Graf 1974: 114-25; Kahil 1979: 79-82; Sourvinou-Inwood 1988; Marinatos 1998: 116-7 and 2002: 29-30), it is reasonable to infer that there were festivals in her honour which were fertility oriented. Even though the example comes from outside the

The account of female rituals in honour of Demeter and relative goddesses (such as Damia and Auxesia) in the course of which the female body was partially or fully exposed, reveals that the female naked body is invested with a certain kind of power, often related to fertility.⁴⁷ In this light, the women's intention of exposing their private parts in *Lysistrata* is to be understood as a symbolic act to manifest and promote their fertility. The same act has a different effect towards the men: they are annoyed and they feel threatened and degraded with regard to their virility. The appalling effects that the exposure of women's private parts has on men is displayed in two passages from Plutarch. In the first example (Plu. *Apophthegmata Laconica* 241 B4) a Spartan woman, whose sons had run away from battle, attempted to reproach and humiliate them on their return home, by performing an ἀνάσυρμα in front of them.⁴⁸ Similarly, in *Mul. Virt.* 246a Persian women perform an ἀνάσυρμα before their men fleeing from battle and thus force them to turn back and face the Medes.⁴⁹ excessive femininity checks and prevails over the men's lack of virility. Moreover, in both examples, the gesture is accompanied by the women's reproach to the men that they cannot slink back to where they came from (ἢ δεῦρο ὅθεν ἐξέδυτε

Greek world, Herodotus notes that the Greeks celebrate similar festivals which they took from the Egyptians (2.58).

⁴⁷ For the female nudity during the celebration of Artemis at Brauron and its implications, see further below in the discussion of the ritual services that the women in *Lysistrata* commemorate.

⁴⁸ Plu. *Apophthegmata Laconica* 241 B4 «ποῦ, φησὶν, ἦκετε δραπετεύσαντες, κακὰ ἀνδράποδα; ἢ δεῦρο ὅθεν ἐξέδυτε καταδυσόμενοι;» ἀνασυράμενη καὶ ἐπιδείξασα αὐτοῖς.

⁴⁹ Plu. *Mul. Virt.* 246a φεύγουσι δὲ τοῖς Πέρσαις εἰς τὴν πόλιν, ὀλίγον ἀπεχόντων συνεισπεσεῖν τῶν πολεμίων, ἀπῆντησαν αἱ γυναῖκες πρὸ τῆς πόλεως καὶ τοὺς πέπλους ἐκ τῶν κάτω μερῶν ἐπάρασαι 'ποῖ φέρεσθε' εἶπον, 'ὦ κάκιστοι πάντων ἀνθρώπων; οὐ γὰρ ἐνταῦθα γε δύνασθε καταδύναι φεύγοντες, ὅθεν ἐξεγένεσθε.' ταύτην τὴν ὄψιν ἄμα καὶ τὴν φωνὴν αἰδεσθέντες οἱ Πέρσαι καὶ κακίσαντες ἑαυτοὺς ἀνεστρέψαντο καὶ συμβαλόντες ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐτρέψαντο τοὺς πολεμίους.

καταδυσόμενοι; οὐ γὰρ ἐνταῦθά γε δύνασθε καταδύναι φεύγοντες, ὅθεν ἐξεγένεσθε). In saying so, the women appear to connect the control that the sight of their genitals exert over men with their reproductive ability.

Two more examples show that the sight of the naked female body was perceived by men as threatening to them, even though the gesture is not exclusively connected with the women's fertility or reproductive ability: in Plutarch *Mul. Virt.* 248B Lycian women perform an ἀνάσυρμα in front of Bellerophon and force him to retreat because of shame (ἐπεὶ δὲ τῶν ἀνδρῶν δεομένων τὸν Βελλεροφόντην ἐπισχεῖν οὐδὲν ἔπειθον, αἱ γυναῖκες ἀνασυράμεναι τοὺς χιτωνίσκους ἀπήντησαν αὐτῷ· πάλιν οὖν ὑπ' αἰσχύνῃς ἀναχωροῦντος ὀπίσω καὶ τὸ κῦμα λέγεται συνυποχωρῆσαι); Artemidorus (4.44) tells of a man who dreamt that his wife lifted up her clothes and showed him her genitals (ἀναστελαιμένην τὴν γυναῖκα ἐπιδεικνύειν αὐτῷ τὸ αἰδοῖον) and interprets the act in the dream as a verification of the fact from real life that the wife caused her husband much suffering (πολλῶν κακῶν αἰτία ἐγένετο αὐτῷ ἡ γυνή).

The above examples reconfirm that the act of exposing a woman's body or, more specifically, genitals evokes among men sentiments of shame, uneasiness, and insecurity about their virility; they also show that the gesture has connotations of fertility and reproduction. In this light, the undressing of the women in *Lysistrata* can be perceived as a gesture which, on the one hand, strengthens the women's solidarity and displays their

power of fertility and, on the other hand, discomfits the men by reminding them of their own degraded masculinity.⁵⁰

2.2 Women as ritual practitioners

So far we have noted how the women's actions point to the practice of certain rituals, which celebrated the power of women's fertility and commemorated their important role in reproduction. We shall now see that the women overtly speak about their service to the city as actual ritual practitioners. The passage (641-7) has been construed as signifying the important role of women in the city.⁵¹ I wish to stress the fact that the rituals they enumerate were undertaken by young girls and prepared them for the future roles of women as wives and mothers. In this way, the women's description of the ritual offices is strongly linked with their previous ritualistic gesture of undressing: both draw attention to the important role of women as mothers and wives for the city. Thus, the women point out once more to the men (and the audience) where their power lies and assert their right to leadership.

⁵⁰ For other references about women's (partial) nakedness before men which is perceived as having endangering or discomfiting effects cf. the case of Hecuba in *Hom. Il.* 22.82-5, Clytemnestra in *A. Ch.* 896-8 (with emphasis on motherhood) and Candaules' wife in *Hdt.* 1.8-15.

⁵¹ Bowie 1993: 180 refers to these rituals as signifying the women's importance in the city; Goff 2004: 361 notes "it is as ritual practitioners that women serve the city, and they are consequently entitled to address it in that role". See also Sourvinou-Inwood's detailed discussion (1988).

After they have started their gradual undressing (637), the women make reference to the following services: ἀρρηφόρος, ἀλετρίς, ἄρκτος in the festival of Artemis of Brauron, and κανηφόρος (641-7):

ἔπτα μὲν ἔτη γεγῶσ' εὐθύς ἡρρηφόρουν·
εἴτ' ἀλετρίς ἧ δεκέτις οὔσα τάρχηγέτι·
καὶ χέουσα τὸν κροκωτὸν ἄρκτος ἧ Βραυρωνίοις·
κάκανηφόρουν ποτ' οὔσα παῖς καλὴ 'χουσ'
ἰσχάδων ὀρμαθόν.

As Henderson notes (1987: 154) “the cults mentioned here were chosen for their special splendour and for their connection with the preparation of girls for motherhood, since the women emphasize both the production of males and high social standing”. I wish to add that these services, especially that of ἀρρηφόρος, ἄρκτος and κανηφόρος, also symbolize and represent female fertility. As far as the rites of ἀρρηφόροι are concerned, one of the main duties of the girls who were chosen to be ἀρρηφόροι was the participation in nocturnal mysterious rites, in the course of which the Polias priestess gave the girls baskets (κίσται) containing sacred objects, which they carried underground to the precinct of Aphrodite and brought them back to the ground the following morning.⁵² The retrieved baskets had a different content from the original,⁵³ but had to be returned unopened to the priestess, while neither the priestess nor the girls knew what they were carrying.⁵⁴ The

⁵² Our main source is Paus. 1.27.3. See also Sch. to Lucian, *Dial. Meretr.* 2.1 who mentions the Arrhephoria as a ritual very close to meaning to the Thesmophoria. See also Burkert 1966a; Parke 1977: 140-5; Zeitlin 1982; Brulé 1987: 84-98; Goff 2002: 98-104. For the artistic evidence see Rosenzweig 2004: 49-55.

⁵³ Paus. 1.27.3 κάτω μὲν δὴ τὰ φερόμενα λείπουσιν, λαβοῦσαι δὲ ἄλλο τι κομίζουσιν ἐγκεκαλυμμένον.

⁵⁴ Paus. 1.27.3 οὔτε ἡ διδοῦσα ὁποῖόν τι δίδωσιν εἰδυῖα οὔτε ταῖς φερούσαις ἐπισταμέναις.

meaning of the ritual is obscure; it has often been interpreted as an initiation ritual, related mostly to fertility.⁵⁵ The scholiast in Lucian *Dial. Meretr.* 2.1 mentions the ritual together with Thesmophoria and notes:

τὰ δὲ αὐτὰ καὶ ἀρρητοφóρια καλεῖται καὶ ἄγεται τὸν αὐτὸν λόγον ἔχοντα
περὶ τῆς τῶν καρπῶν γενέσεως καὶ τῆς τῶν ἀνθρώπων σποράς.
ἀναφέρονται δὲ κἀνταῦθα ἄρρητα ἱερὰ ἐκ στέατος τοῦ σίτου
κατεσκευασμένα, μιμήματα δρακόντων καὶ ἀνδρείων σχημάτων.

In agreement with the scholiast's statement that figures of snakes and phalluses were part of the ritual, Burkert (1966a) has argued that the κίσται that the girls were carrying contained snakes which represented the male phallus. As for the covered up thing that they retrieve back to the ground, Burkert urges that it must be understood as the representation of a swaddled baby. In this way, he suggests that the ritual enacts the process of human reproduction. Moreover, Burkert finds in the ritual a connection with the myth of the Kekropides:⁵⁶ the daughters of the Athenian king Kekrops were entrusted by Athena with the earthborn baby Erichthonios, but were not supposed to open the casket in which he lay. Nonetheless, they disobeyed the order, and were so terrified by what they saw that they fell down the Acropolis and died. The ἀρρηφόροι, in a mimesis of the Kekropides, carry down "phallic" snakes, but like the Kekropides, were supposed to restrain their curiosity about sexual matters up to the appropriate time, when they would be ready

⁵⁵ See Parke 1977: 141 "the whole procedure indicates that it was a magical fertility ritual: the secrecy, the performance by night and the fact that it was done only by women all point that way". See also Rosenzweig 2004: 45-9, who argues that the Arrhephoria must be interpreted as expressing the mutual concern of both Athena and Aphrodite for the growth of the crop in Attica harvested in late fall and winter.

⁵⁶ For the opinion that the ἀρρηφόροι represent the two disobedient daughters of Kekrops see also Brulé 1987: 28-49, 78-98; Rosenzweig 2004: 47-8.

to have a husband and children. This symbolism is better understood if one sees the ritual in contrast with the adult female rituals, mentioned above: the prepubescent girls are not allowed to look at the ἄρρητα which they carry, whereas adult women are allowed to speak in vulgar words and handle indecent objects.⁵⁷ In this light, the Arrhephoria can be perceived as a ritual, which has a lot to do with fertility and reproduction. If we also take into account Goff's suggestion (2002: 98-104) that the girls knew perfectly well what they took down and what they brought up but did not talk about it, we are able to see the girls as sharing a secret, unknown to others, which bonds them and brings them together even closer: this secret could be the beginning of the realization of their power as both subjects and objects of desire. Thus, the Arrhephoria, as an initiation rite which carried strong implications of the girls' future roles as wives and mothers, is most appropriately evoked by the old women in *Lysistrata* who wish to place emphasis on their power of fertility and reproduction and their importance for men and the city.

The women go on to speak about their service as ἀλετρίς and ἄρκτος. Sourvinou-Inwood (1988: 140-4) believes that the office of ἀλετρίς was associated with the Eleusinian ritual cycle, Demeter and ritual agricultural operations; we cannot be sure, but, if this is the case, fertility rites might have been involved.⁵⁸ The service of ἄρκτος is of great interest and importance to our study. The participants of the cult of Artemis in Brauron were little

⁵⁷ See Zeitlin 1982: 150-3.

⁵⁸ The scholiast ad loc. claims that the ἀλετρίς prepared cakes for offering and Brulé (1987: 116) conjectures that these girls ground the flour for special bread eaten by the ἀρρηφόροι.

girls up to the age of ten⁵⁹ who, according to the iconographical evidence, ran and danced holding torches or wreaths; some of them wear a short χιτών (the κροκωτός), while others are naked.⁶⁰ At some point of the ceremony, the girls, while previously dressed, dropped their clothes and performed the rites in the nude.⁶¹ This gesture, along with the symbolism of the bear, is most commonly perceived to signify the status of the initiands: the girls are purged of their innate wildness in order to assume the conduct of an adult tamed woman; they are making their transition from a wild to a civilized state, from virgins and young girls to sexually mature women, ready for marriage.⁶² By running and dancing, they act out their wildness, but at the same time they are reminded that this wildness must be restrained and abandoned in the disciplined environment of marriage and, of course, through marital intercourse.⁶³ The shedding of the κροκωτός points exactly to this very moment: by taking it off the girls practice the female gesture of loosening the belt for defloration and, subsequently, childbirth; the naked female body which is revealed is

⁵⁹ For the age of the ἄρκτοι see the discussion in Scanlon 2002: 159.

⁶⁰ For primary sources see Hesychius s.v. ἀρκεία and δεκατεύειν; Harpokration s.v. ἀρκεῦσαι and δεκατεύειν; Suda s.v. ἄρκτος; Schol. Ar. Lys. 645; F. Gr. Hist. 342 f 9. For a discussion of the iconographical evidence see Sourvinou-Inwood 1988: 39-66.

⁶¹ This passage in *Lysistrata* is the only explicit literary testimony that the χιτών was indeed taken off during the ceremony. See Sourvinou-Inwood 1988: 127-34 who draws attention to this, as well as to representations on vase paintings where some ἄρκτοι are naked, presumably because they have already shedded their χιτών. For the shedding of the κροκωτός see also Osborne 1985: 169; Vidal-Naquet 1986: 129-56. For a detailed discussion of the ritual see Scanlon 2002: 139-60.

⁶² See Brelich 1969: 240-90; Kahil 1977: 87; Parke 1977: 137-40; Vidal-Naquet 1981a: 178-80; Simon 1983: 83-4; Cole 1984; Osborne 1985: 170; Burkert 1985: 263; Sourvinou-Inwood 1988; Calame 2002; Marinatos 2002; Goff 2004: 105-13. On the symbolism of the bear, see also Perlman 1983, who suggests that its hibernation is linked with the shy, retiring παρθένος, while its nurturing and protective qualities are associated with the mature γυνή. For a contrary view see Faraone 2003, who argues that the ritual must be connected to sacrificial rites aimed at the appeasement of Artemis and, therefore, must not be construed as an initiation ceremony.

⁶³ See Goff 2002: 105-13.

shown ready to be tamed and used for reproduction. The girls thus become familiar with their bodies as objects of sexual pleasure, which in marriage leads to reproduction. When the old women in *Lysistrata* speak of their service in the Arkteia they point exactly to this feature: they draw attention to the wearing and they explicitly talk of the shedding of the κροκωτός⁶⁴ (645 καὶ χέουσα τὸν κροκωτὸν ἄρκτος ἢ Βραυρωνίοις), thus to the moment when the girls show they are ready to become adult women, wives and mothers.⁶⁵ It is important to note at this point that, while commemorating their service as ἄρκτοι who shed the χιτῶν (645), the old women themselves have removed (or are in the process of removing) their outer garments (637 ἀλλὰ θώμεσθ', ὦ φίλοι γρᾶες, ταδὶ πρῶτον χαμαί). In this way, the old women identify themselves with the young ἄρκτοι they once were and show that their undressing is to be understood within a ritual context, which emphasizes once more their important role as wives and mothers for the city.

Lastly, the old women refer to their service as κανηφόροι.⁶⁶ Girls who served as κανηφόροι, according to iconographical evidence,⁶⁷ were older than the ἀρρηφόροι and were ready for marriage. The old women, thus, have reached a climax in their account of

⁶⁴ Kahil 1977: 81 believes the gesture is to be related to that of Iphigeneia before her sacrifice (A. Ag. 239) and argues for the reading καταχέουσα. See also Sourvinou-Inwood 1988: 130-4.

⁶⁵ The ritual nudity of the young women in the Ἀρκτηία has been compared to the nudity of the women in the ritual of the Ἀμφιδρόμια, during which mothers run naked around an altar, while carrying their newly born infants (Hesychios s.v. δρομιάμφιον ἡμαρ: ἀμφιδρόμια. ἔστι δὲ ἡμερῶν ἑπτὰ ἀπὸ τῆς γεννήσεως, ἐν ᾗ τὸ βρέφος βαστάζοντες περὶ τὴν ἐστίαν γυμνοὶ τρέχουσι. See Kahil 1965: 30-31 and note 80). It is noteworthy that *Lysistrata* mentions the ceremony of the Ἀμφιδρόμια, when scolding the woman who pretended to be pregnant in order to escape (757).

⁶⁶ For primary sources see Thuc. 6.54-6; Ar. *Ach.* 253-6; Hesychios and Photios s.v.; Philochoros in *FGH* 328 F8.

⁶⁷ See Sourvinou-Inwood 1988: 53-7.

feminine ritual services to the city. The symbols of fertility in this ritual are even more obvious: the women envisage themselves as carrying baskets of figs (646-7 (ἔ)χουσ’/ἰσχάδων ὄρμαθόν), which were commonly associated with rites of procreation.⁶⁸

By this enumeration of female rituals the women aim to show where their power lies and why they are absolutely justified in speaking their minds as temporary leaders of the city: women must be respected because they contribute to human reproduction. Through these rituals the city raises the women to be good mothers and wives, anticipates this moment and, finally, celebrates it. To make their rights and their power even clearer, the women go on explicitly to state how this account serves their cause:

649-51

ἄρα προὔφειλω τι χρηστὸν τῇ πόλει παραινέσαι;
εἰ δ’ ἐγὼ γυνὴ πέφυκα, τοῦτο μὴ φθονεῖτέ μοι,
ἦν ἀμείνω γ’ εἰσενέγκω τῶν παρόντων πραγμάτων.
τούρανου γάρ μοι μέτεστι· **καὶ γὰρ ἄνδρας εἰσφέρω.**⁶⁹

The women contribute men to the city. Henderson (1987: 157) notes that through this statement the women establish their credentials; I would add that they show where their real power lies and how they can manipulate men and the city through control of reproduction. By performing ritualistic acts and by referring to their service as ritual practitioners the women get through their message very clearly: they can be the leaders,

⁶⁸ See Deubner 1932: 19ff. Cf. the use of figs in Hippocratic recipes against “hardened” vaginas (i.e. perceived to have a membrane on the mouth of the womb which prohibits women to receive the seed) and infertility (*Mul.* 1.74 (8.156.5-7), 2.155 (8.330.15)). Σῦκον or συκῆ is connected with the male and most often the female reproductive organs (Hipponax fr. 124; Ar. *Pax* 1352), while ἰσχάς always indicates the female member. See Henderson 1991: 117-8.

⁶⁹ Cf. 589-90 πλεῖν γ’ ἢ τὸ διπλοῦν αὐτοῦ φέρομεν, πρῶτιστον μὲν γε τεκοῦσαι/κάκπέμψασαι παῖδας ὀπλίτας.

and, in fact, they *are* the leaders of this city, because they are superior to men and they owe this superiority to their reproductive role. This is further reinstated in the fire-and-water scene during the fight of the two semi-choruses, to which I shall now turn.

2.3 Biology matters: the implications of the fire-and-water scene and its relation to the Adonia

The fight between the two semi-choruses is initiated by the ascent of the old men onto the Acropolis (254ff.) and their attempt to attack the young women, and goes on until the final reconciliation of the female and male choruses (1014-42), which foreshadows the men's acceptance of the women's victory and the subsequent peace treaty. When the old men, in the course of the fight, attempt to burn the old women's fellow-citizens in the Acropolis, the old women respond by giving them a bath. It has been argued that the distinction between the elements of fire and water in the scene reflects the conflict of the two sexes,⁷⁰ insofar as excessive heat was believed to be a male feature, whereas moisture a female one.⁷¹ I wish to elaborate further on the possibilities of this reading. I shall argue that the carrying of the water and the dousing are not just a trivial detail: it is the

⁷⁰ Dorati 1999. For the view that the bath in the *parodos* reflects a very popular type of Greek salvation myth according to which the old women become the saviours of the city see Faraone 1997.

⁷¹ For the perception of men as hot and women as cold see Emped. frag. 31B62, 65, 67 D.-K. (with Wright 1981: 219-20), Parm. 28a46, 52-54 D.-K., Arist. *Pr.* 4.25.879a, 4.28.880a. In the Hippocratic corpus the distinction is mostly made on the basis of women being more humid, whereas men more dense. But see also [Hp.] *Vict* 27 (6.500) where the seed is believed to consist of a fiery and moist element: when the fiery element predominates the seed is male and, when the moist, female.

culmination of a scene loaded with sexual innuendos. The scene of the fight between the old men and old women can be read as an erotic fight, with the women on the one hand teasing and threatening the men and on the other hand displaying and reaffirming their sexual superiority and their control over them. The (mockingly) revitalizing bath that the old men receive at the end of the scene soon takes on overtones of death, which are strongly associated with issues of sexual impotence and infertility.

This reading of the scene invites two interpretations: in the first, I shall pursue further the connection between female rituals and leadership in the play; I shall relate the act of bathing to the ritual of the Adonia and its possible interpretation as a festival which celebrates female superiority over men in terms of fertility and reproduction. In the second, I shall provide a link to the medical treatment of female leadership (section 3), which will corroborate the study of the rituals in the play: I shall consider the association of the women with the element of water in the light of certain medical theories, which link the moist nature of women to female reproductive parts of the body. Both stances of interpretation invite us to consider that the power of the old women is inextricably linked to their power of sexuality and fertility and their display of (relative) control over the process of reproduction.

I will begin with a first reading of the scene and I will move on to explain its connection with the ritual of the Adonia and adduce the evidence of the medical theories. After the women announce their intention to save their female fellow-citizens from men's

incendiary rage (332-40), they meet the men and engage in a verbal fight. The women respond to the men's threats of physical violence (360-1) with a threat of castration (363 κού μή ποτ' ἄλλη σου κύων τῶν ὄρχεων λάβηται). The men then retort with more sexual abuse (364 εἰ μή σιωπήσει, θενῶν σου ἔκκοκκιῶ τὸ γῆρας, 366 τί δ' ἦν σποδῶ τοῖς κονδύλοις;). As Henderson (1987: 114 and 1991: 134) notes, γῆρας can be used to signify the old skin, whereas ἐκκοκίζειν derives from κόκκος which, according to Hesychius, indicated the female genitals. The verb, thus, in this context means rape. Moreover, σποδῶ was very commonly used in comedy as a reference to sexual intercourse.⁷² Thus, the old men, by threatening the women with rape or violent sex, take pride in their virility and sexual potency and make fun of the women's supposedly inferior position (366 τί μ' ἐργάσει τὸ δεινόν;). More threats of physical abuse follow (367), but the women suddenly turn their attention to the pitchers of water they had left on the ground and bend over to lift them. The move of the women towards the pitchers seems to be abrupt and unjustified since the old men, as far as we can tell from the text, make no mention of the fire or show that they are about to use it as their weapon. Henderson (1987: 114) believes that the men in lines 368-9 turn back to their task of igniting their wood pile, to which the women respond with the lifting of the pitchers. However, there is no explicit mention of this supposed act of men in the text, whereas there is an explicit mention of the women's acts. Hence, I believe it is more reasonable to assume that it is the women who initiate the bathing scene which

⁷² See Henderson 1991: 172.

follows as a response to the men's sexual abuses: the women decide to put an end to the abusive dialogue by lifting their pitchers, since they consider that the water can be a more effective weapon against the men's sexual abuses. The explicit reference to this act on stage (370 αἰρώμεθ' ἡμεῖς θοῦδατος τὴν κάλπιν, ὧς Ῥοδίππη) intends to draw our attention to the water and its vital role in the victory of women over men.

From the moment that the women turn their attention to their pitchers, the conversation evidently assumes a sexual tone: it revolves exclusively around the men's ability to set the women on fire, which is questioned by the women, and the women's intentions of bathing the men. The vocabulary of burning often points to the effects of erotic passion and sexual intercourse itself;⁷³ thus, the old men's intention of setting the women on fire signifies their desire to have sexual intercourse with them.⁷⁴ Indeed, words which denote burning are to be found in abundance in the scene.⁷⁵ In this sense, when the old women make fun of the old men's incinerating abilities, they, at the same time question their sexual potency. The old women think that the old men's fire can burn no one but themselves (372 τί δ' αὖ σὺ πῦρ, ὧς τύμβ', ἔχων; ὡς σαυτὸν ἐμπυρεύσων;); or, even worse, that it cannot even burn, but just have a light warming effect (386 οὔκουν, ἐπειδὴ πῦρ ἔχεις,

⁷³ See Henderson 1991: 177-8.

⁷⁴ See Henderson 1991: 48 "a man is thought to "inflamm" the vagina by means of his hot organ (345, 350, 353 ff.), a process dramatized in the parodos of *Lysistrata* when the chorus of men, armed with flaming rams, launch an attack on the women, who, having sworn off sex, "close the gates" of the Acropolis and try to douse the flames with water. Men in the grip of sexual passion are "afire" (347) and can be "set afire" by the attractions of women (349, 351)". See also Foley 1982: 7.

⁷⁵ 269 ἐμπρήσωμεν, 309 ἄψαντες, 321 ἐμπεπρήσθαι, 340 ἀνθρακεύειν, 341 πιμπραμένας, 348 ὑποπιμπρήσι, 372 ἐμπυρεύσων, 373 ὑφάψω, 376 σταθεύσω, 381 ἔμπρησον; cf. 221 ὅπως ἂν ἀνὴρ ἐπιτυφῇ μάλιστά μου and 1079 τεθερμῶσθαί τε χεῖρον φαίνεται.

σὺ χλιανεῖς σεαυτόν;). It should be noted here that earlier on *Lysistrata* had also questioned the old men's ability to burn the women down (249-51):

οὐ γὰρ τοσαύτας οὔτ' ἀπειλὰς οὔτε πῦρ
ἥξουσ' ἔχοντες ὥστ' ἀνοῖξαι τὰς πύλας
ταύτας, ἐὰν μὴ 'φ' οἷσιν ἡμεῖς εἴπομεν.

The breaking down of the gates of the Acropolis may also be a double entendre for the sexual act.⁷⁶ Thus, the women's belief that the old men are unable to break down the gates of the Acropolis again indicates their questioning of the men's potency and their confidence in their female power.

Indeed, the old women consider themselves fully capable of putting out the men's fire (374 ἐγὼ δέ γ', ἵνα τὴν σὴν πυρὰν τούτῳ κατασβέσαιμι, 375 τοῦργον τάχ' αὐτὸ δείξει, 377 λουτρόν γέ σοι παρέξω). At this point, there is a noteworthy twist of the plot: the plan of fetching the water to pour it over the young women who are locked up in the Acropolis is forgotten, or, rather, is altered. Although the old women seemed quite anxious about the young women before (319-49, esp. 319-25, 341-2), they now, surprisingly enough, make no mention of them or of the danger they are in. They are totally absorbed in their fight with the men and behave as if they originally intended to pour the water over the old men.

⁷⁶ See Henderson 1991: 137 "the women's closing of the acropolis against the crowbars and battering rams of the men is made analogous to their decision to forbid access to their cunts"; Loraux 1993: 138-9 discusses the repeated double entendre of the words for door and gate in lines 246-81. See also Vaio 1973: 371, who seems to express a similar idea when he refers to the ramparts of the Acropolis as a "gigantic chastity belt". Cf. the scene in *Ecccl.* 975-90, where the young man's knocking on the hag's door also acquires sexual overtones (see Henderson 1991: 137-8, 171; Sommerstein 1998: 223; Revermann 2006: 185; Brown 2008: 368-9).

Accordingly, the men forget all about their plan to incinerate the young women in the Acropolis and, instead, threaten to burn the old women (376 οὐκ οἶδά σ' εἰ τῇδ' ὥς ἔχω τῇ λαμπάδι σταθεύσω). In this light, the old men can be perceived as, initially, setting off to have sexual intercourse with the young women and, when prohibited from doing so, as turning their incendiary/sexual rage against the old women. The role of the old women, thus, is two-fold: on the one hand, they rush over to save the young women from the old men's erotic intentions and, in this way, they ensure the safe continuation of the sex strike. On the other hand, they prove to the men that their threats are inane, since they are unable to perform sexually and are vanquished by the women's water.

The scene of the bathing which follows the mocking conversation proves that the men are not only compared – and found inferior – to women in terms of their sexual potency, but also in terms of fertility and productivity. The women define the bath they are about to give to the men as νυμφικόν (378).⁷⁷ The water used for the nuptial baths came from a specially prescribed source, a spring or river, depending on the custom.⁷⁸ Since rivers were considered to have special fertilising powers, the water for the nuptial bath was thought to enhance the fertility of both the bride and the groom.⁷⁹ Hence, in the

⁷⁷ Note that the old men were described before as carrying the fire to heat their bath (337 ὥσπερ βαλανεύσοντας).

⁷⁸ For example, in Eur. *IT* 818-9 Clytemnestra fetches the water for Iphigeneia's wedding from home. According to Thucydides 2.15.5 at Athens the water for bridal baths came from Enneakrounos, the fountain house for the spring Kallirhoe. See Oakley and Sinos 1993: 15-6.

⁷⁹ Note for example the frequent representations of rivers as bulls, a symbol of male virility, on Sicilian coins and the common transformation of rivers to men who get married to women (cf. for example in Sophocles' *Trachiniae* (6ff.) the fight of Acheloos with Heracles for the sake of Deianeira (perhaps it is not without

Aristophanic context, the women display their intention to make the men more potent and fertile by means of a nuptial bath. Their intention is even more emphasized by their mocking attitude against the men, to whom they say ἄρδω σ', ὅπως ἂν βλαστάνῃς (384). In this way, they point out the men's infertility and impotence. The water destined to be thrown over the young women in the Acropolis is after all cast over the old men. Thus, it turns out that, while the men call the women rotten (378 σαπρά),⁸⁰ it is not the women, but the men who are in desperate need of a fertilizing bath. However, even when they receive it, it still proves to be ineffective: the men say that they are withered (385 αὔρος). The statement of stiffness and dryness can be understood as carrying overtones of death, even more so since the old men before the bath were also called τύμβε (372) and later on the magistrate, also an old man, is told to buy a coffin (600 σορὸν ὠνήσει) and embark on Charon's boat (605-6 χώρει ἐς τὴν ναῦν/ὁ Χάρων σε καλεῖ). Taking these into account, one may assume that the bath the old men receive is not a nuptial but a funerary one.⁸¹ Even more suggestively, the vocabulary and imagery of death reinforces the impression of the men's inability to achieve sexual arousal.⁸²

significance that the women address the water as Acheloos in line 381) and Pausanias 2.15.5, 6.22.9, 7.23.1, 8.43.2, 9.34.6 and 9). For the fertility of the nuptial bath see the scholia to Eur. *Ph.* 347: εἰώθεσαν δὲ οἱ νυμφῖοι τὸ παλαιὸν ἀπολούεσθαι ἐπὶ τοῖς ἐγχωρίοις ποταμοῖς καὶ περιρραίνεσθαι λαμβάνοντες ὕδωρ τῶν ποταμῶν καὶ πηγῶν συμβολικῶς παιδοποιῖαν εὐχόμενοι, ἐπεὶ ζωοποιὸν τὸ ὕδωρ καὶ γόνιμον. See also Ginouvès 1962: 421-2; Oakley and Sinos 1993: 15-6.

⁸⁰ See Henderson 1987: 115 for σαπρός as a common adjective attributed to old men and women.

⁸¹ For baths in funerary rituals see Ginouvès 1962: 238-64; see also Rehm 1994.

⁸² See Perusino 1999: 73-4; Dorati 1999: 84-5; Reitzammer 2008: 313-4.

The importance of the bathing scene is reinforced by the fact that the old men themselves do not take it lightly, but, conversely, seem to be enraged, since they complain about it to the magistrate twice (399-402, 469-70). Most importantly, in the first instance their complaints are placed amongst the magistrate's grievances about the young women (386-98, 403-30), which, as we shall see further below, convey the impression of a female unbridled sexual behaviour.⁸³ Placed in this context, the old men's complaints about the old women link strongly the behaviour of both female groups and, thus, imply that the old women's act of bathing is perceived by the men as carrying offensive sexual connotations against them.

The sexual background of the fight, the women's playful harassment of the men and their prevailing over the men by means of the (mockingly) fertilizing bath, all provide links to the ritual of the Adonia. The act of the women in pouring water over the men has been read by at least one scholar⁸⁴ as forming part of a supposed enactment of the Adonia festival in the play. Indeed, the Adonia festival is a possible filter for the play;⁸⁵ I shall briefly refer to the myth of Adonis and his celebration in the Adonia festival, as well as to the various interpretations that have been put forward, with emphasis on that of Winkler (1990), in order to show how the Adonia festival becomes relevant to the issues of

⁸³ See, for example, τρυφή (387), Ἀδωνιασμός (388) and ἀκολαστάσματα (398).

⁸⁴ Reitzammer 2008. For the Adonia festival as a possible filter for the play see Bowie 1993: 181; Goff 2004: 362-4.

⁸⁵ Note the alternative title of the play Ἀδωνιάζουσαι, pointed out also by Reitzammer 2008, as preserved in a scholiast's note in l. 389 (ὅ τ' Ἀδωνιασμός: Ἑορτὴν γὰρ ἐπετέλουν τῷ Ἀδώνιδι αἱ γυναῖκες καὶ κήπους τινὰς εἰς τὰ δώματα ἀνέφερον. τινὲς δὲ ἐκ τούτου τὸ δρᾶμα Ἀδωνιαζούσας ἐπιγράφουσιν οὐ καλῶς).

leadership in the play. I shall argue that considering the fire and water scene through the Adonia filter reinforces my interpretation of the women's claim to leadership: women understand their power to lie in their (biological) superiority over men with regard to issues of fertility and reproduction.

The myth of Adonis can be reconstructed from Ovid as follows:⁸⁶ Adonis is conceived in incestuous union when Myrrha seduces her father. He is subsequently born after his mother has been metamorphosed into a myrrh tree. When he becomes a young man, Aphrodite falls in love with him and he becomes her lover; but he is soon killed by a boar and Aphrodite laments him. We do not know on which aspects of the Adonis myths the festival in Athens was based.⁸⁷ I quote here a summary of the festival, as presented by Parker (2005: 284-5):

Seeds of quickgrowing plants (lettuce and fennel) were planted on large potsherds, to create the so-called gardens of Adonis. At a certain point the women took the gardens up to the roofs of the houses and there— seclused but not hidden, nor inaudible—lamented for Adonis. The god himself was represented by little images. Different celebrations of the *Adonia* no doubt varied, but “gardens”, the little images and the accompanying lament were presumably the *sine quibus non*. [...] The festival could extend into an informal *pannychis*, with dancing. After the festival the gardens were or could be carried out and thrown into springs.

⁸⁶ The principal accounts of the Adonis myths are late. They are found in Apol. *Bibliotheca* 3. 14. 3-6 and Ov. *Met.* 10. 298-559 (conception of Adonis), 708-39 (Adonis' affair with Aphrodite and his death).

⁸⁷ Our evidence for the Adonia festival relies on the following sources: for outside Athens Praxill. 747 PMG; Sappho fr. 140A L-P ; Paus. 2.20.5; Theoc. 15. For the festival as celebrated in Athens our main sources are the aforementioned passage in *Lysistrata* (387-96), *Men. Sam.* 38-46 and *Plu. Nic.* 3.17. A passage in Plato's *Phaedrus* (276B) refers to the gardens of Adonis; a scholion to this passage tells us that the gardens of Adonis were proverbial for things which were ἀώρων καὶ ὀλιγοχρονίων καὶ μὴ ἐρριζωμένων. One vase is clearly associated with the festival: Badisches Landesmuseum, Karlsruhe, B 39.

What was the meaning of the festival and how it can be related to *Lysistrata*? According to Detienne (1994), Adonis and his festival were concerned with improper farming, seduction, and the failure of reproduction. Detienne defined the Adonia as structurally opposed to the Thesmophoria, a festival that centred on marriage and procreation. Reitzammer's (2008) study of the association between *Lysistrata* and the Adonia festival has been largely shaped by Detienne's analysis:⁸⁸ she perceives unproductive sex and the art of seduction as the main thematic lines which connect the women in *Lysistrata* with the women performing the Adonia. The fire and water scene forms also part of her analysis: the old men in *Lysistrata* gradually resemble the plants that the women place on the rooftops during the Adonia festival; just as the plants are abandoned there by the women to dry out, similarly, the old men appear to wither in front of the women's eyes. Indeed, the phrase the women use when throwing the water over the men is appropriate for watering plants (384 ἄρδω σ', ὅπως ἄν βλαστάνῃς); yet, the men remain dry, as the gardens of Adonis (385 αὔρος). Reitzammer (2008: 317-8) points out that "the women are watering the men to quench their fiery desire for war so that civic order can be re-established and restored, and so that proper farming can begin again". She finds another link with the myth of Adonis in the characteristics of powerlessness and impotence that the old men exhibit vis-à-vis the women - and in this view she moves away from

⁸⁸ She acknowledges though that "the restrictiveness of Detienne's picture of the Adonis festival as fundamentally a marginalized and private festival in opposition to the public and central Thesmophoria obscures the wider political implications of the Adonia" (Reitzammer 2008: 284).

Detienne's analysis of the Adonia and approaches that of Winkler (1990):⁸⁹ Reitzammer places the affair between Adonis and Aphrodite as celebrated at the Adonia within a wider tradition of affairs between mortal men and immortal women, which ended up with the impotence and detumescence of the mortal man.⁹⁰ She subsequently argues that in *Lysistrata* the women appear to play the role of Aphrodite, while the old men assume the part of Adonis and, as a result, experience diminished sexual capacity and a figurative death.⁹¹

This remark very well illustrates my observations on the bathing scene so far. Yet, I feel that more emphasis has to be placed on the role of the women in the Adonia festival and in *Lysistrata*; for, if men are indeed rendered weak and impotent by the women, then, *mutatis mutandis*, the women appear to have control over the men with regard to fertility issues and the process of reproduction. This observation is in the spirit of Winkler's (1990) interpretation of the Adonia festival: Winkler suggests that the Adonia, far from making a distinction between good male agriculture and bad female sexuality, as Detienne proposes, rather call attention to the subordinate role men play in both agriculture and human generation in relation to wives and mothers.⁹² Thus, the festival can be read

⁸⁹ Although Reitzammer does not refer to Winkler's analysis, her views of the role Adonis held in the Adonia are identified with his.

⁹⁰ See Reitzammer 2008: 312-5. For the view that in Greek myth, when a goddess has an affair with a mortal man, the man becomes literally or figuratively impotent see Stehle 1996. See also Winkler 1990 who argues the same and cites the examples of Eos with Tithonos, Selene with Endymion and Aphrodite with Phaon.

⁹¹ Reitzammer 2008: 314-5. She argues the same for the case of Kinesias and the other young men, who are metaphorically impotent as a result of their erections, which render them weak and ineffective.

⁹² See Winkler 1990: 205.

“as a social allegory, a statement that women and goddesses have primary control of the processes of production and reproduction, that women enjoy relative independence from male performance in the basic life processes. In the communities of women such knowledge is shared, passed around and passed on. The many religious-social gatherings of ancient Greek women, so few of which were noted by men, are the obvious location for sharing knowledge about male adequacy – or inadequacy”.⁹³

Hence, in the fire and water scene in *Lysistrata* the old women temporarily assume the role of Ἀδωνιάζουσαι in order to express their power and control over men: they ridicule the men’s alleged virility and reduce it to a state of impotency, while drawing attention to their own important reproductive role.

The same conclusion can be drawn by the study of medical theories, which confirm that the association of the old women with the element of water is suggestive of the fertile female nature. Indeed, in Hippocratic medicine the moist nature of women is essentially connected with female reproductive parts of the body and, thus, with fertility and the ability of reproduction.

According to the Hippocratics, the female body was distinguished from the male on the grounds of its excessive humidity:⁹⁴ the woman’s flesh is loose and spongy, which makes her soak up more moisture.⁹⁵ The evidence of this moisture was the menstrual flow:

⁹³ Winkler 1990: 206. For other views of the Adonia see Stehle 1996, who argues that the Adonia provided an additional social outlet for women, an occasion for revelry which had erotic overtones; Reed 1995: who, similarly, holds that the Adonia encouraged “sexual expressiveness”; Simms 1998, who argues for the emphasis of the Adonia on ritualized lament. For an overview of the festival and the problems as to when it took place see Dillon 2003.

⁹⁴ [Hp.] *Nat. Puer.* 15 (7.494.13-5). This was often attributed to women’s loose flesh and their more inactive, indoor lifestyle. See Dean-Jones 1994: 56-9, 123.

⁹⁵ [Hp.] *Mul.* 1.25-8 (8.12), *Vict.* 27 (6.500); *Arist. Pr.* 879a33-4.

the blood was the moisture that resulted from nourishment and that was used to build and maintain the body.⁹⁶ Regular menstruation was important for the health of the female body and, more specifically, it played a vital role in conception and gestation. Frequent menses were a sign of fertility and, accordingly, various therapies to promote conception focused on women's menstruation.⁹⁷ Apart from the importance of menstrual blood for conception, the majority of the Hippocratics attributed a significant role also to the female seed, which they believed was ejaculated when the woman reached orgasm and was exceedingly moist;⁹⁸ the female seed would then mingle with the male seed in the womb in order to produce the foetus.⁹⁹ In this light, one could envisage the women's spurting of water as a most appropriate and ironic ending to a scene during which the men constantly exhibited their desire to "burn" (i.e. mate with) the women: the act of sex, though used as a threat by men against women, is never fulfilled; nonetheless women appear to "ejaculate" and overcome the men.

To sum up the aforementioned theories about the association between women's moisture and conception, those who argued against the existence of the female seed believed that a woman's contribution to reproduction was menstrual fluid, whereas those

⁹⁶ See Dean-Jones 1994: 46.

⁹⁷ [Hp.] *Nat. Mul.* 22 (7.340); *Mul.* 1.2 (8.42.9-18).

⁹⁸ [Hp.] *Genit.* 4 (7.474) μεθίει δὲ καὶ ἡ γυνὴ ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος ὅτε μὲν ἐς τὰς μήτρας, αἱ δὲ μήτραι **ἱκμαλέαι** γίνονται. Cf. *Vict.* 27 (6. 500) and Arist. *GA* 739b1-5 ἡ δ' ἄφεςις οὐκ ἐντὸς γίγνεται καθάπερ οἶονταί τινες (στενὸν γὰρ τὸ στόμα τῶν ὑστερῶν), ἀλλ' εἰς τὸ πρόσθεν οὐπὲρ τὸ θῆλυ προίεται τὴν ἐν ἐνίαις αὐτῶν **ἱκμάδα** γιγνομένην, ἐνταῦθα καὶ τὸ ἄρρεν προίεται [ἐάν τις ἐξικμάσῃ].

⁹⁹ [Hp.] *Mul.* 1.17 (8.56.20-2).

who believed that both men and women provided seed saw menses as a further female contribution to reproduction. At any rate, female moisture, whether in the form of menstrual blood or of female seed, was particularly important for the conception of the foetus; even more so, since no male was believed to be able to provide these elements to reproduction.

Female moisture in the form of menstrual blood was also significant for the nourishment of the foetus: if a woman conceived, the menstrual fluid was not evacuated but was believed to be used to nurture the embryo in the womb.¹⁰⁰ What is more, the medical theories postulated an affinity between the female secretions of blood and milk: some of the menstrual material which was not being used up in the formation of the embryo was believed to go into the breasts and, once the child was born, this blood was converted into milk in the breasts to nourish the child.¹⁰¹ In general, breasts were supposed to retain moisture in a woman's body and were the first line of defence against a woman's natural humidity, immediately prior to the evacuation of menses through the womb.¹⁰²

The medical interpretation, which relates that moisture in women was essentially linked with issues of conception, gestation and motherhood, is in agreement with the

¹⁰⁰ [Hp.] *Alim.* 37 (9.110), Arist. *GA* 728a29-30: when the "purer" menstrual fluid mixes with semen it effects generation, when the "cruder" menstrual fluid mixes with pure nourishment, it effects nutrition.

¹⁰¹ [Hp.] *Alim.* 37 (9.110), Arist. *GA* 739b26, 777a8. The affinity between the two secretions was thought to be so close that [Hp.] *Epid.* 2.3.17 (5.118.10-1) calls milk "sister of the menses". See Dean-Jones 1994: 216. Cf. [Hp.] *Mul.* 1.73 (8.154.2-5).

¹⁰² [Hp.] *Gland.* 17 (8.574.2-8) says that if a woman loses a breast, she dies because the moisture it would have received is directed to more vital parts of the body. See Dean-Jones 1994: 215-6.

interpretation of the bathing of men by women through the spectrum of the Adonia: both views establish that the bathing scene is an expression of female superiority over the men as far as issues of fertility and reproduction are concerned.

2.4 Old age, fertility and rituals: the material evidence

At this point I wish to make an observation regarding the rather paradoxical idea of old women capitalising on their power of fertility and procreation through ritualistic practice. That old age was not incompatible with sexuality and fertility is confirmed by material evidence: various terracotta figurines have been found in different sites all over the Greek world, dating from the classical through the Hellenistic period, which represent naked old women. Some of them are squatting; others are holding infants or a phallos, while others have protruding bellies, as if pregnant.¹⁰³ Some of these terracotta figurines have been classified as cultic and have been linked to the worship of Demeter and the promotion of fertility in various ways: Pfisterer-Haas (1989) perceives of some of the figurines as “Baubo figurines”,¹⁰⁴ which probably functioned as amulets for fertility and as a protection against dangerous demons. She claims that these figurines must be associated with cultic processions in honour of Demeter or, perhaps, a relevant subordinate deity of

¹⁰³ Such terracotta figurines were found in the Thesmophorion at Bitalemi (see Orlandini 1967; Kron 1992), in a woman’s early-fourth-century grave collection from the Taman peninsula on the Black Sea (see Peredolskaya 1964 and Pfisterer-Haas 1989: 69-77). A lot of figurines of pregnant crones are also included in the later (late fourth century) collection of Meligunis-Lipara (see Bernabo-Brea and Cavalier 1965). For a brief discussion of the figurines see O’ Higgins 2003: 27-30.

¹⁰⁴ Pfisterer-Haas 1989: 71-2.

fertility. Other figurines which do not belong in the Baubo category, but have naked fat bellies, heavy breasts and a bare pubic area, are also associated with Baubo and have a similar function: their bare genitals represent fertility, while the raised hand and the ugly face probably had an apotropaic function.¹⁰⁵ According to Pfisterer-Haas (1989: 75) priestesses of Demeter were perhaps buried in the place where the figurines were found. Another scholar has claimed that the figurines express fertility and parody, which is most appropriate in the context of the ritual of the Thesmophoria.¹⁰⁶ In some of the figurines the old naked women appear to pull their mouths open and stick their tongues out: these have been considered to have had an apotropaic function.¹⁰⁷ Fertility is stressed once more in a group of old women with youthful heads, while another group of old women who appear to hold phalluses may go back to ritual practices in the worship of Demeter.¹⁰⁸ Various other figurines of old women, who are clothed and more decent, have been associated with the comic stage, due to the similarity of the faces to the comic masks.¹⁰⁹

Thus, even though we do not know what the exact use and meaning of the figurines was, their existence betrays another connection between old naked and/or indecent women and fertility rituals. I wish to draw particular attention to the figurines with the

¹⁰⁵ See Pfisterer-Haas 1989: 73.

¹⁰⁶ See Clinton 1992: 36, n. 110. He refutes Peredolskaya's interpretation (1964) that the figurines point to the Eleusinian mysteries because they reflect various episodes from the Homeric Hymn to Demeter.

¹⁰⁷ See Pfisterer-Haas 1989: 74-5.

¹⁰⁸ See Pfisterer-Haas 1989: 74-5. Cf. Deubner 1932: 66-7 for other representations of women holding φαλλοὶ in ritual contexts.

¹⁰⁹ See Bieber 1961: 45-7, 97-8; Pickard-Cambridge 1968: 214-6; Green and Handley 1995: 69.

protruding bellies, because they point most explicitly to this strange combination of old age and fertility.¹¹⁰ Although they are rotten and disfigured on the outside, they hold the promise of a new life within. What is particularly striking is that the figurines are laughing. Bakhtin (1968: 25-6) attributed this feature to the aesthetic of the grotesque that the old women represent. However, the pregnant crones are more than representations of the grotesque: they embody the incongruous hope that out of senile and decaying flesh a new life can be formed; they celebrate the power of fertility and rebut death. In this way, the figurines express the women's "uncanny reproductive powers, agrarian and human"¹¹¹ and show how maternal bodies overlap boundaries: as the grotesque bodies outgrow themselves, they become transgressive and bypass their limits. It is this innate knowledge of the women's power that gives the figurines their mocking laughter.¹¹² Since a lot of the figurines show up in women's graves, one may argue that they touched on important issues for the women in whose graves they were found; they may have shaped the women's reception of comedy and their own cultic values.¹¹³ On the other hand, for men the

¹¹⁰ Peredolskaya 1964: 17 argues for a certain figurine of an old hag with swollen belly, that the swelling represents the comic padding and not a pregnant woman.

¹¹¹ O' Higgins 2003: 29. He also argues that the pregnant crones probably represented cultic characters in recurring cultic dramas, which are now lost to us.

¹¹² Cf. O' Higgins 2003: 29 who argues that "the joke that the pregnant crones represent is the discrepancy between women's own aging and often unlovely bodies and the ever-renewing life cycles over which they keep watch".

¹¹³ See O' Higgins 2003: 29.

pregnant crones may tell a different story: they may reflect all the sentiments of fear, anxiety and loathing around the biological processes of reproduction and of aging.¹¹⁴

The evidence of the pregnant crones is important since they provide a link between ritual performance and the comic stage, as well as old age and the power of fertility. Moreover, they may illustrate the different perception, by men and by women, of the women's reproductive ability: for women it is a strong power and a lived experience; for men, it is an unknown and somewhat terrifying spectacle.¹¹⁵ This opposition also shapes female leadership in *Lysistrata*: as I have shown, the old women claim their right to leadership by exhibiting their power of fertility and reproduction, through ritual practices, while the men are warded off and discomfited by this power.

I will now move on to the second part of this study and the treatment of the young women as Hippocratic patients and I will show that the same logic is present: by assuming the role of female patients, the young women draw the men's attention to their important reproductive role and distress them greatly. In this way one can observe the unity between the two groups of women, young and old, as they both work towards the realisation of *Lysistrata*'s plan.

¹¹⁴ For the view of the grotesque body as an embodiment of the social relations of gender see Russo 1994: 61-5.

¹¹⁵ This fear and anxiety of men is also mirrored in their reaction towards female rituals, of which they were highly suspicious. Note that in Aristophanes all female plans are hatched up during such rituals: this may be due to practical reasons, since female rituals provided an excuse for women to gather together, but may also show the anxiety of men over the doings of the women.

3. YOUNG WOMEN

3.1 Aristophanes and medicine: the paradox of the sex strike

Before I proceed any further with the interpretation of the young women's role as Hippocratic patients, I must offer a short introduction to the degree of Aristophanes' acquaintance with theories of Hippocratic medicine and, thus, vindicate my comparative study, as well as the audience's knowledge of medicine. There can be no doubt concerning Aristophanes' interaction with medical discourse. Scholars have often argued that Aristophanes drew upon the technical terminology of several areas of scientific knowledge which were in process of evolution during the fifth century B.C., just as medical science. Therefore, medical terms are already attested in the comedy of Aristophanes and point to Hippocratic literature as a plausible linguistic source.¹¹⁶ These attempted Hippocratic readings of Aristophanes reflect the fact that medical science and medical terminology did not constitute a distinct or isolated category of intellectual activity in antiquity: in fact, professional physicians as well as other types of intellectuals shared certain ways of looking at the world which were deeply embedded in their culture. Thus, the relationship between the comedies of Aristophanes and the Hippocratic corpus must not be conceptualized in terms of the influence of the one on the other, but rather in terms of the broader intellectual and cultural environment that the writers (and their audiences/receivers)

¹¹⁶ Miller 1945; Byl 1990 and 2006 (in response to Willi's aphoristic statement that "there is not a single Aristophanic passage that would require advanced medical knowledge to be fully understandable" (2007: 86)); Jouanna 2000.

inhabited.¹¹⁷ In order to understand Greek literature and, in particular, Greek drama, one should attempt to reconstruct the world of the playwrights and their audiences, which, among other activities and intellectual categories, includes medical science and medical thinking. Connections can be traced between medical texts and various other contemporary works of literature, not least Aristophanic comedy. I, therefore, propose that a Hippocratic reading of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* shows that there are many rewards to be gained from such interdisciplinary approaches; for the purposes of my research especially, the medical reading sheds light on the women's claims to leadership and on the way the men perceive this uncommon initiative.

The medical reading of *Lysistrata* is triggered by the fact that the comic plot is based on a purely medical idea: I refer to the plan of the sex strike and the inconsistencies it contains. The women appear to complain about and suffer from the long absence of their husbands from home, but they then decide to withhold sex from their husbands in order to tantalize them and force them to sign a peace treaty. Yet, for this plan to be effective, men must be present at their homes. Moreover, if indeed the women are suffering from the lack of sexual intercourse with their husbands, how can we account for their refusal to follow *Lysistrata's* plan, once they have heard all about it, because they cannot do without sex? (124-44). The plan for a sex-strike against men who are away at war has occasioned much

¹¹⁷ Cf. Plato's *Symposium*, where Aristophanes and the physician Eryximachus are presented to participate in the same symposium.

comment¹¹⁸ and elicited various interpretations.¹¹⁹ The matter is simple: the women suffer from the lack of sexual intercourse and choose the prolongation of this abstention as a way to deal with it; they fight the “evil” with the same “evil”, use the cause of the problem as the solution for it. The principle is the same as that of homeopathy: that likes have an impact on likes is a fundamental Greek belief,¹²⁰ which was also utilized by the Hippocratics as an explanation for a whole range of issues, from disease causation to the growth of the human body (*Morb. Sacr.* 18.3, *Nat. Puer.* 17.1, *Morb.* 4.33.2-3). Most importantly, the homeopathic principle was put forward by the Hippocratics as a remedy: it proposed to cure a disease with the same thing which caused the disease in the first place. For example, in *Nat. Hom.* 6.3, the function of drugs in the body is explained through homeopathy: whenever a drug is introduced into the body, it first brings out whatever is particularly similar to it and then it draws it out and cleanses the rest. Thus the cure is effected through the homeopathic therapeutics of the drugs.

¹¹⁸ See, for example, Hulton 1972; Vaio 1973; Rosellini 1979; Loraux 1980; Moulton 1981; Foley 1982.

¹¹⁹ Henderson 1980: 179-80 argues: “It is the importance of domestic life that will provide the major theme of the play and the strongest case against the war. [...] Aristophanes needs to stage homes disrupted by war to motivate a plot in which homes will be disrupted by wives”. Bowie 1993 suggests an explanation for the paradox based on myths of gynaecocracy: “Aristophanes combines this motif of the “absence” of men with the motif of the disruption of normal sexual relations, and thus produces what in “realist” terms is a paradox, but in mythological and ritual terms is a standard feature: there is disruption *both* in the civic sphere (men absent from political centre) *and* in the domestic (suspension of sexual relations)”.

¹²⁰ Cf., for example, Hom. *Od.* 17.218 ὥς αἰεὶ τὸν ὅμοιον ἄγει θεός ὥς τὸν ὅμοιον and the story of Telephus, who can only be healed by Achilles’ spear, which had wounded him. For an account of the homeopathy issue in tragedy see Guardasole 2000. Note also the operation of the homeopathic principle in Greek magic (see Faraone 1991: 5-10).

In this light, fighting sexual deprivation with more sexual abstinence in *Lysistrata* is not a paradox at all: it is just an application of the homeopathic way of thinking. What is of great importance to our case is that homeopathic cure is found to be clearly at work in a number of gynaecological treatises: it was applied in cases of illnesses and problems which were believed to originate in the womb and in the female genitalia.¹²¹ Could it be then that the reason why the women apply the homeopathic remedy is because they face a similar problem, a gynaecological sickness?

Indeed, there is a strong reason why we are encouraged to think along the lines of medical pathology. In the second half of the play, where the women have already put the sex-strike into effect, *Lysistrata* leaves no doubt about the cause of their sufferings when she states that they desperately need sex: βινητιῶμεν (715). The word is a comic formation playing on the vogue for verbs in -ιάω designating maladies (like ὀφθαλμ-ιάω (ὀφθαλμία) ‘to suffer from ophthalmia, to have eye problems’, or στραγγουρ-ιάω (στραγγουρία) ‘to suffer from strangury’).¹²² What *Lysistrata* actually says is “we are sick with sexual abstinence”, “we suffer from the lack of sex or ‘fuckosis’”.¹²³ Was there then a sickness which afflicted women who long abstained from sexual intercourse?

¹²¹ These therapies entailed treating the patient’s impurity (since women genitalia were generally considered to be dirty, and birth, intercourse and menstruation were often thought as sources of pollution) with impurities (that is, ill-smelling substances and dangerous plants). For more information see Von Staden 1992: 13-20; Kosak 2004: 117-21).

¹²² Henderson 1987: 164. For verbs in -ιάω in Aristophanes denoting a state of physical or mental illness see Willi 2007: 85-6.

¹²³ So Willi 2007: 85.

Indeed, that a woman's health was closely linked to sexual intercourse and reproduction was a fundamental Hippocratic belief. By contrast with men, "women are much more at risk from too little sexual activity and their therapy often includes recommendation for intercourse, in forms similar to "let her go to her husband" rather than to use sexual pleasure"¹²⁴ in whatever way. Before I elaborate on the technical details of the women's pathologies, I wish to cite Dean Jones' remarks on the subject, which are most relevant to the situation in *Lysistrata*:

"In denying women the possibility of mastering their own sexual appetites, the Hippocratic model further justifies their subordinate position to men. Women could not rebel and refuse to grant their husbands their sexual favours because this would backfire on the women themselves, who would eventually be the more incapable of suppressing their need for their spouse".¹²⁵

What then if women did rebel against their husbands and refused to satisfy their sexual appetites? This is exactly what *Lysistrata* is about. In the light of the Hippocratic equation between female health and sexual intercourse, it is hard to consider the outcomes of such a decision out of a medical context. However, no concerted efforts have been made so far for a medical reading of *Lysistrata*, except for a few observations in passing as to the medical vocabulary in the second half of the play,¹²⁶ where men suffer from sexual deprivation. Yet, in the view of Hippocratic gynaecology, the sexual pathology is first and foremost to be traced in the women. In the comic context, sexual abstinence is presented as

¹²⁴ Dean-Jones 1992: 79.

¹²⁵ Dean-Jones 1992: 80.

¹²⁶ Miller 1945; Byl 1990; Zimmermann 1992: 517.

a conscious decision on the women's part, who exploit the medical effects of their pathological condition as a weapon against the established male order. For once, the scientific arguments, which bolstered the traditional harnessing of female fecundity to the service of the family and the community, are put to the service of the women themselves.

3.2 Women as patients

I will begin by offering a summary of the Hippocratic views about the female bodies, including the condition of the "wandering womb", its causes and its recommended treatment, and, subsequently, I will move on to show how the medical theories find their application in the case of the women in *Lysistrata*.

As briefly mentioned before, one aspect of female physiology on which all Hippocratics agreed was that the female body was moister in comparison to that of men's.¹²⁷ The evidence for this moist nature of women was the menstrual flow¹²⁸. The Hippocratics thought that the mechanism of menstruation, which allowed the blood to flow all over the woman's body and into the womb, made it possible for a woman to maintain her health.¹²⁹ However, if there was a pathological condition, the stoma ('mouth') of the womb could close and, in this case, the menses were retained and blood could not

¹²⁷ [Hp.] *Nat. Puer.* 15 (7.494.13-5). This was often attributed to women's loose flesh and their more inactive, indoor lifestyle. See Dean-Jones 1994: 56-9, 123.

¹²⁸ See Dean-Jones 1994: 55.

¹²⁹ See Dean-Jones 1994: 64, 152-3.

pass out of the womb.¹³⁰ A woman could experience such menstrual difficulties if she were not married, around the age of marriage or a little later.¹³¹ Thus, a girl should be married as soon as she reached the age of marriage,¹³² since the best treatment for the retention of the menses was sexual intercourse which would possibly lead to pregnancy and parturition.¹³³ through intercourse, the blood was heated, its passage was made easier and the mouth of the womb was kept open, so that no blood was retained; during pregnancy menses did not crowd into the womb all at once and after parturition the female body could bear the accumulation of blood more easily.¹³⁴

Apart from the retention of menses, another condition that commonly afflicted women originated in the womb itself. As women's constitution was mostly humid, this innate moisture had to be preserved under a certain balance for their bodies (and minds) to function properly. Therefore, if, for some reason, the female womb was not adequately moistened, it became dry and started to move inside the body, because it got attracted to the moister organs. This is what the Hippocratics called the "wandering womb".¹³⁵ The displacement of the womb was facilitated when the passages, which supposedly connected the womb to all parts of the body through φλέβια and φλέβες, were further widened due to

¹³⁰ See Dean-Jones 1994: 50-3, 69, 126-7.

¹³¹ [Hp.] *Virg.* 1.10-3 (8.466.2), See Dean-Jones 1994: 48-9.

¹³² [Hp.] *Virg.* 1.40-5 (8.468.23-470.1).

¹³³ There is an emphasis on pregnancy and parturition: [Hp.] *Virg.* 1.42-5 ἥν γὰρ κυήσωσιν, ὑγιέες γίνονται [...] τῶν δὲ ἡνδρωμένων γυναικῶν αἱ στεῖραι μᾶλλον ταῦτα πάσχουσιν.

¹³⁴ [Hp.] *Mul.* 1 (8.10). See Dean-Jones 1994: 126-7.

¹³⁵ [Hp.] *Mul.* 7 (8.32), 137 (8.308). The concept of the mobile womb is also found in Plato, *Tim.* 91B-D. See Carson 1990: 139, 143; King 1993: 214-22; Dean-Jones 1994: 69-77.

prolonged menstruation or lochia. Thus, the women who were more susceptible to suffering from a displaced womb were older παρθένοι, women who had once been sexually active but had ceased, and widows who had had children. For the women who suffered from a displaced womb the most successful treatment, according to the Hippocratics, was frequent sexual intercourse, which would keep the womb moist, and pregnancy, which could anchor the womb in its place.¹³⁶

Both of the female disorders we have just described shared the following common features: a) they originated in the moist nature of women, b) the cause was conceptualized as the lack of (frequent) intercourse and/or absence of pregnancy and childbirth and c) they could be treated through sexual intercourse and childbirth. To put it into more simple terms, women were humid, had to keep their humidity through sex and childbirth and, in case this did not happen regularly or in good time, they got sick.

We are, thus, faced with an interesting paradox: the Hippocratics, on the one hand, attributed negative value to the wetness of women, since they believed that this feature made women more susceptible than men to assaults upon body and mind.¹³⁷ The female mechanism that controlled moisture (and, by implication, fertility and reproduction) was in constant danger of malfunction and posed a threat to the health of a woman. On the other hand, the moisture innate in women was perceived as a defence mechanism against the disorders that afflicted women, since normal menstruation and a moist womb

¹³⁶ [Hp.] *Mul.* 2.7-15 (8.14-6), *Nat. Mul.* 3 (7.314). See King 1993: 221; Dean-Jones 1994: 71-2, 126-7.

¹³⁷ See Carson 1990: 138-9.

performed a prophylactic role. Therefore, the reproductive mechanism of the women, which caused the pathology, was at the same time able to provide the cure for it. Ironically, the women in *Lysistrata* completely disregard these medical theories: instead of enhancing their moisture and staying healthy through regular sexual contact, they decide to prolong their pathology through sexual abstention. I will, thus, move on to show how these women qualify as Hippocratic patients and, subsequently, I will provide evidence as to what their cure consists of.

When *Lysistrata* calls the women's meeting and even before all of them gather together, Calonike wants to know about the plan and asks *Lysistrata* how big it is (23 πηλίκον;). When *Lysistrata* replies that it is something big and fat (23 μέγα, 24 παχύ) Calonike wonders why the women have not gathered already, implying that she has a rather different thing in mind. Up to this point, where there is no mention of the women's husbands being away, one could perceive the comment as communicating the stereotypical sexual licentiousness of women in comedy; yet, once the absence of the husbands is stated as a painful fact, one could surmise that Calonike speaks her mind about what she actually has been missing for a long time. One could perhaps think along these lines with regards to the women's treatment of the Spartan, the Boeotian and the Corinthian women: the Athenian women feel over Lampito's breasts (83-4) and make sexual comments about the

other two women (87-9, 91).¹³⁸ Again this could be taken to signify that women resort to homoerotic actions and comments, because they are mad with sexual lust.

Lysistrata does not fail to identify Calonike's vulgar implication and assures her that she is talking about something else (25). However, in her reply, the sexual connotations persist. She keeps on referring to the plan as *πρᾶγμα*, which as a word can be used to denote the penis,¹³⁹ and reveals to the women that she conceived her plan when she "tossed herself about" in bed (26-7):

ἀλλ' ἔστιν ὑπ' ἐμοῦ πρᾶγμ' ἀνεζητημένον
πολλαῖσι τ' ἀγρυπνίαισιν ἐρριπτασμένον.

Apart from the sexual implications of this statement, the choice of the word *ἐρριπτασμένον* in this context is very interesting, since the expression *ρίπτᾶζειν ἑαυτόν* is applied to patients who cannot sleep because of their sickness and toss themselves about in bed.¹⁴⁰ Thus, from the very beginning of the women's gathering, Lysistrata uses medical language in order to describe her condition as that of a patient.

Indeed, all of the young women fit the profile of a female patient. They are all married women with children whose fathers are away because of the war. As Lysistrata puts it (99-101):

¹³⁸ See Henderson 1987: 78 and 1991: 135-6 for the sexual puns on *πεδίον* and *βληχώ*; See also Sommerstein 1990: 160. About the homoerotics of this scene see Konstan 1995: 58 who claims that "the solidarity of the women could find expression also in a sexualized form".

¹³⁹ Cf. before l.23; See also Henderson 1991: 116.

¹⁴⁰ See [Hp.] *Morb.* 2.17, 2.69, 3.1. Cf. the even more common in the Hippocratic corpus *ρίπτασμός* (*Acut.* 15.9, *Acut. [Sp.]* 7.38, *Epid.* 4.1.20, 5.1.43, 5.1.55, 7.1.10, 7.1.77, 7.1.89, *Coac.* 81.1, *Morb.* 3.15, *Alim.* 26.2, *Judic.* 10.3).

τοὺς πατέρας οὐ ποθεῖτε τοὺς τῶν παιδίων
ἐπὶ στρατιᾷς ἀπόντας; εὖ γὰρ οἶδ' ὅτι
πάσαισιν ὑμῖν ἐστὶν ἀποδημῶν ἀνὴρ.

Lysistrata uses the verb ποθέω in order to describe the longing of the wives for their husbands. As Plato (*Crat.* 420a-b) explains very clearly, πόθος denotes the desire for what is absent, which causes suffering because it cannot be fulfilled. As a feeling it is ambiguous, since it denotes the passion of a lover towards the beloved, but at the same time it conveys a feeling of emptiness and unbridgeable distance. Thus, by using the verb ποθέω, Lysistrata emphasizes the long absence of the husbands with which the women have to deal.

The women respond to Lysistrata's statement about the current domestic situation in the city by confirming the fact that their husbands are constantly away from home and they admit that they are greatly missed (102-6). Calonike¹⁴¹ reveals the aspect of their husbands that the women mostly miss, as she complements the women's complaints by crossing off the list the two other sexual outlets that could be available to a woman, namely lovers and dildos (107-10):

ἀλλ' οὐδὲ μοιχοῦ καταλέλειπται φεψάλυξ.
ἐξ οὗ γὰρ ἡμᾶς προὔδοσαν Μιλήσιοι,
οὐκ εἶδον οὐδ' ὄλισβον ὀκτωδάκτυλον,
ὃς ἦν ἂν ἡμῖν σκυτίνη 'πικουρία.

The situation, as it is, does not allow women to satisfy their sexual appetites. It becomes obvious then that the women do not just miss their husbands' presence at home, but, rather, they miss the marital sexual intercourse they enjoyed when their husbands

¹⁴¹ Or Lysistrata according to Henderson 1987.

were at home. It is at this point that Lysistrata decides to spell out her plan, which, as becomes obvious, is not presented as primarily intending to solve the problem of the war, but rather contemplates the end of the war as the only way to solve the problem of the women's sexual deprivation.¹⁴² Accordingly, later on, when Lysistrata explains to the Proboulos their motives (523-6), she says that the women decided to take action only when they heard men commenting in the streets on the lack of men in the city:

ὅτε δὴ δ' ὕμῶν ἐν ταῖσιν ὁδοῖς φανερώς ἠκούομεν ἤδη
 “οὐκ ἔστιν ἀνὴρ ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ.” —“μὰ Δί' οὐ δῆτ' <ἔσθ'>” ἕτερός τις—,
 μετὰ ταῦθ' ἡμῖν εὐθὺς ἔδοξεν σῶσαι τὴν Ἑλλάδα κοινῇ
 ταῖσι γυναιξὶν συλλεχθείσαις. ποῖ γὰρ καὶ χρῆν ἀναμεῖναι;

It is the lack of men and the decreasing prospects of marriage, sex and procreation that make the women revolt and seize power in the city. Lysistrata herself describes the plan as a μηχανή which could put an end to their misfortunes (110-1). The women enthusiastically agree to follow such a plan (111-8).

The circumstances then are such as to cause those symptoms that Hippocratic gynaecology seeks to treat: the women are married with children, but their husbands have been away for a long time and they are clearly shown to suffer from sexual abstinence. To make matters worse, according to Loraux's interpretation, the women, from the moment

¹⁴² See Konstan 1995: 47 “The women's primary motive for ending the hostilities between the Athenian and Spartan alliances is sex - they long for their husbands, who are endlessly away on distant military campaigns (99-112) - and the device Lysistrata hits upon to compel the men to reach an accord is a sex strike, the stratagem for which the comedy is best remembered”.

that they decide to seize the Acropolis, also opt to make themselves young girls once again: in order to be heard by men, they regress to the state of παρθένος.

It is a paradoxical strategy, and typical of Aristophanes (in order to make Demos young again, was it not ancient Athens that he was given for a home in the *Knights*?). But most of all, it is a very feminine strategy [...] Paradoxes of femininity: in order to renew marriage, the plan is to secede and to become a *parthenos* once again—in a word, to celebrate something like a “Thesmophoria for young girls”. The woman becomes young again in order to renew her bond with the city, and to place herself under the authority of Athena. But also, doubtless to recover all the seductive allure of a young girl and thus entice her husband.¹⁴³

To support her argument, Loraux cites the term ἀταυρώτη in the women’s oath (217), which she explains as pure and chaste like a virgin, abstaining from the male sexual organ, the ταύρος. She finds more proof in the words of the old women’s chorus, who speak not just for themselves but on behalf of the young women as well: the chorus refer to the cults of young girls (638-47), which, as we have seen, prepare them for their roles as wives and mothers, as well as to the enticements they jokingly offer to men (1189-90 στρωμάτων δὲ ποικίλων καὶ χλανιδίων καὶ ξυστίδων καὶ χρυσίων), which also happen to be “wedding gifts for the young girl who will soon take the step into marriage, but they are also the garments of the virgins of the Acropolis”.¹⁴⁴ In this way, according to Loraux, when the women vote to follow the plan of the sex strike, not only do they choose to remain sexually inactive even longer, but also go back several stages in their sexual life, to a time when they had not even initiated it: they become παρθένοι. If we accept Loraux’s interpretation, there

¹⁴³ Loraux 1993: 166.

¹⁴⁴ Loraux 1993: 170.

is an extra reason for suspecting that the women might suffer from the wandering womb symptom, since, while it is true that the Hippocratic corpus includes among the women who are more susceptible to suffer from this disease those who are married with children, but do not have frequent sexual intercourse,¹⁴⁵ it also places much emphasis on women who are unmarried and have not ever given birth ([Hp.] *Mul.* 2 (8.14) ἐπὴν οὖν **γυναικὶ ἀτόκῳ** ἐούσῃ **κρυφθῇ τὰ ἐπιμήνια** καὶ μὴ δύνηται ὁδὸν ἔξω εὐρεῖν, νοῦσος γίνεται, *Nat. Mul.* 3.3 (7.314) γίνεται δὲ τὸ τοιοῦτον πάθος **παρθένοισι μάλιστα παλαιήσιν ἐούσῃσι**, *Virg.* 1 (8.466.10-2) αἱ δὲ **παρθένοι**, ὁκόσῃσιν ὥρῃ γάμου, **παρὰνδρούμεναι**, τοῦτο μᾶλλον πάσχουσιν ἅμα τῇ καθόδῳ τῶν ἐπιμηνίων, πρότερον οὐ μάλα ταῦτα κακοπαθεύουσαι.). Thus, if indeed the young women can be perceived as re-experiencing the state of παρθενία, they can also be considered to suffer from the afflictions that fall upon the παρθένοι.

Indeed, the women in *Lysistrata* exhibit some of the side-effects of sexual deprivation, not so much the physical as the mental ones:¹⁴⁶ according to Hippocratic medicine, women who suffered from retained menses experienced loss of reason¹⁴⁷ and at *Mul.* 2.182 (8.364.14-5) a woman is pictured as suffering from anxiety, depression and despair because, supposedly, she has black bile in her womb. Although individuals of both

¹⁴⁵ See, for example, [Hp.] *Nat. Mul.* 3.3 (7.314) γίνεται δὲ τὸ τοιοῦτον πάθος [...] καὶ **χῆρσιν, αἱ νέαι ἐοῦσαι καὶ τοκήσσαι χηρεύουσιν**, *Mul.* 2.7 (8.14) ἦν [...] **μὴ μίσηται ἢ γυνὴ τῷ ἀνδρὶ**, καὶ κενωθῇ ἡ κοιλία μᾶλλον τοῦ καιροῦ ὑπὸ τευ παθήματος, στρέφονται αἱ μήτραι.

¹⁴⁶ As Lefkowitz 1981: 16-7 argues, most female mental problems were attributed to sexual problems.

¹⁴⁷ [Hp.] *Virg.* 1.25-35 (8.468) ἐκ δὲ τῆς καρδίας καὶ τῶν φρενῶν βραδέως παλιρροεῖ ἐπικάρσαι γὰρ αἱ φλέβες καὶ ὁ τόπος ἐπίκαιρος ἔς τε **παραφροσύνην** καὶ **μανίην** ἔτοιμος. Ὅκταν δὲ πληρωθῶσι ταῦτα τὰ μέρα, καὶ φρὶκη ξὺν πυρετῷ ἀναΐσσει **πλανήτης**. [...] **καὶ κελεύουσιν ἄλλεσθαι καὶ καταπίπτειν ἐς τὰ φρέατα καὶ ἄγχεσθαι**, ἅτε ἀμείνονά τε ἔοντα καὶ χρεῖην ἔχοντα παντοίην.

sexes could be subject to bouts of delirium, and turn violent due to excess of black bile,¹⁴⁸ women were at greater risk, because the menses could turn them savage.¹⁴⁹ Another interesting side-effect of sexual abstention was the masculinization of women. There are two cases recorded in the *Epidemics*¹⁵⁰ of women who grew hairier and whose voices grew deeper because their husbands left them and their menses stopped.¹⁵¹

That wild and violent acts and feelings were attributed to women who did not have regular sexual intercourse is not surprising, if one takes into account the social order in classical Greece and the implications of marriage, especially for women. Women before marriage were perceived to be in a wild, uncultivated state and had to be harnessed and tamed by their husbands.¹⁵² A common metaphor for a girl's upbringing, which ended up with her marriage, was the taming of a filly,¹⁵³ while the sexual act in the context of marriage was perceived as an ἔργον (Xen. *Mem.* 2.1.11), sometimes specified as that of

¹⁴⁸ [Hp.] *Prorrh.* 1.123 (5.552.5-554.1).

¹⁴⁹ See Dean-Jones 1994: 133.

¹⁵⁰ [Hp.] *Epid.* 6.8.32 (5.356).

¹⁵¹ Aristotle also connects the suppression of menses with the development of masculine traits in women (GA 746b27-9, 747a-3, HA 518a33-5). See Dean-Jones 1994: 134.

¹⁵² In [Xen]. *Oik.* 7.10 the παρθένος needs to be 'tamed' (ἐτετιθάσεντο) before a man can even carry on a conversation with her.

¹⁵³ In Eur. *Hipp.* 545-53, the unwed Iole (πῶλον ἄζυγα λέκτρων) who is yoked (ζεύξασ') for marriage by Aphrodite is likened to a footloose Naiad or a Bacchant; cf. Soph. *Tr.* 536 where Iole is ἐζευγμένην and lines 31-3, where Deianeira compares Heracles to a farmer who ploughs a field that he visits only at the time of sowing and the time of harvest. Cf. Soph. *Ant.* 477-8. See also Loraux 1987: 36; Calame 1977: 411-20, 330-3; King 1998: 77. Cf. also the representations on vases of young ephebes hunting the fleeing girl (see Sourvinou-Inwood 1991: 25-143). Bowie 1993: 179 notes that "many of the motifs that are found on these vases are to be encountered in Pi. *Py.* 9 with its account of Apollo's marriage to the wild girl Cyrene".

sowing or ploughing.¹⁵⁴ By means of marital sex, “the Greek husband domesticates his wild bride and, just as he does for his land and the beasts on it, brings to fruition what would otherwise remain savage and unproductive”.¹⁵⁵ Another indication of the perceived wildness of the παρθένοι is the rituals at Brauron, where Athenian girls, as already mentioned, by acting the bear for Artemis, made their transition from a wild to a civilized state, from virgins and young women to sexually mature women, ready for marriage.¹⁵⁶

Marriage, then, features as the only solution for a woman in order to escape from her wild state and be introduced to civilized life.¹⁵⁷ Vice versa, to renounce marital life altogether means to detain oneself in a primitive state of wildness. Inasmuch as sexual intercourse was unacceptable, at least for respectable citizen women, out of the context of marriage, one can substitute (marital) sex for marriage in the above. It suffices to cite some examples of women who acquire wild features due to the postponement of marriage or sexual intercourse: Atalante’s refusal to marry parallels not only her status as a hunter, but also her flight into the wild: according to Theognis (1289-93) she flees the house of her father and “goes off into the lofty peaks of mountains, shunning lovely marriage, golden

¹⁵⁴ Cf. the common betrothal formula in Menander γνησίων παίδων ἐπ’ ἀρότρῳ (as in *Perik.* 435); Clem. Al. *Strom.* 2.23 γάμος μὲν οὖν ἐστι σύνοδος ἀνδρὸς καὶ γυναικὸς ἢ πρώτη κατὰ νόμον ἐπὶ γνησίων τέκνων σπορά. Cf. Ar. *Eccl.* 611 σκαλαθῦραι, dig.

¹⁵⁵ Carson 1990: 149. For the women’s preparation for marriage see also Goff 2004: 98.

¹⁵⁶ See Brelich 1969: 240-90; Burkert 1985: 263; Simon 1983: 83-4; Vidal-Naquet 1981a: 178-80. For a more detailed interpretation see Sourvinou-Inwood 1988; Goff 2004: 105-13; Marinatos 2002; Calame 2002.

¹⁵⁷ See Segal 1981: 31-6 and 1986: 71-2; Detienne 1994: xiv-xxv and xxxix (intr.) and, on the opposition in the marriage ritual between the wild and civilized life, see 116-17. Cf. Carson 1990: 153 “the wildness of women, then, is a notion that cooperates with the work/play distinction to recommend marriage as the context wherein a female may transform savagery, sterility and uselessness into a fruitful *kosmos* of life[...] The bride is fortunate to escape her wilderness of barren choices”.

Aphrodite's gifts".¹⁵⁸ Anacreon likens a young woman to a Thracian filly, who has not yet tasted the bit, and envisages himself applying it on her and taming her (PMG 417);¹⁵⁹ the daughters of Proetus in ode eleven of Bacchylides, who utter a boastful remark in Hera's shrine, are presented as unyoked maidens, not fully civilized, and are punished by Hera to wander in the mountains. The narrative of the ode expresses the marginality of the unmarried girls in the familial, spatial and biological codes.¹⁶⁰ The Amazons, the women who live out of marriage, are also typically portrayed as savage and wild.¹⁶¹ Likewise, the Danaids, who flee from marriage, are compared by the king of Argos to the Amazons, "the

¹⁵⁸ Segal 1981: 31. The original is:

ἔργ' ἀτέλεστα τέλει
πατρός νοσφισθεῖσα δόμων ξανθὴ Ἀταλάντη·
ᾧχετο δ' ὑψηλὰς εἰς κορυφὰς ὀρέων
φεύγουσ' ἡμερόεντα γάμον, χρυσῆς Ἀφροδίτης
δῶρα τέλος δ' ἔγνω καὶ μάλ' ἀναινομένη.

¹⁵⁹ πῶλε Θρηκίη, τί δή με
λοξὸν ὄμμασι βλέπουσα
νηλέως φεύγεις, δοκεῖς δέ
μ' οὐδὲν εἰδέναι σοφόν;
ἴσθι τοι, καλῶς μὲν ἄν τοι
τὸν χαλινὸν ἐμβάλοιμι,
ἡνίας δ' ἔχων στρέφοιμί
σ' ἀμφὶ τέρματα δρόμου·
νῦν δὲ λειμῶνάς τε βόσκειαι
κοῦφά τε σκιρτῶσα παίζεις,
δεξιὸν γὰρ ἵπποπείρην
οὐκ ἔχεις ἐπεμβάτην.

¹⁶⁰ See Segal 1981: 35-6 "decoded, the message of this myth is a redundant form of the statement that women at this transitional point between girlhood and sexual maturity are dangerous and need enclosure in domestic space. Only through the special help of gods and the patient efforts of their father can the unyoked females be brought from bestiality into the civilized space of house and polis".

¹⁶¹ Diodorus (3.52ff.) describes the Amazon society as reversing aspects of normal Greek life. In Herodotus (4.110-7), the Amazons appear more civilized: although they refuse to spin and weave, they take Scythians as their husbands. The concession of Amazons to marriage may explain their civility in Herodotus' account. Cf. Hom. *Il.* 3.189 Ἀμαζόνες ἀντιάνειραι, 6. 186 Ἀμαζόνες ἀντιάνειραι, A. *Pr.* 723-4 ἔνθ' Ἀμαζόνων στρατὸν/ἤξεις στυγάνορ'. Cf. Bowie 1993: 184, who notes that the myth of the defeat of the Amazons by Theseus represented the victory of cosmos over chaos, civilization over savagery.

unwed women who devour raw flesh” (Aesch. *Supp.* 287 τὰς ἀνάνδρους κρεοβότους τ’ Ἀμαζόνας). The Lemnian women (A.R. *Arg.* 1.636) are a very similar case: due to their state of anti-marriage, they are assimilated to the Thyiades who devour raw flesh.¹⁶² Another example, which best illustrates the view that women who are in desperate need for sex display an affinity with the wilds, is Phaedra. Phaedra’s husband has been away for a long time and, during his absence she is shown to suffer both physically (Eur. *Hipp.* 198-202) and mentally: she speaks unintelligible words, as if she were insane (212-4, 232) and expresses the desire to go hunting on the mountains, a desire, that is, for a wild life (215-22). Although her longing of Hippolytus may explain her sudden craving for hunting, nonetheless, one could argue that this desire, along with her other sufferings, are caused by the prolonged postponement of sexual intercourse with her husband.¹⁶³

In the light of this evidence, it is not surprising that the young women in *Lysistrata*, who have lived for a long time out of the context of marriage (or in an interrupted state of marriage), reveal a wild, violent and almost masculine disposition, not unlike the female patients in the medical texts and the unwed women described above. It is also very important that the women’s nature is perceived as savage and is, thus, problematized by the *men* in the play – and, as one may imagine, also by the men in the audience. Just as the hermeneutic stance that the Hippocratic texts adopt is shaped by the preconceptions and the prejudices of their male writers against women, likewise, in Aristophanes, it is the men

¹⁶² See Detienne 1994: 91-2.

¹⁶³ See Lefkowitz 1981: 16-23.

who find fault with the women. The women's decision to get out of their houses, where they normally belong, and seize the acropolis, makes them appear dangerously insane in the eyes of the men. By escaping the confines of the household, the women are shown to defy their feminine nature and assume a man's activities. As Henderson (1980: 178) notes "to be a real woman now requires that the wives act like men". The men find the women's deeds hard to believe (256 ἄελπτ(α)) and call their actions θράσος (318) and ὕβρις (399, 400 ὕβρίκασι, 425 ὕβρεως). Although the word ὕβρις has a wide range of meanings, in comedy ὕβριζειν means "be virile" or "treat roughly during the sexual act".¹⁶⁴ In this light, the women as ὕβρισταί exhibit both virility and lust.¹⁶⁵

The most decisive evidence for the way the men view the young women in *Lysistrata* is their suggestion that they are very much alike with two groups of women, which I singled out before as examples of savagery: the Lemnian women and the Amazons.¹⁶⁶ In line 300, the men call the fire they carry in order to burn the women a "Lemnian fire" (κᾶστιν

¹⁶⁴ Accordingly, at Eub. 67.9 ὕβρις means "crude lust" and at Pi. P. 10.36 ὕβριν ὀρθίαν κνωδάλων is the erect phallus (see Henderson 1991: 159). Cf. E. Ba. 743-4 for the hubris of the bull, which Cairns (1996: 23) sees as its exuberant sexual energy, being the most "masculine" of all animals. Cf. also Xenophon, Cyr. vii 5.62-3, where castration cures the hubris of horses, which cease to bite, bulls, which cease to disobey, and dogs, which don't desert their masters anymore. See also Cairns 1996: 24 "we do not have to look far to discover why it is that castration should be felt to cure hybris - there is clearly a link between the powerful forces of masculinity and a headstrong spirit which values self over others and rejects external restraint".

¹⁶⁵ For uses of ὕβρις in the sense of sexual degradation, see Aesch. 1.29,87, Dem. 19.309. See also Dover 1978: 34-9, esp. 36: "a man of strong sexual appetites, more shameless, importunate and headstrong in pursuit of their satisfaction than society regarded was acceptable was *hubristēs*"; Cairns 1996: 24 "hybris is envisaged as a force which grows and wells up within the organism, a force which has its origins in the energy-giving properties of food or in the inherent fertility or fecundity of the subject itself, and which eventually grows so powerful that it can be contained no longer and breaks out".

¹⁶⁶ For these two groups as models for the women in *Lysistrata* and the structural similarities between the myth of the Lemnian women and the comic play see Bowie 1984 and 1993: 184-95; Martin 1987.

γε Λήμνιον τὸ πῦρ τοῦτο πάσῃ μηχανῇ), while in lines 676-9, they attempt to castigate the women's actions by comparing them to the Amazons' attack on the city. The most obvious point of the two comparisons is the reversal of the normal situation (women in charge of men) and the perceived violence of the women against the men. However, the likeness between these women and the women in *Lysistrata* may illustrate a more important point: the young women in *Lysistrata*, just like their mythical counterparts, are perceived as savage and wild, because they decide to live on their own, without men, and outside the confinements of the οἶκος. In this sense, the lack of marital sexual intercourse renders them "sick" in the eyes of the men. This interpretation is reinforced by the sexual innuendos that the words of the men carry: their description of the Amazons sitting on their horses (679) follows naturally their reference to the "equestrian" position the women occupy during sexual intercourse (677 ἵππικώτατον γάρ ἐστι χρῆμα κάποχον γυνή); the same coital position is implied by the verbs ναυμαχεῖν and πλεῖν earlier on (675).¹⁶⁷ Thus, when comparing the young women to the Amazons, the old men have the female sexual appetite in mind, which is hard to be managed and controlled (678 οὐκ ἂν ἀπολίσθοι τρέχοντος) and, in this case, has turned against men.

The violence of the young women, which supposedly associates them with the Amazons and the Lemnian women, is displayed in the way they treat the magistrate. Lysistrata is the first to warn the magistrate of retaliation if the archer so much as touches

¹⁶⁷ Cf. *Lys.* 59-60, *Ve.* 502, *Pax* 900ff., *Eup.* fr. 268, *Anaxil.* fr. 22. l. 10. See also Henderson 1987: 160; Sommerstein 1990: 192-3.

her (435-6 εἰ τάρρα νῆ τὴν Ἄρτεμιν τὴν χεῖρά μοι/ἄκραν προσοίσει, δημόσιος ὧν κλαύσεται) and it is her lead that the old women follow when threatening the Proboulos (439-40, 443-4, 447-8). She further warns the magistrate that inside the Propylaia (454 ἔνδον) there are four armed troops ready to fight, which, we may well infer, consist of the young women, who have locked themselves up into the Acropolis.¹⁶⁸ Indeed, when Lysistrata summons her helpers from inside (456 ἔνδοθεν), they attack the men most violently (459-60 οὐχ ἔλξετ', οὐ παίησετ', οὐκ ἀράξετε;/οὐ λοιδορήσετ', οὐκ ἀναισχυντήσετε;); Lysistrata comments on this violence by stating that the women have a lot of χολή in them (464-5, cf. 691 ὑπερχολῶ). At this point, one may recall that women were more prone than men to suffer from an excess of black bile, which could turn them savage.¹⁶⁹

Indeed, the men seem to believe that the women have an affinity with the wilds, since they call them beasts and monsters¹⁷⁰ (468 θηρίοις, 476 κνωδάλοις), while the Proboulos sees them as the worshippers of orgiastic cults¹⁷¹ (τυμπανισμός (387), πυκνοί Σαβάζιοι (388)). The savage behaviour of the women is strongly related to a lack of sexual restraint, since, when the Proboulos enters the stage, he conflates, in his description of the women, the aforementioned orgiastic cults with that of the Adonia; he perceives the sight

¹⁶⁸ The ἔνδον(454) and ἔνδοθεν (456) show that Lysistrata speaks about the young women who occupy the Acropolis and not the old helpers. See Henderson 1987: 123 “the occupying women defend themselves just as had the chorus of old women”.

¹⁶⁹ See Dean-Jones 1994: 133.

¹⁷⁰ Since it is the young women who have just attacked the men, the men’s characterizations refer both to the young women and the old ones: the former attack violently the Proboulos and the archers, while the latter give them a bath.

¹⁷¹ On maenads and *tumpana*, see Dodds 1940. On the fusion of various ecstatic cults by the Proboulos see Reitzammer 2008: 289-90.

of women seizing the Acropolis as reminiscent of their celebration of Adonia at a crucial political moment in the past, just before the Sicilian expedition (387-98). In doing so, the Proboulos does not merely identify the women's cries (both in the past and at present) with a bad omen for the city;¹⁷² most importantly, he wants to point out that all the women care about is sexual pleasure: τρυφή (387), Ἀδωνιασμός (388) and ἀκολαστάσματα (398), all are words which carry sexual connotations.¹⁷³ In this light, the Proboulos seems to attribute the women's behaviour to their innate wantonness and inclination to mischief. This impression is reinforced by his subsequent complaint about the way men encourage the lewdness of their wives (403-19): what he sees is a group of misbehaved, sexually depraved (or deprived) women.

The women's sufferings appear to be great also in the second half of the play, as the strike starts to bite the women, and the signs of pathology are once more evident. Lysistrata signals an alarm: the women, she says, are trying to break off the strike by making up excuses in order to go home to their husbands, since they find it too hard to hold up without sex any longer. What is most interesting is that Lysistrata voices her complaint in a medical discourse: the women's deeds do not simply disappoint or annoy her; they make her ἀθυμεῖν (709). The word is not attested anywhere else in Old Comedy, but is often found in various forms in the Hippocratic corpus. In three instances ἀθυμία is

¹⁷² On the popular mood of scapegoating after the Sicilian expedition see Henderson 1987: 119.

¹⁷³ About the meanings of τρυφή see Kurke 1992: 105. See also Henderson 1987: 118; Reitzammer 2008: 288-9. According to Detienne's analysis (1994), the Adonia were associated with the celebration of seduction and short-lived sexual pleasure.

used to describe one of the side-effects of women who suffer from a gynaecological condition, such as the wandering womb or bile-coloured menses.¹⁷⁴ As it is, *Lysistrata* uses this uncommon word in Old Comedy in order to point out once more the medical condition of her fellow conspirators. She leaves no doubt about the cause of their sufferings when she concludes, with the certainty of a doctor who makes a diagnosis, that they desperately need sex: βινητιῶμεν (715). The women are sick and they are shown to suffer from this sickness on stage; hence their attempts to escape, which are acted out immediately after *Lysistrata*'s observations (728-80).

The attempts of the women to escape once more bring to the fore the relation between sexual abstinence and issues of fertility and productivity. The series of the scenes where women endeavour to “defect” are all loaded with sexual innuendos only to culminate in the delivery of a helmet by one of the women. *Lysistrata* begins with complaints about what has happened (720-5): she caught one of the women picking open a hole by the grotto of Pan and she pulled another one by the hair as she planned to fly to Orsilocho's house on a sparrow. The opening of the hole creates a pretty transparent sexual image; the sparrow is Aphrodite's bird, while the name of Orsilocho is probably chosen deliberately for its phallic associations.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁴ *Mul.* 8.23, 154.6; *Virg.* 1.9.

¹⁷⁵ See Henderson 1987: 165. The scholia suggest that Orsilocho was a πορνοβοσκός and a μοιχός and Bowie 1993: 199 follows this interpretation.

After Lysistrata's account of the attempted desertions, three more women appear on stage, each with an excuse to go home: one wishes to spread fleeces on a bed and another wants to strip her flax (728-41).¹⁷⁶ Both are transparently sexual images.¹⁷⁷ The most important clue, however, comes from the third woman: she claims to be pregnant, but she carries not a child, but the helmet of Athena, to which she "gives birth" on stage (743-57). This sequence of events allows us to make some suggestions: it is important that the image of sex leads to that of pregnancy and parturition. It could be that the women contemplate possible therapies for their condition, parturition being the most effective. On the other hand, the production of a helmet, not a baby, could signify the danger of sterility that the war creates and that the women wish to emphasize.¹⁷⁸

Even the oracle that Lysistrata produces in order to instil courage among the women is suggestive of the way one may perceive their situation: Lysistrata describes the young women as the swallows who flee the hoopoe's pursuit¹⁷⁹ (770-1 ἀλλ' ὁπότεν πτήξωσι

¹⁷⁶ What is most important is that in all of the attempted escapes features the word home (724-5 πάσας τε προφάσεις ὥστ' ἀπελθεῖν οἴκαδε / ἔλκουσιν, 728 οἴκαδ' ἐλθεῖν βούλομαι, 735-6 τάλαιν' ἐγώ, τάλαινα τῆς ἀμοργίδος, / ἦν ἄλοπον οἴκοι καταλέλοιφα). Even in their invented excuses the women still reveal their desire to go home to their husbands – and not relieve their sexual urges otherwise. The scene becomes even more comical if we bring to mind other scenes, like the one described in Ar. *Thesm.* 481-9, where women are shown to make up various excuses in order to go out of the house (or, in the case of the adulterous wife in Lysias 1, even stay in the house) and cheat on their husbands with their lovers. Ironically, the women in *Lysistrata* adopt a similar behaviour in order to go home and have sex with their husbands.

¹⁷⁷ See Henderson 1987: 165-6.

¹⁷⁸ See Bowie 1993: 199.

¹⁷⁹ This description is reminiscent of the story of the Thracian king Tereus, who raped the sister of his wife, Philomela, and was finally transformed into a hoopoe, whereas Philomela into a swallow. I deal with this story in detail in the third chapter on *Birds*. The metamorphosis was announced on stage in Sophocles' *Tereus* (F 581) and it may have been dramatized. Lysistrata here transcribes the actual metamorphosis into a most telling metaphor.

χελιδόνες εἰς ἓνα χῶρον, / τοὺς ἔποπας φεύγουσαι, ἀπόσχωνταί τε φαλήτων...). In this way, the women are once more likened to wild, untamed παρθένοι, which are in need of sexual intercourse (or restoration of their marital status) in order to be effectively cured.

I have demonstrated that the young women in *Lysistrata* can be viewed as suffering from a sickness caused by abstention from sexual intercourse, which they attempt to cure, based on a homeopathic model, through more sexual abstinence. By applying this homeopathic remedy, the women effectively perpetuate the disruption of their marital life and succeed in transmitting their “disease” to their husbands: we will see that men, as soon as the sex strike is put into effect, are also portrayed as patients, who suffer from the lack of sexual intercourse and are in desperate need of their wives. In this way, women manage to inflict on their husbands a similar pain to the one they are suffering from and force them to notice the importance of their domestic role as wives and mothers.

3.3 Men as patients: the failure of the phallus

After the women’s unsuccessful attempts at escaping, a man, Kinesias, shows up on stage looking for his wife, Myrrhine. Kinesias’ appearance is indicative of the success of the women’s plan, since he is in bad shape. Kinesias suffers from the lack of sex, but he is not merely shown to crave sex or complain about the lack of it: rather, his state is more severe and is described in medical terms. Just as the women before, Kinesias is also a patient, afflicted by the same “disease”, the lack of sex: he is παραπεληγμένος (831) and is shown

to suffer from convulsions (845-6 οἷος ὁ σπασμός μ' ἔχει/χῶ τέτανος). Derivatives of the verb πλήσσω are very common in medical language, such as the word παράπληκτος which is common in the Hippocratic corpus as a word denoting paralysis.¹⁸⁰ In addition, both of the words σπασμός and τέτανος, although they are very rare in contemporary literature, and especially in poetry,¹⁸¹ are commonly found in the Hippocratic corpus.¹⁸² It is noteworthy that Lysistrata also uses the word τέτανος, when she anticipates the sufferings their sex strike will inflict upon the men (553 κᾶτ' ἐντέξῃ τέτανον τερπνὸν τοῖς ἀνδράσι καὶ ῥοπαλισμούς). Moreover, when Myrrhine abandons Kinesias without satisfying his sexual desire, the men in the chorus use medical vocabulary in order to express their pity about his condition (962 ποῖος γὰρ <ἔτ'> ἄν νέφρος ἀντίσχοι). As Henderson (1987: 183) notes, the verb ἀντέχειν is used in *De Fracturis* of the bodily organs in the sense “withstand”, as here with νέφρος, a word which appears, with a few exceptions, only in medical contexts, especially in the singular. Kinesias responds accordingly: he suffers from fresh pain (968 ὦ Ζεῦ, δεινῶν ἀντισπασμῶν). The word ἀντισπασμός probably indicates that the previous σπασμός is now even more intense.

¹⁸⁰ [Hr.] *Aēr.* 10. Cf. also παραπληγία in *Epid.* 1.2.8, 2.2.24, 2.3.1, παραπληγικοί in *Epid.* 6.7.1 and παραπληκτικὸν τρόπον, which is interestingly accompanied by convulsions, just as in our case: *Epid.* 1.3.13 δεξιὴν χεῖρα παρελύθη μετὰ σπασμοῦ, παραπληκτικὸν τρόπον and *Prorrh.* 1.118 τὰ ἐξ ὀσφύος ἐς τράχηλον καὶ κεφαλὴν ἀναδιδόντα, παραλύσαντα παραπληκτικὸν τρόπον, σπασμῶδεα, παρακρουστικά.

¹⁸¹ Τέτανος is found in Plato (*Ti.* 84e) and Aristotle (*HA*604b4); σπασμός in Herodotus (4.187) and Thucydides (2.49), and also in Sophocles *Tr.* 805, 1082, under Hippocratic influence.

¹⁸² For instance, *Aph.* 2.26, 5.25, 7.13. See Miller 1945: 83.

In the scene that follows the men gather together and complain about their sufferings. Their gathering reminds us of the women's secret assembly at the beginning of the play: then it was the women who were shown to suffer from their disease; now, it is the men's turn to suffer accordingly. To make this resemblance even more evident, the men's complaints are voiced in medical terms:

987-8

ἢ βουβωνιάς

ὑπὸ τῆς ὁδοῦ;

1078-9

βαβαί· **νενεύρωται** μὲν ἤδ' <ή> συμφορὰ

δαινῶς **τεθερμῶσθαί** τε χεῖρον φαίνεται.

The verb βουβωνιάω comes from βουβών, which ordinarily signifies the groin. However, here it is most probably coined from the usage in medicine of βουβών in the sense of swollen gland, as illustrated in *Hp. Aph.* 4.55. Moreover, the verb falls under a category of verbs, coined probably by Aristophanes himself, which end in -ᾶν or -ιᾶν and are used to signify disease or a sickly condition.¹⁸³ The two other verbs also come from a medical background. The meaning is clear: the men are afflicted as by an inflamed limb.¹⁸⁴ The impression of the disease is reaffirmed by the use of words meaning sickness (1085 νοσήματος, 1088 νόσος) and the repetition of the word σπασμός (1089). Even more suggestively, the constantly erect phallus is not proudly exhibited as a sign of manliness

¹⁸³ Cf. 472 κυλοιδιᾶν, 715 βινητιῶμεν. For these verbs see Rutherford 1881: 153; Miller 1945: 76; Willi 2007: 85-6.

¹⁸⁴ See Henderson 1987: 193.

and virility, as commonly happens in the comic context: in every extant play before *Lysistrata* (except for *Clouds*) the phallus marks the male protagonist's vigour and final triumph and becomes almost a validation of his power and new political order.¹⁸⁵ In such contexts the large, erect phallus of the comic hero takes on positive valences and in no way can be interpreted as laughable.¹⁸⁶ Yet, in *Lysistrata*, the men are ashamed of their erect phalluses and try to hide them under their clothes or explain them away (985-94, 1082-5). The symbol of male pride in its full vigour must now be covered because it is a κακόν, a terrible disease which tortures men and drives them crazy.¹⁸⁷ Even worse, not only are the men anxious about their erections, they are also afraid of impending castration: the chorus of the old men advises the newcomers to cover their phalluses with their clothes, lest they fall victims to castration (1093-4 εἰ σωφρονεῖτε, θαῖμάτια λήψεσθ',/ὅπως τῶν Ἑρμοκοπιδῶν μή τις ὑμᾶς ὄψεται); the men hurriedly agree and rush to cover themselves up (1096 φέρε τὸ Φέσθος ἀμβαλώμεθα). This warning coming from the old men is particularly ironic, since in the preceding scenes (614ff.) they attempted to exhibit their manliness and superiority over the women by removing their clothes. In this sense, the act of covering up underlines once more the failure of the men to assert their position and indicates the bad state they find themselves in. The irony of the re-dressing is also felt in the scene where the old

¹⁸⁵ See *Ach.* 787, 1216-21, *Eq.* 1391-3, *V.* 1343-4, *Pax* 1351-2, *Av.* 1253-6, 1759-62. Cf. *Th.* 643-8, where the Inlaw most disgracefully hides his phallus, so that he appears a proper woman. In most of the aforementioned examples the state of the phallus may well have been visible to the audience. See Stehle 2002: 374-6.

¹⁸⁶ See Foley 2000: 297.

¹⁸⁷ The erect phallus takes on a negative valour: 988 ἀλέός, 1002 μογίομες, 1003 ἐπικεκύφαμες, 1090 ἐπιτετρίμμεθα, 1097 αἰσχρά γ' ἐπάθομεν, 1098 δεινά γ' αὖ πεπόνθαμες.

women, in their attempt to be reconciled with the old men, approach them and dress them, saying that they look stupid without their garments on (1019-21 νῦν δ' οὖν οὐ σε περιόψομαι/γυμνὸν ὄνθ' οὕτως. ὄρα γὰρ ὡς καταγέλαστος εἶ/ἀλλὰ τὴν ἐξωμίδ' ἐνδύσω σε προσιοῦς' ἐγώ). The men can only apologize for their behaviour (1023 ἀλλ' ὑπ' ὀργῆς γὰρ πονηρᾶς καὶ τότε' ἀπέδυν ἐγώ).¹⁸⁸ Later on, the men ambassadors will also let the women drag them by their erect phalluses (1119-21), so that the final reconciliations be effected, a most insulting gesture.¹⁸⁹

Even more suggestive is the place that the manifestation of the men's side-effects occupies in the text. Kinesias appears on stage right after we have caught a glimpse of the women's illness, so that the association between the two conditions is unmistakable. Men are shown to suffer as a result of their wives' condition. They explicitly point out as the cause of their disease the women's vaginas (998-1001):

οὐκ, ἀλλ' ἄρξε μέν, οἶῶ, Λαμπιτώ,
 ἔπειτα τᾷλλαι ταὶ κατὰ Σπάρταν ἀμᾶ
 γυναιῖκες ἄπερ ἀπὸ μιᾶς ὑσπλαγίδος
 ἀπηλάάν τὼς ἄνδρας ἀπὸ τῶν ὑσάκων¹⁹⁰

Thus, as the women's biological malfunction is felt by men and they experience a pain similar to the women's pain, they are forced to acknowledge the women's rights and, finally, reconsider their decisions about the war.

¹⁸⁸ See Sommerstein 2009: 240-2.

¹⁸⁹ Cf. *Eq.* 771-2, *Eccl.* 1019-20, where the gesture of being dragged by the penis is equally degrading for the man who submits to it. By contrast, in *Ach.* 1216 Dicaeopolis most happily welcomes and invites the gesture by his female companions.

¹⁹⁰ For the meaning of this word as female genitals see Henderson 1987: 186.

3.4 Illness as a metaphor

The implications of the women's sickness, the representation of men as patients and the extended medical vocabulary, especially in the second half of the play, points to the fact that the city itself is the great patient and is in need of a treatment. Aristophanes uses the sickness both of men and women as a metaphor for the bad situation in the city, which has been come about because of the war. Sexual relations in the city are problematic: young men are scarce, since they are away at war or, even worse, have been killed (588-90), while young women are deprived of their men or cannot get married at all (591-7); under these circumstances procreation, if not totally stopped, is interrupted. The young and most vital forces are condemned to death or idleness. In this sense, the city is "sick".

The image and language of disease both as a medical reality and as a metaphor are not unknown to Aristophanes. In *Wasps*, Bdelycleon addresses jury service not only as the disease from which his father suffers, as mentioned several times earlier in the play,¹⁹¹ but also as a disease inbred in the city that inspires a submissive behaviour in all Athenians: 650-1 χαλεπὸν μὲν καὶ δεινῆς γνώμης καὶ μείζονος ἢ 'πὶ τρυγωδοῖς/ιάσασθαι νόσον ἀρχαίαν ἐν τῇ πόλει ἐντετακυῖαν. As Reckford (1977: 298) observes on these lines "the longtime, deeply ingrained disease of Philocleon merges with that of Athens".¹⁹² In *Wealth*, Chremylus is in search of a doctor for the blind god Ploutos (407 τίς δῆτ' ἰατρός ἐστὶ νῦν ἐν τῇ πόλει;); the healing of Ploutos, however, is inextricably linked also with the healing of

¹⁹¹ For instance, V. 71, 76, 87, 114, 121-4.

¹⁹² See also Brock 2000: 24; Kosak 2000: 46; Mitchell-Boyask 2008: 38.

the *polis*, since it will bring about just reward and punishment and the restoration to Athens of its imperial wealth. There perhaps,¹⁹³ as well as in *Frogs*,¹⁹⁴ Aristophanes recommends himself as the healer of the νοσοῦσα city: the city is sick, in bad labour (1423 ἡ πόλις γὰρ δυστοκεῖ) and Dionysus chooses to resurrect the poet who will give the best advice so as to save the city, (1418-9 ἐγὼ κατῆλθον ἐπὶ ποιητήν. τοῦ χάριν;/ἵν' ἡ πόλις σωθεῖσα τοὺς χοροὺς ἄγῃ); for the duty of the good poet, Aristophanes suggests, is to make people better in the cities (1008-9).

It is not alien then to Aristophanes' thought to mix literal and allegorical medical language in order to suggest an association between the disease of the individual and the failings of the body politic. Of course, the metaphor of the sick city appears early in literature (Solon 4.17, Thgn. 1133-4) and becomes something of a common place or a political trope.¹⁹⁵ In tragic drama, imagery and themes of illness often take on resonances far beyond the health of the diseased character. In *Prometheus Bound* and *Agamemnon* political instability is more explicitly compared to illness: in *Prometheus Bound* the disease that afflicts Prometheus (cf. 472-5) threatens not only his bodily health but also the social and political order. Thus, the sickness of Prometheus is transformed into a political

¹⁹³ As Mitchell-Boyask 2008: 188 has argued, the ultimate healer of the god Ploutos and the city, is Aristophanes himself “who presents a “vision” of a newly wealthy Athens to his audience”.

¹⁹⁴ See Mitchell-Boyask 2008: 188.

¹⁹⁵ See Mitchell-Boyask 2008: 3 who claims that “the specific metaphor of the sick city, which appears several times before 430, becomes particularly potent during the plague and then newly powerful as the political unity of Athens begins to fail during the subsequent decade”. See also Brock 2013: 69-70.

metaphor, an illness that only proper speech can cure.¹⁹⁶ In *Ag.* 848-50, Agamemnon presents himself, the king, as the doctor of the πόλις, by promising to restore civic health by surgery.¹⁹⁷ Sophocles also explores the relationship between leader and community during a time of plague, while associating the plague with the violation of customs of society.¹⁹⁸ The association between disease and στάσις is also prominent in Euripidean drama.¹⁹⁹ Outside drama, Thucydides seems to be also aware of the theme of disease as a symptom of moral and political disintegration;²⁰⁰ Plato's medical imagery is based on the notion of the body politic, as he views the state in terms of the human body (*R.* 368e-369b, 444a-e, 556e), and the equation of those in political power with doctors (*Plt.* 297e, *Lg.* 905e).²⁰¹

The extended use of the metaphor of the city νοσοῦσα in drama before Aristophanes and in the later literary tradition, as well as some instances of its application by Aristophanes himself in other plays, provide a nice framework for application of the same metaphor in *Lysistrata*. The cure of the disease is found in the “patients” themselves, since it consists in the re-establishment of normal sexual activity between husbands and wives.

¹⁹⁶ See Griffith 1983; Mitchell-Boyask 2008: 34.

¹⁹⁷ For the imagery of disease in the trilogy see Zeitlin 1965: 501-3. See also Brock 2000: 31-2; Mitchell-Boyask 2008: 33.

¹⁹⁸ For the link between the plague and Sophocles' *Trachiniae* and *Oedipus Tyrannus* see Mitchell-Boyask 2008: 56-104. In *Antigone* the theme of the association of νόσος between people and the city is hinted, but not developed (cf. the sick city of Thebes in lines 425, 1015, 1141). See Winnington-Ingram 1969: 5-6; Scullion 1998; Mitchell-Boyask 2008: 27, 34.

¹⁹⁹ See Kosak 2000: 48-49; Mitchell-Boyask 2008: 45-55, 122-52.

²⁰⁰ For instance, in 2.53.2 plague is presented as the beginning of lawlessness and anomia. See Parry 1969; Swain 1994; Mitchell-Boyask 2008: 41-43 and *passim*.

²⁰¹ See Brock 2000: 27-29 and 2013: 71-2.

This is also in line with the concept of political/medical imagery in the 6th and 5th centuries, where the figure of the doctor is absent and “it is the patient who occupies the central position and the patient’s interests, as perceived by the patient, which are paramount”.²⁰²

As the Athenian ambassador says, everyone is now in favour of a “fucking policy”, since they all suffer from painful erections (1178-80 ποίοισιν, ὧ τᾶν, ξυμμάχοις; ἐστύκαμεν./οὐ ταῦτὰ δόξει τοῖσι συμμαχοῖσι νῶν,/βινεῖν, ἅπασιν;). After a unanimous agreement (1180-1), Lysistrata urges the men to exchange oaths and pledges and allows them to take their wives home (1182-7, 1273-8). The oaths can be understood in two ways: they are the oaths of peace, but at the same time the oaths of marriage, which are now renewed, since the “fucking” policy is essentially the peace policy. The play ends with the reunion of husbands and wives; although the sexual act has not taken place yet,²⁰³ as soon as the normative situation has been officially restored, the symptoms of physical distress and disease appear no more: this is the indication that the cure of the city (restoration of peace) comes about together with the cure of its people (restoration of normal marital relations).

4. Conclusions

As has been demonstrated, the women manage to become temporary leaders of the city by relying on the power they hold as mothers and wives. The essence of Lysistrata’s

²⁰² Brock 2013: 76.

²⁰³ See Henderson 1987: 206 “sexual act is not to be imagined as occurring on the Acropolis”.

plan is evident in her own words to the Proboulos (596-7), when she calls attention to the most important function of women in the city, that of marriage and reproduction:

τῆς δὲ γυναικὸς σμικρὸς ὁ καιρὸς, κἄν τούτου μὴ ᾗ πιάβηται,
οὐδεὶς ἐθέλει γῆμαι ταύτην, ὅττευομένη δὲ κάθηται

Domestic life and the life of the *polis* are in peril because of the men's decision to continue the war. The women manage to fix the political situation by making a claim to leadership which does justice to their domestic role. From an early age, girls were raised and prepared for the most important roles they would assume in their adult lives: that of wives and mothers. The women in *Lysistrata* manage to manipulate these roles most successfully; they make themselves heard and finally change the political landscape by forcing men to acknowledge their rights and their important role in supporting and upholding the domestic stability.

In order to show the ways in which female leadership works in the play, I have used two methodological tools: rituals and medicine. Evidence from both areas suggests that the power of women lies in their ability to conceive and reproduce life. On the one hand, the old women assume the role of ritual practitioners by performing or pointing to certain rituals which emphasize the importance of the women's reproductive role and promote their fertility: by disrobing before the men, they draw their attention to their naked bodies in order to exhibit the power of female fertility and humiliate their male audience (ἀνάσυρμα); by commemorating their services as ἀρρηφόροι, ἄρκτοι and κανηφόροι, they

stress the importance of their preparation for their future roles as mothers and wives in the city; and, lastly, by teasing and, finally, dousing the men they display their powerful female nature which prevails over the male, in terms of active sexuality and fertility (Adonia and evidence of medical theories).

On the other hand, the young women play a different role, which also stresses their power of fecundity and reproduction: they perform a sex strike. Since, for respectable female citizens, their sexual activity was hardly separated from their reproductive role, the sexual strike signifies more than mere abstention from sex: it brings about the danger of sterility and cessation of reproduction. Indeed, a medical reading of the women's sex strike reveals that abstention from sex leads to the malfunction of the women's reproductive system, which could be catastrophic for the health of the whole community. The notoriously infinite appetite of women for sex, so often ridiculed, has turned from a sign of female lewdness and weakness to a strong weapon: men are afflicted from the very sickness their wives were suffering and are finally vanquished by it.

Thus, both approaches to female leadership in *Lysistrata* lead to the conclusion that the women vindicate their claim to power by manipulating and promoting their biological roles. Are we supposed to consider female leadership as a triumph of the women over the men? It is true that the women successfully make their case, but, as soon as their husbands accept their terms, things get back to normal: the women put an end to their occupation of the Acropolis and the sex strike, and the men are allowed to take their wives back home

and resume their normal lives. Thus, the women do not get to be the permanent leaders of the city; yet they never wished to be in the first place. It may be claimed then that the women's leadership is successful insofar as the women attain their goals: the end of their leadership enacts an end to the Peloponnesian war, a return to proper farming, a return to marriage. The normative situation is reinstated.

CHAPTER II

SACRIFICING (THE) DEMOS: ALIMENTARY AND SACRIFICIAL CODES IN *KNIGHTS*

1. Introduction

In the preceding chapter I discussed the ways in which the women in *Lysistrata* assert and establish their rights to power: through ritual practices and sexual abstinence, which perpetuate their condition as female patients, they draw attention to the importance of their reproductive role in the context of marriage. The women's actions initially disrupt and reject the institution of marriage. During this temporary disruption, the women are often assimilated to savage tribes and their actions to savage energies, while the whole city is pictured as suffering from a terrible disease. The final restoration of the social order brings about also the restoration of power to men.

In *Knights*, the political and social order of the city appears also to be disrupted. This time the implications of savagery are not to be traced in the sexual code, as in *Lysistrata*, but mostly in the dietary one. When the play begins, power is concentrated in the hands of Paphlagon, Demos' steward, who rules both over the house and the city of Demos. As I will show, Paphlagon features as an ogre-like, nightmarish vision of a pre-civilised man. He performs politics in an animalistic and cannibalistic way, by incessantly consuming everything, even raw meat and people; savage political practices have replaced a civilized

leadership. A change is brought about with the appearance of the Sausage-seller, who aspires to take Paphlagon's place and rule over Demos. Although the two rivals compete in rascality, trickery and shamelessness and the Sausage-seller wins, as he proves to be the most foul of the two, in the end he is miraculously transformed into the city's saviour: he boils Demos down, makes him young and wise and restores him back to power.

What are we supposed to make out of all this? Several studies about *Knights* have touched upon the issue of the mysterious figure of the Sausage-seller¹ and the most unexpected twist of the plot with the appearance of the rejuvenated and all-wise Demos. Are we supposed to see the Sausage-seller in a favourable light, as the new benevolent *prostates* of Demos? Has Demos really changed or does he fool himself and is doomed to remain at the hands of vile politicians forever?² What is the meaning of his boiling?³ I shall

¹ According to Landfester (1967: 36, 92-4) the Sausage-seller assumed πανουργία and ἀναίδεια only to win Demos to his side, but they were not inherent to his nature. Likewise, Ford (1965: 108ff.) and Brock (1986: 15-6) have viewed Agorakritos as the ideal reformer who is devoted to the interests of people. Bowie (1993: 45-77) read the play as a gigantomachic succession myth and, accordingly, suggested a view of the Sausage-seller as an ephebic hero of mythology, who fights successfully his monstrous rival, Paphlagon. According to McGlew (1996: 357) the Sausage-seller is transformed in the end to an orator who inaugurates a new era of partnership between politicians and the audience. From the perspective of political theory, Zumbrunnen (2004: 671-2) argues that the Sausage-seller represents the ordinary individual citizen who turns to a hero of agonistic democracy. Scholtz (1997 and 2004) describes the political practices employed by the two rivals in *Knights* as a comic progression from φιλία to κολακεία and finally παιδευαστία. Focusing on a relevant topic, Wohl (2002: 73-123 and *passim*) discusses the debased erotics of the play, where "[Thucydides'] love of the beautiful city is [...] brought down to the basest corporeal terms and the courtship imagined in all its sordid details" with Demos being a κίμαιδος and Paphlagon and the Sausage-seller his corrupted lovers. Likewise, Yates (2005) focuses on the role of the two rivals as ἀντερασταί, whose perpetual competition for Demos sustains democracy. Lastly, Worman (2008: 62-92) sees the Sausage-seller as the effeminized type of politician who is characterized by his open anus, by contrast to Paphlagon, who is mostly the politician of the open mouth.

² Some scholars have treated this "metamorphosis" of Demos as his complete restoration to power and his vengeance on the leaders who abuse his trust: Ehrenberg 1951: 47; Littlefield 1968: 21-2; Dover 1972: 98; Henderson 1990: 288; McGlew 1996: 354, 357; Zumbrunnen 2004: 672. Ford 1965: 10 and Brock 1986: 15-6

argue that the Sausage-seller gradually manifests himself as the sacrificer Agorakritos who, in the end, performs Demos' sacrifice. The sacrifice of Demos by Agorakritos is to be interpreted as a symbolic act which puts an end to the politics of savage, raw consumption as they were employed by Paphlagon (and, occasionally, by Demos himself), and saves the day by inaugurating a new era of political practice. In this way, the re-establishment of the political and social order in *Knights* is effected in an analogous way with that in *Lysistrata*: it is brought about through the restoration of the sacrificial ritual, just as in *Lysistrata* it was achieved through the restoration of another important institution of the city, that of marriage.

The analogous position of marriage and sacrifice has been repeatedly stressed by structuralist analysis.⁴ Marriage and sacrifice are complementary expressions of civilization: "marriage is to sexual consummation what sacrifice is to the consumption of meat: both assure continuity of existence to mankind, sacrifice by making it possible for the individual to subsist throughout his life and marriage by affording him the means of

accept the transformation of Demos but only as being part of an idealistic second plot, which follows the realistic and more cynical one in the beginning. Others, like Landfester (1967), Reckford (1987), Bennett-Tyrell (1990), Bowie (1993), Wohl (2002) and Zumbrunnen (2004) are more sceptical.

³ Ancient scholiasts as well as modern scholars (Wilkins 2000: 198; Bowie 1993: 54 and 76) have often compared this boiling of Demos to the story of Pelias in the Medea myth. See also Olson (1990) who argues that Demos is rejuvenated against Edmunds 1987: 256.

⁴ Hesiod's myth of Prometheus connects sacrifice with fire, woman, marriage and self-perpetuation through legitimate offspring in a family (*Th.* 535-616; cf. *Op.* 42-105). See Auger 1979: 74-5; Segal 1981: 35, 40, 61-2; Foley 1985: 36; Detienne 1989: 5; Vernant 1989: 70-3, 74 and Vernant's introduction to Detienne 1994 (esp. xiv, xxvi, xxxviii); Seaford 1994: 307-8; Redfield 2012: 178. See also King 1987 for the analogy between the flow of blood in childbirth and in sacrificial practice.

perpetuating himself after death through his child”.⁵ In this sense, the restoration of the normative order which is effected by the end of both plays (in *Lysistrata* with the handover of power from women to men, in *Knights* with the restoration of Demos to his former power and glory), is inextricably linked to the proper function of civilized structures in the city. In the end, the social order is affirmed; leadership becomes the safeguard of stability and fecundity.

2. Sacrifice, drama and political power

The centrality of sacrifice in drama has long been studied.⁶ In tragedy, sacrifice acquires dark overtones. The preoccupation of tragedy as a genre with social crises and disasters is reflected in the plays’ sacrificial crisis: sacrifice is often perverted into the killing of kin, as human victims are substituted for animal victims and the terminology for the ritual killing of animal victims is metaphorically applied to the violent death of humans. The dramatic norm in tragedy is the corrupted or abortive sacrifice,⁷ which may indicate the hero’s failure of authority and his inability to establish order.⁸ In this way, tragic sacrifice indicates the ambiguity of the human position between godlike power and

⁵ Vernant 1994 (introduction to Detienne): xiv.

⁶ For a general overview of tragic sacrifice see Burkert 1966b and 2001: 1-36; Henrichs 2012. For individual studies on the place of sacrifice in tragedy see Zeitlin 1965 and 1966; Vidal-Naquet 1981b; Pucci 1992 (Aeschylus’ *Oresteia*); Segal 1981 (Sophocles); Pucci 1977 (Euripides) and 1980 (Euripides’ *Medea*); Seidensticker 1979 and Seaford 1994: 281-93 (Euripides’ *Bacchae*); Foley 1985 (Euripides); Seaford 1994 *passim* (various tragic plays); Gibert 2003 (Euripides, esp. *Orestes*); Sourvinou-Inwood 2003; Calame 2005 (Sophocles’ *Trachiniae*).

⁷ See Zeitlin 1965 and 1966; Scodel 1993: 164; Henrichs 2012: 189.

⁸ See Scodel 1993: 165-7.

unruly violence, civilization and savagery. Through sacrificial rituals tragedy “pushes back the structures and reopens the painful possibility of seeing life as chaos”.⁹ Yet, sacrificial deaths can also have a therapeutic effect.¹⁰

Although the role of sacrifice in tragedy has been largely explored, there are only a few studies which touch upon the animal sacrifice and its function in comedy.¹¹ It has been suggested that sacrifice in Old Comedy is of the celebratory type, and, as such, it often becomes the prelude to the hero’s wedding and the achievement of the new order;¹² that emphasis is placed, in strong contrast with tragedy, not on the killing, but on the eating and the feasting after the sacrifice;¹³ that sacrifice belongs to the second part of the play, when the hero’s aim has been achieved and, thus, it vindicates, but does not create the hero’s authority;¹⁴ and, lastly, that sacrifice is, unlike tragedy, not about the ambiguity of our human condition, but about the joys of satisfying our appetite: just as marriage, it is life affirming.¹⁵ These observations may be true for a lot of sacrificial examples in comedy; yet, the case of *Knights* is different and deserves special attention, but, so far, has escaped

⁹ Segal 1981: 42.

¹⁰ See Pucci 1977: 165-6 “sacrifice is the violent ritual through which men achieve a remedy, placate their consciousness, establish order in chaos, compensate for losses and ruins”; Segal 1981: 41- 6 and 101 “the tragedy lets loose chaos in a fearful destruction of the boundaries between man and beast, but at the same time its aesthetic form asserts the framework which can contain and neutralize that violence”; Foley 1985: 60-1.

¹¹ See Scodel 1993 (Old and New Comedy): 161-76; Bowie 2011: 572-91; Redfield 2012; Heinrichs 2012 (in passing).

¹² See Scodel 1993: 164-5.

¹³ See Heinrichs 2012: 193; Redfield 2012: 172.

¹⁴ See Scodel 2012: 165.

¹⁵ See Redfield 2012: 172, 178. For sacrifice in New Comedy see Scodel 1993, who argues that, although sacrifice occupies an important place, μάγειρος and his authority are displaced and ridiculed, so that the tension which is associated with sacrifice in drama is dissipated.

notice.¹⁶ The sacrificial ritual in *Knights* is not just a detail which is embedded in the comic plot; rather, it forms the plot and shapes the characters of the play. Sacrifice in *Knights* has very important implications for the interpretation of the entire play, as it is inextricably linked with the political issues in the play. On the one hand, it becomes a vehicle for the communication and assertion of political power, since the Sausage-seller prevails over his rival, the animal-like and savage Paphlagon, by means of his position as a sacrificer. On the other hand, the sacrifice of Demos has a cleansing and cathartic effect for the whole city, since Demos (symbolic of the people) is restored to his former power and glory. In this sense, *Knights* retains the socio-political implications of the tragic sacrifice, while it suppresses the problematic aspects of human sacrifice in tragedy.

The idea that political power is linked to sacrifice is not only a convention of the tragic context. The sacrificial ritual was particularly important in the life of the polis;¹⁷ as Detienne (1989: 3) puts it, political power could not be exercised without sacrificial practice; and by political, one should understand all the acts that had to do with the polis: military and political undertakings, like campaigns or treaties, service in a civil post,

¹⁶ Reckford 1987: 113-20 sees the Sausage-seller as the Magic Cook, who brings salvation through the right cooking, and mentions in passing that “he retains something of the ancient *mageiros*, the sacrificial cook” (117); Wilkins 1993 and 2000 has most extensively analysed the association of the Sausage-seller with sacrificial meat and has suggested that the boiling of Demos may be seen as forming part of a sacrificial ritual, but has not explored the implications of such a ritual for the comic plot.

¹⁷ Detienne 1979: 10-11. See Mikalson 1983: 13 and Parker 2005: 100 (on sacrifices before the assembly); Burkert 1985: 54-9 on the social bond created through sacrifice; Detienne 1989: 3-4 and *passim* (on the solidarity between the political and sacrificial domain) and Bowie 1995: 463 (“there are few if any significant areas of Greek life in which sacrifice is not found”) and 466-7 (on sacrifices marking out relationships in the polis).

festivals staged by the entire community or private offerings should all begin with or be sealed by a sacrifice. In all these instances, the act of sacrifice acquired a symbolic meaning: it was a means of establishing certain relationships between humans themselves, as well as human and divine;¹⁸ but, most importantly, it defined the order of society and was a way of restoring that order when it was disrupted.¹⁹ Through destruction sacrifice brought rebirth and creation of a new order. As Burkert (1983: 38) holds:

“In the experience of killing one perceives the sacredness of life; it is nourished and perpetuated by death. This paradox is embodied, acted out and generalized in the ritual. Whatever is to endure and be effective must pass through a sacrifice which opens and reseals the abyss of annihilation”.

Any new creation requires the act of ritual killing. Some examples might enable us to observe this solidarity between the domain of political and that of the sacrificial: sacrifices were required when a house or a bridge was built for the house or the bridge to remain strong.²⁰ Moreover, when a colony was founded, a sacrifice would symbolize the act of the creation of a new political community, born of the mother-city.²¹

Sacrifice, then, is a deeply political act which expresses the need for recreation through destruction. This aspect of the sacrificial ritual is prominent in the myth of the first alimentary sacrifice, narrated twice by Hesiod (*Theog.* 507-616, *Op.* 42-105). According to tradition, men lived for a long time like animals, eating raw food and one another. Their

¹⁸ Hubert and Mauss 1964: 35; Burkert 1983: 6, 37ff.; Detienne 1989: 3-4.

¹⁹ Hubert and Mauss 1964: 35.

²⁰ Nilsson 1967: 404 n. 10. Cf. also Burkert 1983: 39.

²¹ Cf. the scholia in the opening scene of Arist. *Birds* and Bowie 1993: 152. See also Detienne 1989: 3-4.

primitive state changed through animal sacrifice, which entails not only the ritual killing of the animal, but also its cooking and its consumption. Prometheus' slaughter of the ox, his preservation of the flesh for humanity and his gift of fire marks a commencement of a new status for humans, who developed their habits of eating cooked meats, and were able to differentiate themselves from beasts (and, of course, from gods as well). In this way, sacrifice saved mankind from savagery by directing it away from an animal existence and towards civilized living: death brought creation, destruction generated development.²²

With this in mind, we may now turn to Aristophanes and the function of the sacrificial model in *Knights*. I shall begin to unravel the function of the ritual by first examining the political practices of Paphlagon and the Sausage-seller, and I will suggest that their competition is often presented in terms deriving from the preparation, cooking and eating of food.²³ The political/alimentary models that they represent are essentially different: Paphlagon features as the all-consuming type of politician,²⁴ who performs politics in an animalistic way, by incessantly consuming everything, even raw, non-sacrificial meat, while leaving almost nothing for the people. On the contrary, the Sausage-

²² My analysis of the sacrificial ritual follows the structuralist approach of Detienne and Vernant. See Detienne 1979: 53-67 and 1981: 219 who states the importance of the first Promethean sacrifice in the definition of the relationship between people-beasts and people-gods: "the model contains two symmetrical starting points, one at the top, the other at the bottom [...] [Prometheus], in the one case [...] brings about the transition from the Golden-Age fellowship with the gods to a diet of meat [...]; in the other, he extricates mankind from savagery. See also Vernant 1981a (esp. 11-2) and 1981b; Segal 1974 and 1981: 13-59.

²³ See Wilkins 1993, 1997 and 2000: 179-201.

²⁴ This voracious and monstrous capacity of Paphlagon-Cleon is emphasized by Worman (2008: 82-92), who goes on to distinguish between two types of politicians: that of the open mouth (Paphlagon) and that of the open anus (the Sausage-seller).

seller is associated only with sacrificial meat and gradually reveals himself as being more than a simple vendor of meat: he is a sacrificer, who, in the end, performs Demos' sacrifice. As I will argue, this sacrifice of Demos by Agorakritos is to be interpreted as a symbolic act which puts an end to the politics of savage, raw consumption and saves the day by inaugurating a new era of political practice. This interpretation is in line with the place of the sacrificial ritual in the life of the polis and in the history of anthropology, as described above: sacrifice can be perceived, in Aristophanes too, as a political act which brings about a new order of things.

3. Paphlagon and the politics of consumption: non-sacrificial meat

In Greece sacrificial practice and meat-eating coincided: sacrifice was fundamentally killing for eating,²⁵ since people enjoyed the consumption of meat only after a sacrifice was executed.²⁶ In this sense, a sacrificer is a procurer of food for the people: he

²⁵ See Hdt. 2.41 on the differences between Greeks and Egyptians as far as eating habits are concerned (οὐδὲ μαχαίρη ἀνδρὸς Ἕλληνας χρήσεται οὐδὲ ὀβελοῖσι οὐδὲ λέβητι, οὐδὲ κρέως καθαροῦ βοὸς διατετμημένου Ἑλληνικῇ μαχαίρῃ γεύσεται). The refusal of the Egyptians to use a knife, spit or kettle (all sacrificial instruments) of Greek origin might be considered as a dismissal of the eating that necessarily followed the sacrifice of the animals (here a cow). See Detienne 1981a: 217; Vernant 1981b: 18, 61; Berthiaume 1982: 81 and Detienne 1989: 3. According to Casabona (1966: 21-2) ἱερεύω means both slaughter an animal and offer a sacrifice and there is no term distinguishing between the two. See also Van Straten 2005: 25 "private sacrifice at home would entail a banquet to which a generous host might invite his friends. Probably at times the priorities were the other way round: the wish to have a banquet would suggest the idea to sacrifice an animal" and 26: "meat eaten at a banquet came from sacrificed animals".

²⁶ That is meat coming from domesticated animals and not non-sacrificial meat, like hunting meat (e.g. hare). See Bremmer 2007: 141 "hunting is a profane activity, unlike sacrifice".

is a μάγειρος.²⁷ This particular characteristic is something a sacrificer and a leader have in common, since a leader is often deemed to be successful on the grounds that he is capable of satisfying the people's need or appetite for food. It should be noted that the role of the leader as a sacrificer is very well demonstrated by some ancient sources for the history of the Athenian cults, which observe that the *archon basileus*, the most ancient of all the officers of the state, used to administer all the ancestral sacrifices (Arist. *Ath. Pol* 57.1, Pl. *Pol.* 290e6-8 and [Dem]. 59.74).²⁸ Moreover, literary sources for sacrificial rituals often present leading figures as presiding over sacrifices, such as Agamemnon in the *Iliad* 2.402-31, Nestor in the *Odyssey* 3.418-72 and Aegisthus in Euripides' *Electra* 774-843. This expectation, and often demand, that people have of their leaders with regard to supplies of food forms the basis of the relation between Demos and his stewards in *Knights*. Demos not only expects his stewards to provide him with all kinds of delicacies; there is also a clear implication that his decision about his new steward is made on the basis that the Sausage-seller is willing to offer more food than Paphlagon:

1107-9

ἀνύσατέ νυν ὅ τι περ ποιήσεθ' ὡς ἐγώ,
 ὁπότερος ἂν σφῶν εὖ με μᾶλλον ἂν ποιῇ,
 τούτῳ παραδώσω τῆς Πυκνὸς τὰς ἡνίας.

²⁷ For μάγειρος in the sense of butcher, cook and vendor see Dohm 1964: 30-6; Detienne 1979: 75; Berthiaume 1982: 1-141 (*passim*); Detienne 1989: 8, 11-2; Wilkins 1993: 123 and Wilkins 2000: 196, 369-71. See also Scodel 1993: 162 "‘cook’ is not an exact translation of the Greek *mageiros*. The *mageiros*' original and essential task was the slaughtering and butchering of a sacrificial animal and the preparation of its meat for consumption. [...] *Mageiroi* were sometimes, at least, used at public sacrifices, as well".

²⁸ See also Sissa and Detienne 2000: 174 who provide information about the daily sacrifices conducted by the representatives of the city (citizens acting as *archons*, *prytaneis* or administrators of the Council) around the altar of Hestia.

1207-8

τί οὐ διακρίνεις, Δῆμ', ὅπότερός ἐστι νῶν
ἀνὴρ ἀμείνων περὶ σέ καὶ τὴν γαστέρα;

If a good leader is supposed to give food to people, then, *mutatis mutandis*, personal endless consumption is a sure sign for a leader's failure. In this light, Paphlagon, who when the play begins features as the leader of the house of Demos, is doomed to fail insofar as he is a tanner, whose production includes nothing edible²⁹ and, to make matters worse, he is associated with an all-consuming behaviour.³⁰ At the beginning of the play, he is described as sleeping and digesting noisily all the food he consumed.

103-4

ἐπίπαστα λείξας δημιόπραθ' ὁ βάσκανος
ῥέγκει μεθύων ἐν ταῖσι βύρσαις ὕπτιος

115

ὥς μεγάλ' ὁ Παφλαγῶν πέρδεται καὶ ῥέγκεται

This text recalls distinctly Polyphemus when he lies down to sleep after he has gobbled up Odysseus' men and wine. Thus, Paphlagon's ways can be compared to those of a primordial, man-eating creature:

Od. 9. 371-4:

ἦ, καὶ ἀνακλινθεὶς πέσεν ὕπτιος, αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα
κεῖτ' ἀποδοχμώσας παχὺν ἀνχένα, καὶ δέ μιν ὕπνος
ἥρει πανδαμάτωρ· φάρυγος δ' ἐξέσσυτο οἶνος
ψωμοὶ τ' ἀνδρόμεοι· ὁ δ' ἐρεύγετο οἶνοβαρείων.

²⁹ See Reckford 1987: 117, who notes that the reason for Paphlagon's defeat is that he is more concerned with eating than serving food.

³⁰ For Paphlagon as the politician of the open mouth see Worman 2008: 88-92.

The assimilation of Paphlagon to Polyphemus persists throughout the play, as I will show in the following section regarding bestiality and allelophagy.

Consistently with this unflattering image, Paphlagon is often accused of having a rapacious and voracious appetite (137 ἄρπαξ, 203 ἀγκυλοχήλης, 204 ὅτι ἀγκύλαις ταῖς χερσὶν ἀρπάζων φέρει, 248 Χάρυβδιν ἀρπαγῆς). This rapacity of Paphlagon is often exercised in the πρυτανεῖον³¹ (280-1, 709) and most often to the detriment of Demos' needs. Although Paphlagon pretends to make provision for Demos' food, he consumes most of it himself:

716-8

κᾶθ' ὥσπερ αἱ τίτθαι γε **σιτίζεις κακῶς**.
μασώμενος γὰρ τῷ μὲν ὀλίγον ἐντίθης,
αὐτὸς δ' ἐκείνου **τριπλάσιον κατέσπακας**.

801-2

οὐχ ἵνα γ' ἄρξῃ μὰ Δί' Ἀρκαδίας προνοούμενος, ἀλλ' ἵνα **μᾶλλον**
σὺ μὲν ἀρπάξης καὶ δωροδοκῇς παρὰ τῶν πόλεων

819

σὺ δ' Ἀχιλλείων ἀπομάττει.

854-7

τοῦτο δ' εἰς ἓν ἐστι συγκεκυφός,
ὥστ' εἰ σὺ βριμήσαιο καὶ βλέψειας ὀστρακίνδα,
νύκτωρ καθαρπάσαντες ἂν τὰς ἀσπίδας θέοντες
τὰς εἰσβολὰς τῶν ἀλφίτων ἂν καταλάβοιεν ἡμῶν.

In addition, Paphlagon's oracle, which suggests that Paphlagon is Demos' guardian dog, is interpreted by the Sausage-seller in a way that is in agreement with all the previous

³¹ See Wilkins 2000: 189 "a number of speakers make it plain that the city is experiencing its present crisis because of the abuse of honorific dining in the *prytaneion*".

references to Paphlagon's greediness: the dog, instead of protecting Demos, is stealing his food.³²

1025-7

οὐ τοῦτό φησ' ὁ χρησμός, ἀλλ' ὁ κύων ὁδὶ
ὥσπερ θύρας σου τῶν λογίων παρεσθίει.
ἐμοὶ γάρ ἐστ' ὀρθῶς περὶ τούτου τοῦ κυνός.

1030-4

“φράζευ, Ἐρεχθεΐδη, κύνα Κέρβερον ἀνδραποδιστήν,
ὃς κέρκῳ σαίνων σ', ὁπότεν δειπνῆς, ἐπιτηρῶν
ἐξέδεταί σου τοῦψον, ὅταν σύ ποι ἄλλοσε χάσκης·
εἰσφοιτῶν τ' εἰς τοῦπτάνιον λήσει σε κυνηδὸν
νύκτωρ τὰς λοπάδας καὶ τὰς νήσους διαλείχων.”

It is noteworthy that even though Paphlagon appears to consume vast quantities of food, no sacrificial meat is to be found among them:³³ he is associated with game (1192 λαγῶ(α)), cereals and vegetables (1166 μαζίσκην, 1171 ἔτνος, 1177 τέμαχος, 1181 ἐλατῆρος, 1190 πλακοῦντος) and especially with fish (354 θύννεια, 361 λάβρακας, 864 ἐγγέλεις, 929 and 934 τευθίδων, 1192). As far as fish is concerned, they were largely classified among non-sacrificial meats,³⁴ because they have little blood. Only a few fish sacrifices are

³² It must be noted here that in *Wasps* Cleon appears in the form of a dog as a prosecutor against another dog-politician (comically distorted as Labes after Laches), with the charge that he ate up a Sicilian cheese on his own without sharing it with him. Although he accuses his opponent as a thief and μονοφαγίστατον (923), he is just as selfish and thieving himself: he is the kind of dog which licks the pots clean (904 διαλείχειν τὰς χύτρας), a real κλέπτης (928) who cannot tolerate the fact that Labes behaved like he would, not sharing his cheese but, provocatively, giving off horrible belches of it (912-4 ἔμοιγέ τοι/τυροῦ κάκιστον ἀρτίως ἐνήρυγεν/ὁ βδελυρὸς οὔτος, cf. Paphlagon in *Knights* 103-4 ἐπίπαστα λείξας δημιόπραθ' ὁ βάσκανος/ῥέγκει). The dog-Cleon stays at home doing nothing but, all the same, demands a share from the food that Labes brings in, and bites if he does not get what he asks for (970-2) in the same way that Cleon in *Knights* eats in the *prytaneion* doing nothing (765 ὥσπερ νυνὶ μηδὲν δράσας δειπνεῖν ἐν τῷ πρυτανείῳ).

³³ See Wilkins 1993: 123-4 and 2000: 199.

³⁴ As Wilkins has repeatedly argued (1993: 123-4; 1995: 104 and Wilkins and Hill 2006: 142). See also Berthiaume 1982: 85 and Sissa and Detienne 2000: 170-1.

attested: Agatharchides (ap. Athen. 297D) mentions that the highly appreciated eels of the Copais lake were sacrificed, and Men. Fr. 319.5 Kock mentions eels among other things offered to the gods. The fishermen of Halae in Sicily sacrificed the first tunny they caught to Poseidon (Athen. 297 E). Otherwise, sacrifice of fish to the gods was unusual,³⁵ and even Poseidon commonly rejoiced in sacrifices of lambs and oxen.³⁶ Other fish sacrifices occurred only in exceptional circumstances, as offerings to the dead, on the condition that they were still living or quite newly caught: Athenaeus (297E-298A) mentions that smoked, salted fish were sacrificed in the funeral cult in the island of Phaselis, but this was exceptional and was considered curious. It gave rise to a proverb (Zenob. 6.36 Φασηλιτῶν θῦμα: ἐπὶ τῶν εὐτελῶν καὶ ἀναίμων λέγεται. Φασὶ γὰρ τοὺς Φασηλίτας ταρίχους τοῖς θεοῖς θύειν). In general, fish sacrifices were not common at all in Athens.³⁷

In general, Paphlagon's association with fish is problematic, since out of all animals eaten in the ancient Mediterranean, fish alone could and did eat people. Purcell (1995: 132) points out that “eating fish could be as morally ambiguous as eating dog”. The association of Paphlagon with tuna in particular is important: tuna was reputed to be a carnivorous,

³⁵ Cf. Plu. *Quaestiones Convivales* 729c ταῦτ' ἐπαινέσας ὁ Σύλλας προσεῖπε περὶ τῶν Πυθαγορικῶν, ὡς μάλιστα μὲν ἐγεύοντο τῶν ἱεροθύτων ἀπαρξάμενοι τοῖς θεοῖς, **ἰχθύων δὲ θύσιμος οὐδεὶς οὐδ' ἱερεύσιμός ἐστιν**. See Teodorsson 1996: 247; Sissa and Detienne 2000: 171. Burkert 1983: 204-12 and 1985: 137 and Durand 1989: 127-8 refer to the sacrifice of tuna and eel as the only fish sacrifices attested; more specifically, tuna's flesh is red and its blood is plentiful (see Thompson 1947: 80-1), which renders it an appropriate meat for blood sacrifice.

³⁶ See Sissa and Detienne 2000: 171.

³⁷ Burkert 1983: 208-9 refers to fish sacrificial rituals as found “not in the great temples, but in geographical and social fringes of the Greek world”, i.e. Chalcidike, Seriphos, Samothrace.

cruel and unnatural fish,³⁸ which was said to burst with fatness³⁹ and thus, is most appropriate to represent our gluttonous and ravaging hero. Even more suggestively, tuna is a cannibalistic fish, since it was reported to devour its own children.⁴⁰ I will come back to this in due course.

The association of Paphlagon with fish was noted by Wilkins (1993: 123-4 and 2000: 199), who did not, however, offer an interpretation of this remarkable exclusiveness. On the same matter, Davidson (1993: *passim* and esp. 57-9, 61-62) made the case that fish carry connotations of luxury and excessive power and, accordingly, suggested that Paphlagon's voracity for fish in *Knights* represents the politician's usurpation of power. Indeed, this suggestion ties in very well with the fact that all associations of Paphlagon with fish appear in that part of the play where he is still appointed as Demos' steward. On the contrary, after his fall from power no more references to fish are to be found. Consequently, these references to fish can be taken to signify Paphlagon's last glimpse of power, before he loses all his privileges.

It has been established then that Paphlagon is not associated with the production or the consumption of sacrificial meat in the play. This is further confirmed in the scene where Demos asks Paphlagon to return his ring which Demos himself gave to Paphlagon, when he had appointed him as his steward. To his great amazement, he discovers that the

³⁸ See Thompson 1947: 81-2.

³⁹ See Arist. *HA* 571b7 and Thompson 1947: 82.

⁴⁰ See Opp. *H.* 760 and Thompson 1947: 82.

ring handed down by Paphlagon is not the original, because it has a different seal on it: a sea-gull with open mouth, instead of a rissole of cow-fat wrapped in a fig-leaf (951-6). In sacrificial terms this means that Paphlagon threw away the ring which carried as a seal the meat of a sacrificial animal and replaced it with one bearing a sea-gull, a bird which is not edible, and often symbolizes several human vices and weaknesses, among which greediness, thievishness and devotion to pleasure.⁴¹

The association of Paphlagon with non-sacrificial meat – or his disassociation from sacrificial meat – reaches its climax at the end of the play, where Paphlagon lapses from his position as Demos' steward and is banished to the city gates to exercise the profession of a sausage-seller. However, it is not sacrificial meat that he will be dealing with, but, by contrast, dog and donkey meat⁴² (1399 τὰ κύνεια μίγνυς τοῖς ὀνείοις τρώγμασιν).

4. Bestiality, omophagy and allelophagy

So far it has been argued that Paphlagon's role is limited to consuming all kinds of food and, in particular, meat which is not sacrificial. This voracity and incessant consumption points more to the ways of a wild animal rather than to those of a human

⁴¹ See Ar. *Nub.* 591 (again of Cleon), Av. 567, Ath. 134e (referring to Chaerephon the parasite), Luc. *Tim.* 12, *Merc. Cond.* 3, Suda s.v. *λάρος κεχηνώς*, Etymologicum Magnum s.v. *λάρος* and *καύηξ*. Aristotle (*HA* 609a23-4) provides the information that sea-gulls are hostile to other sea-birds as well as their own species, a behaviour which again suits Paphlagon. See also Thompson 1936: 193; Sommerstein 1981: 194 and Arnott 2007: 194.

⁴² See Pollux 9.48 who says that donkey-meat was sold separately from other meats in a different part of the market, the *μεινόνεια*. For dog and ass as animals which were considered inappropriate for sacrifice see Berthiaume 1982: 85 and 91 and Bowie 1995: 475.

being. Indeed, the imagery of animals is often applied to Paphlagon in the play.⁴³ Most importantly, he is associated with animals suggestive of his nature, namely with predators or images of animals feeding themselves (197 eagle, 1037 lion, 1052 hawk and 403 an insect sucking from “bribery” flowers δωροδόκοισιν ἐπ’ ἄνθεσιν ἴζων); with animals displaying an aggressive behaviour (in line 416 he is described as κυνοκέφαλος, which Neil (1901: 64) thinks to be a baboon, a specially savage kind of ape); animals renowned for their greediness (956 sea-gull, 375-81 pig); and, lastly, in 496 he is expected to fight like a cockerel.

The imagery of animals is consistent with Paphlagon’s bestiality, which is expressed in two ways: through the dietary and the linguistic code. Traditionally possession of λόγος associates man with the divine and distinguishes him from beasts, while obedience to γαστήρ and its necessities draws him closer to the animal world.⁴⁴ Subservience to the needs of the stomach brings man one step closer to the animal world: γαστήρ represents the ardent, bestial, and wild element in man, the internal animality that chains us to the need for food.⁴⁵ Being able to dominate the γαστήρ is fully human; but to indulge it is to stoop to the level of slaves and women⁴⁶ and is, therefore, criticized and

⁴³ On this see Bowie 1993: 62, who compares Paphlagon to the Minotaur, since they both combine the human and the animal. See also Wilkins 1997: 260 who claims that “animality is important in this comedy” and Sommerstein 2009c: 163-7.

⁴⁴ See Segal 1974: 302-4; Arthur 1983: 104; Vernant 1989: 59ff.

⁴⁵ See Vernant 1989: 59-61.

⁴⁶ See Taillardat 1962: 395-98 for the connection in comedy between women and the “politics of the belly”; Turato 1979: 86; Vernant 1989: 66-7; Zeitlin 1999 emphasizes the importance of female appetite to ideas about

condemned (Hes. *Op.* 374-5, *Th.* 593-9, Archil. 124b, Hippon. 118.1-3, 128, Pl. *Ti.* 73a6, Xen. *Mem.* 1.6.10). In this sense, γαστήρ takes its place as an opposition to λόγος and its associated partners (δίκη, νόμος and so forth): λόγος, speech, is fundamental to civilization, since only men, and not animals, are able to think and talk. Thus, the γαστήρ/λόγος opposition represents the distinction between savagery and civilization.⁴⁷

However, in Paphlagon's case the distinction γαστήρ/λόγος is blurred, as his rhetoric is equated with his incessant appetite for food.⁴⁸ Speech is indistinguishable from food, and its production and consumption are governed by the rules of the stomach. Thus, Paphlagon's mouth does double duty: it ingests food and expels words at the same time. Taking in becomes the same as emitting, since Paphlagon's mouth is also identified with his bottom: when Demosthenes urges the Sausage-seller to examine Paphlagon's tongue, what gapes wide is his πρωκτός and not his mouth (375-81):⁴⁹

καὶ νῆ Δί' ἐμβalόντες αὐ-
 τῷ πάτταλον μαγειρικῶς
 εἰς τὸ στόμ', εἴτα δ' ἔνδοθεν
 τὴν γλῶτταν ἐξείραντες αὐ-
 τοῦ σκεψόμεσθ' εὖ κἀνδρικῶς
 κεχηνότος
 τὸν πρωκτόν, εἰ χαλαζῶ.

Insofar as Paphlagon's bottom and mouth are presented as one and the same, one can imagine the kind of rhetoric it will produce. When making a speech, Paphlagon

whether women are fit to rule; Foley 2000; Worman 2008: 72-83 discusses female appetite in comedy. For the connection of Paphlagon with female traits see below p. 121, n. 54.

⁴⁷ See O' Regan 1992: 60-2.

⁴⁸ See O' Regan 1992: 58-9.

⁴⁹ See also the discussion of the passage below p. 135-6.

explosively emits sounds, which have nothing to do with human sounds and human voices, but are rather animal-like cries:⁵⁰ delivery of a well-structured speech, use of reason and normal conversational tone have been replaced by random threats, accusations and loud shouts hurled at the audience. Before he even enters the stage, Paphlagon is described as notorious for his loud, raucous voice (137 κεκράκτης, Κυκλοβόρου φωνὴν ἔχων) and the first line the Sausage seller-addresses to him denounces this very feature (274 καὶ **κέκραγας**, ὥσπερ αἰετὴν τὴν πόλιν καταστρέφεις; cf. 302 ὦ μίαιρὰ καὶ βδελυρὲ **κράκτα**, 311-2 ὅστις ἡμῖν τὰς Ἀθήνας **ἐκκεκώφωκας βοῶν**). When he is beaten by the chorus, Paphlagon appeals to his ability of shouting and bawling (255-6 ὦ γέροντες ἡλιασταί, φράτερες τριωβόλου, / οὐς ἐγὼ βόσκω **κεκραγῶς** καὶ δίκαια κᾶδικα) and threatens to run his enemies down with his loud cries (275 ἀλλ' ἐγὼ σε **τῇ βοῇ** ταύτῃ γε πρῶτα τρέψομαι,⁵¹ 286 καταβοήσομαι βοῶν σε). Indeed, the slave Demosthenes is worried that Paphlagon will rush to the Council to slander them and “bawl a bawling”:

485-7

θεύσει γὰρ ἄξας εἰς τὸ βουλευτήριον,
ὥς οὗτος εἰσπεσὼν ἐκεῖσε διαβαλεῖ
ἡμᾶς ἅπαντας καὶ **κράγον κεκράζεται**

⁵⁰ See Worman 2008: 91-2.

⁵¹ The mss. give line 274 (καὶ κέκραγας, ὥσπερ αἰετὴν τὴν πόλιν καταστρέφεις;) to the chorus and the next (ἀλλ' ἐγὼ σε τῇ βοῇ ταύτῃ γε πρῶτα τρέψομαι) to the Sausage-seller, whereas in Wilson's edition the first line is given to Demosthenes and the second to Paphlagon. It seems to me more reasonable, however, that the first line is spoken by the Sausage-seller, as his first intervention to Paphlagon's shouting, and the second by Paphlagon, who responds to his rival's comment by calling upon his usual weapon (cf. also Sommerstein 1981: 158). Then, most naturally follow the Chorus' lines (ἀλλ' ἐὰν μὲν τόνδε νικᾷς τῇ βοῇ, τήνελλος εἶ/ ἦν δ' ἀναιδείᾳ παρέλθῃ σ', ἡμέτερος ὁ πυραμοῦς) as a comment to the shouting competition which is to follow.

Further below, Paphlagon assimilates himself explicitly to an animal: he describes himself as the dog who defends Demos and speaks proudly of his ear-splitting volubility as his trademark:⁵²

1017-23

{Πα.} σώζεσθαί σ' ἐκέλευ' ἱερὸν **κύνα καρχαρόδοντα**,
 ὃς πρὸ σέθεν χάσκων καὶ ὑπὲρ σοῦ δεινὰ **κεκραγῶς**
 σοὶ μισθὸν ποριεῖ· κἄν μὴ δρᾷ ταῦτ', ἀπολεῖται
 πολλοὶ γὰρ μίσει σφε κατακρώζουσι κολοιοί.
 {Δημ.} ταυτὶ μὰ τὴν Δήμητρ' ἐγὼ οὐκ οἶδ' ὅ τι λέγει.
 τί γάρ ἐστ' Ἐρεχθεῖ καὶ κολοιοῖς καὶ κυνί;
 {Πα.} **ἐγὼ μὲν εἰμ' ὁ κύων· πρὸ σοῦ γὰρ ἀπύω**

Apart from the shouts and the slanders, a standard practice Paphlagon employs is the monopolisation of speech. His idea of prevailing over a verbal contest is always to speak first and not let anyone else utter a single word:

335-9

{Αλ.} καὶ μὴν ἀκούσαθ' οἷός ἐστιν οὕτοσι πολίτης.
 {Πα.} οὐκ αὖ μ' ἐάσεις;
 {Αλ.} μὰ Δί', ἐπεὶ κἀγὼ πονηρός εἰμι.
 {Δη.} ἐὰν δὲ μὴ ταύτη γ' ὑπεῖκη, λέγ' ὅτι κακ πονηρῶν.
 {Πα.} οὐκ αὖ μ' ἐάσεις;
 {Αλ.} μὰ Δία.
 {Πα.} ναὶ μὰ Δία.
 {Αλ.} μὰ τὸν Ποσειδῶ.
 ἀλλ' αὐτὸ περὶ τοῦ πρότερος εἰπεῖν πρῶτα διαμαχοῦμαι

⁵² Note also Cleon's description in the parabasis of *Wasps*, where he is again compared to a number of animals, with his loud voice being once more one of his special features: 1030-5 ἀλλ' Ἡρακλέους ὀργὴν τιν' ἔχων τοῖσι μεγίστοις ἐπεχείρει, / θρασέως ξυστὰς εὐθύς ἀπ' ἀρχῆς αὐτῷ τῷ καρχαρόδοντι, / οὗ δεινόταται μὲν ἀπ' ὀφθαλμῶν Κύννης ἀκτῖνες ἔλαμπον, / ἑκατὸν δὲ κύκλῳ κεφαλαὶ κολάκων οἰμωζομένων ἐλιχμῶντο / περὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν, **φωνὴν δ' εἶχεν χαράδρας ὄλεθρον τετοκυίας**, / φώκης δ' ὁσμὴν, Λαμίας δ' ὄρχεις ἀπλύτους, πρωκτὸν δὲ καμήλου. Cleon appears in the same play also in the form of a dog, who, in accordance with his loud-mouthed description so far, starts barking meaninglessly (903) from the moment he appears in court and then threatens with more barking (929-30 ἵνα μὴ κεκλάγγω διὰ κενῆς ἄλλως ἐγώ / ἐὰν δὲ μή, τὸ λοιπὸν οὐ κεκλάγξομαι). Even though the animality of Paphlagon-Cleon is more concealed in *Knights*, the resemblances are obvious, especially in his parallelism with a dog-guard of Demos.

351-2

{Αλ.} τί δαὶ σὺ πίνων τὴν πόλιν πεποίηκας ὥστε νυνὶ
ὕπὸ σοῦ μονωτάτου κατεγλωττισμένην σιωπᾶν;

Paphlagon's inability to articulate a human-like speech and sustain a civilized discussion can be again paralleled to the ways of a wild animal and is thus a sign of the infringement of the basic laws of civilization. By being deprived of human thought and speech, Paphlagon makes a step towards savagery;⁵³ he places himself if not closer to animals, then in a most ambiguous place in-between animals and humans.

Paphlagon's dietary code is in perfect accordance with the linguistic one in terms of savagery and bestiality. His incessant appetite, which is not limited only to food or non-sacrificial meat, has been already noted. Even more suggestively, it seems that Paphlagon can consume anything, not least people. He behaves like a terrible monster willing to tear his opponent apart (294 διαφορήσω σ' εἴ τι γρύζει, 708 ἐξαρπάσομαί σου τοῖς ὄνυξι τᾶντετρα) and even eat him alive:

691-3

{Αλ.} καὶ μὴν ὁ Παφλαγὼν οὐτοσὶ προσέρχεται,
ὠθῶν κολόκυμα καὶ ταραττων καὶ κυκῶν,
ὥς δὴ καταπιόμενός με.

698-9

οὔτοι μὰ τὴν Δήμητρά γ', εἰ μὴ σ' ἐκφάγω
ἐκ τῆσδε τῆς γῆς, οὐδέποτε βιώσομαι

Magistrates whose audit is pending and wealthy strangers are also treated as food for consumption:

⁵³ For the uncivilized communication and the disruption of a civilized linguistic code as a violation of the man/beast boundary see Segal 1974: 302-4. See also the third chapter on *Birds*.

259-60

κάποσυκάζεις πιέζων τοὺς ὑπευθύνους, σκοπῶν
ὅστις αὐτῶν ὡμός ἐστιν ἢ πέπων ἢ ἄμῃ πέπων

326

ἀμέργεις τῶν ξένων τοὺς καρπίμους

At this point, one cannot fail to recall Paphlagon's association with tuna, the cannibalistic fish which devours its own children, as already noted above. Thus, Paphlagon not only places himself out of the sacrificial system, but also occupies a most ambiguous position on the famous continuum animal/man and savage/civilized. Both his linguistic and his dietary choices associate him more with the bestial world rather than with a human existence. With regard to the opposition savagery/civilization, Paphlagon's behaviour is very close to what Plato describes as the madman in his *Laws* (11.935a-b): in considering the appropriate behaviour of citizens in a lawful city (11.934e ἐν εὐνόμῳ πόλει) and discussing laws regarding abuse, Plato states that the madman must be prohibited from appearing in public, since his shouting and abusive language can have no place in the city (935b). He describes the madman's behaviour in the following way (934e-935b):

ἐκ γὰρ τοῦ κατεύχεσθαι τε ἀλλήλοις ἐπαρωμένους καὶ δι' αἰσchrῶν ὀνομάτων ἐπιφέρειν γυναικείους ἑαυτοῖς φήμας, πρῶτον μὲν ἐκ λόγων, κούφου πράγματος, ἔργῳ μίση τε καὶ ἔχθραι βαρύταται γίνονται. [...] πράγματι γὰρ ἀχαρίστῳ, θυμῷ, χαριζόμενος ὁ λέγων, ἐμπιμπλὰς ὀργὴν κακῶν ἐστιαμάτων, ὅσον ὑπὸ παιδείας ἡμερώθη ποτέ, πάλιν ἐξαγριῶν τῆς ψυχῆς τὸ τοιοῦτον, θηριούμενος ἐν δυσκολίᾳ ζῶν γίγνεται, πικρὰν τοῦ θυμοῦ χάριν ἀποδεχόμενος. μετεκβαίνειν δὲ αὖ πως εἰώθασιν πάντες θαμὰ ἐν τοῖς τοιούτοις εἰς τό τι γελοῖον περὶ τοῦ ἐναντίου φθέγγεσθαι· ὃ τις ἐθιζόμενος οὐδεὶς πώποτε ὃς οὐ τοῦ σπουδαίου τρόπου ἦτοι τὸ παράπαν διήμαρτεν ἢ μεγαλονοίας ἀπώλεσεν μέρη πολλά.

Plato's passage of the madman is very relevant to Paphlagon's situation, because it skilfully interweaves the antitheses wild/tame, beast/man and savage/civilized, with metaphors from both the linguistic code and the dietary one.⁵⁴ Plato begins by mentioning abusive speech (ἐκ γὰρ τοῦ κατεύχεσθαι τε ἀλλήλοις ἐπαρωμένους καὶ δι' αἰσchrῶν ὀνομάτων, πρῶτον μὲν ἐκ λόγων, ὁ λέγων), but he goes on to parallel abusive language with savagery, wildness and bestiality (ἡμερώθη, ἐξαγριῶν, θηριούμενος), which also apply to Paphlagon's case.⁵⁵

We have noted that Paphlagon appears, on the one hand, to have no relation with the sacrificial ritual and, on the other hand, to have a strong affinity with the bestial world. Both features are associated in the history of anthropology with a primitive state of existence, back in the days when men used to live like animals eating raw food and one another.⁵⁶ According to the myth of the Bee-Women, raw-eating and cannibalism defined man's state before the discovery of honey and agriculture: as recorded by Mnaseas (FGH fr. 5), the Nymphs called Melissai taught people to abstain from omophagy and allelophagy

⁵⁴ Note also that the passage assimilates people who use abusive and insulting language to women (ἐκ γὰρ τοῦ κατεύχεσθαι τε ἀλλήλοις ἐπαρωμένους καὶ δι' αἰσchrῶν ὀνομάτων ἐπιφέρειν γυναικείους ἑαυτοῖς φήμας). Paphlagon, similarly, is often presented to possess female traits (see above p. 116), as well as a sexually passive and thus effeminate man (78, 364, 375-81 and 878-80).

⁵⁵ The passage also makes a noteworthy statement about people's reaction to such abusive and savage behaviour: it notes that in such disputes people are wont to indulge in ridicule of their abusive opponent (εἰς τό τι γελοῖον περὶ τοῦ ἐναντίου φθέγγεσθαι); this behaviour, however, makes them stray from the path of virtue (τοῦ σπουδαίου τρόπου...διήμαρτεν) and lose their high-mindedness (μεγαλονοίας ἀπώλεσεν μέρη πολλά). Indeed, the Sausage-seller indulges in the ridicule of his rival in a way that shows him most foul and unwise.

⁵⁶ See Detienne 1981a: 219. See also Pl. *Leg.* 782b6-c2.

and directed them to agriculture.⁵⁷ A different version of men's shift from their primordial state to civilisation is preserved through the Hesiodic account of Prometheus' first alimentary sacrifice and his gift of fire to the people.⁵⁸ The implications of the first sacrifice have been thoroughly analysed by Detienne and Vernant.⁵⁹ Through the animal sacrifice and the cooking of food over the fire men are able to establish their position between beasts and gods. The distinction lies in the rules about eating:⁶⁰ men are not allowed to eat raw flesh, whereas animals eat uncooked food as well as one another (Hes. *Op.* 276-81).

Thus, consumption of raw food and cannibalism are in sharp contrast with the human dietary habits, as formed after the initiation of the sacrificial ritual,⁶¹ and certainly carried negative overtones, since they were both proclaimed to be forms of a primitive bestiality, which the human race had long left behind. This is further confirmed by the fact that cannibalism and eating of raw food in Greek texts appears to survive as a practice only in the margins of the civilized world, namely in geographically remote areas, like, for

⁵⁷ FHG fr. 5= Schol. Pindar. P. IV, 104: Ὅτι δὲ καὶ τὰς περὶ τὰ ἱερὰ διατελούσας Νύμφας Μελίσσας ἔλεγον, Μνασέας ὁ Παταρεὺς ἀφηγεῖται λέγων, ὥς αὐταὶ **κατέπαυσαν σαρκοφαγοῦντας τοὺς ἀνθρώπους** πείσασαι τῇ ἀπὸ τῶν δένδρων χρῆσθαι τροφῇ [...] ἄνευ γὰρ Νυμφῶν οὔτε Δῆμητρος ἱερὸν τιμᾶται, διὰ τὸ ταύτας πρῶτας καρπὸν ἀποδείξαι καὶ τὴν **ἀλληλοφαγίαν** παῦσαι καὶ περιβλήματα χάριν αἰδοῦς ἐξ ὕλης ἐπινοῆσαι. On the myth of the Bee-Women see also Detienne 1981b: 100. According to a relevant tradition, the Bee Nymphs were also the teachers of Aristaios, who, subsequently, brought humanity to the next level of civilisation, pastoralism (Larson 2001: 87).

⁵⁸ See Hes. *Th.* 535-70 and *Op.* 47-58. See also Athenion fr. 1 (=Athen. 660e), where a μάγειρος claims that the institution of sacrifice and ὁπταῖν rescued man from primeval cannibalism; Plato *Plt.* 274c-d ὅθεν δὴ τὰ πάλοι λεχθέντα παρὰ θεῶν δῶρα ἡμῖν δεδώρηται μετ' ἀναγκαίας διδαχῆς καὶ παιδείσεως, πῦρ μὲν παρὰ Προμηθέως, τέχναι δὲ παρ' Ἡφαίστου καὶ τῆς συντέχνου, σπέρματα δὲ αὖ καὶ φυτὰ παρ' ἄλλων· καὶ πάνθ' ὅποσα τὸν ἀνθρώπινον βίον συγκατεσκεύακεν ἐκ τούτων γέγονεν [...].

⁵⁹ See Detienne 1979, 1981a and 1989; Vernant 1981a, 1981b and 1989.

⁶⁰ See Porphy. *Abst.* 1.13 and Detienne 1979: 56-7 and 1981a: 217-20; Vernant 1981a: 13.

⁶¹ See Vernant 1981a: 13 "*omophagia* est l' inversion des valeurs normales du sacrifice".

example, northern Aetolia,⁶² Scythia,⁶³ and the Euxine coast.⁶⁴ In general, from Homer on, the extreme edges of the inhabited world form a focal point for the contrast between civilization and savagery.⁶⁵ The distinction between savage and civilized people with regard to dietary issues is very often made in ethnography. Raw-eating and cannibalistic practices are treated, at best, as paradoxographical material concerning outlandish people⁶⁶ or, at worst, are listed among – and therefore associated with – unnatural propensities, which are sometimes thought to be triggered by an unstable or insane condition of the mind.⁶⁷ In both cases, either treated as part of a paradoxographic description or as mental sickness, omophagy and cannibalism are deemed to be unacceptable.

⁶² Thuc. 3.94.5 ἐπιχειρεῖν δ' ἐκέλευον πρῶτον μὲν Ἀποδωτοῖς, ἔπειτα δὲ Ὀφιονεῦσι καὶ μετὰ τούτους Εὐρυτάσιν, ὅπερ μέγιστον μέρος ἐστὶ τῶν Αἰτωλῶν, ἀγνωστότατοι δὲ γλῶσσαν καὶ **ὠμοφάγοι** εἰσίν, ὡς λέγονται.

⁶³ Ephorus in FGrH fr. 42 (= Strabon 7. 3. 9) Ἐφορος δ' ἐν τῇ τετάρτῃ μὲν τῆς ἱστορίας, Εὐρώπῃ δ' ἐπιγραφομένῃ βίβλῳ, περιοδεύσας τὴν Εὐρώπην μέχρι Σκυθῶν ἐπὶ τέλει φησὶν εἶναι τῶν τε ἄλλων Σκυθῶν καὶ τῶν Σαυροματῶν τοὺς βίους ἀνομοίους· τοὺς μὲν γὰρ εἶναι χαλεπούς, ὥστε καὶ **ἀνθρωποφαγεῖν**, τοὺς δὲ καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ζώων ἀπέχεσθαι. «οἱ μὲν οὖν ἄλλοι» φησί «τὰ περὶ τῆς **ὠμότητος** αὐτῶν λέγουσιν, εἰδότες τὸ δεινὸν [δὲ] καὶ τὸ θαυμαστὸν ἐκπληκτικὸν ὄν»; Cf. Hdt. 4.101 and 4.106 about the tribe of Androphagoi.

⁶⁴ Arist. *Pol.* 1338b19-22 πολλὰ δ' ἔστι τῶν ἐθνῶν ἃ πρὸς τὸ κτείνειν καὶ πρὸς τὴν **ἀνθρωποφαγίαν** εὐχερῶς ἔχει, καθάπερ τῶν περὶ τὸν Πόντον Ἀχαιοὶ τε καὶ Ἡνίοχοι καὶ τῶν ἡπειρωτικῶν ἐθνῶν ἕτερα, Arist. *NE* 1148b18-24 [...] ἔστι καὶ περὶ τούτων ἕκαστα παραπλησίως ἰδεῖν ἔξεις· λέγω δὲ τὰς **θηριώδεις**, οἷον τὴν ἄνθρωπον ἢν λέγουσι τὰς κυοῦσας ἀνασχίζουσιν τὰ παῖδια κατεσθίειν, **ἢ οἷσις χαίρειν φασὶν ἐνίοις τῶν ἀπηγριωμένων περὶ τὸν Πόντον, τοὺς μὲν ὠμοῖς τοὺς δὲ ἀνθρώπων κρέασιν, τοὺς δὲ τὰ παῖδια δανεῖζειν ἀλλήλοις εἰς εὐωχίαν**, ἢ τὸ περὶ Φάλαριν λεγόμενον.

⁶⁵ Cf. the island of the raw-eating, cannibalistic Cyclops (*Od.* 9.166ff.) and of Laestrygonians (*Od.* 10.116ff.); the people who in Hdt. 3.99 inhabit the eastern limits of the οἰκουμένη and are eaters of raw flesh (ἄλλοι δὲ τῶν Ἰνδῶν πρὸς ἧν οἰκέοντες τούτων νομάδες εἰσὶ, κρεῶν ἐδεσταὶ ὠμῶν, καλέονται δὲ Παδαῖοι), and also practice cannibalism. Cf. also the orgiastic worshippers of Dionysus, who are raw-eaters and perform their rites outside the walls of the city. See Segal 1974: 291-3.

⁶⁶ As, for instance, the case of the “noseless” people (ἀμύκτηρες), described by the Hellenistic historian Megasthenes, quoted by Strabo (15.1.57, 711C = FGrHist 715 F27b). They are remote people who are characterized by raw-eating, ὠμοφαγία.

⁶⁷ Arist. *NE* 1148b24-27 αὐταὶ μὲν θηριώδεις, αἱ δὲ διὰ **νόσους** γίνονται (καὶ διὰ **μανίαν** ἐνίοις, ὥσπερ ὁ τὴν μητέρα καθιερεύσας καὶ φαγών, καὶ ὁ τοῦ συνδούλου τὸ ἥπαρ). See also *Pl. Rep.* 571b4-d2 and 619b7-c2, where unbridled consumption and cannibalism are deemed to be primitive lusts aroused to us only in sleep and pertain to the tyrant's behaviour.

Consequently, Paphlagon, with regard to his tendency to consume raw food and gobble up people alive, does not differ much from the remote savage tribes or the primitive men at the beginning of time and their practices, as mentioned above. Equally telling in this respect are Paphlagon's name and its implications. Indeed the Paphlagonians are a suitable race to typify this monstrous leader. They are first mentioned by Homer in the Trojan catalogue:

Il. 2.851-2

Παφλαγόνων δ' ἡγεῖτο Πυλαιμένος λάσιον κῆρ
ἐξ Ἑνετῶν, ὅθεν ἡμιόνων γένος ἀγροτεράων.

As Bowie (1993: 61) suggests, the “race of the wild mules” indicates the unusual nature of the Paphlagonians, since abnormal occurrences like fertile mules are often attributed to barbarian areas. Moreover, in ancient tradition, Paphlagonians are presented as forming part of groups of people on the Euxine coast, whose characteristics, as previously mentioned, mark them as separate from the Greek world.⁶⁸ In Herodotus (1.6 and 1.72), they are one of the races living along the river Alys, which cuts off the lower part of Asia and flows into the Euxine sea. Apollonius of Rhodes (2.311-407) lists them alongside the Cimmerians, who, according to Homer, live at the limits of the Ocean and are always covered by darkness, cloud and mist (*Od.* 11.13-9). Lastly, in Hermippus (PCG fr. 66 20-1) Paphlagonians are associated with acorns (τὰς δὲ Διὸς βάλανους καὶ ἀμύγδαλα σιγαλόεντα/Παφλαγόνες παρέχουσι). This is again very appropriate for Paphlagon, since it

⁶⁸ See Bowie 1993: 61.

is very well attested that acorns were one of men's earliest foods, which were abandoned once men got out of their primitive condition.⁶⁹ Thus, Paphlagon can be seen as a member of a savage tribe, whose political practices pertain to bestiality and cannibalism.

5. Paphlagon and Polyphemus

I have noted above the resemblance of Paphlagon to Polyphemus with regard to their noisy and gruesome digesting of food. I will now pursue this likeness further by tracing it in the combination of rawness and cannibalism, which defines Paphlagon and is best illustrated by Polyphemus. In the *Odyssey*, Polyphemus eats uncooked food and devours men raw, when he has a chance. His eating ways are compared to those of a mountain-dwelling lion (9.292 ἥσθιε δ' ὥς τε λέων ὀρεσίτροφος), which is an eater of raw-flesh: he dashes Odysseus' men to the earth like puppies, so that their brains flow forth upon the ground (9.289-90), and devours them, entrails, flesh, bone and all (9.292-3). Moreover, Polyphemus appears to mimic the civilized ways of eating, since he cuts his "meat" and fashions a meal (9.291 τοὺς δὲ διὰ μελεῖστί ταμῶν ὀπλίσσατο δόρπον). However, we are not allowed to forget that it is raw people that he is splitting limb from limb and devouring. Polyphemus makes no use of fire, although he possesses it (*Od.* 9.251, 308, cf. *Theoc.* 11.51). This image of Polyphemus, who is aware of what constitutes civilized living,

⁶⁹ Perhaps the earliest reference is found in *Hdt.* 1.66.2, who attributes to Arcadians the epithet βαλανηφάγοι in his intention to imply their primitive condition (see How and Wells 1928: 89 and Asheri 2007: 128 and 132-3). For acorn-eating as a habit referring to people of remote districts or barbaric regions see also Mason 1995: 13.

but chooses to override the rules of civilization,⁷⁰ becomes more evident in Euripides' *Cyclops* (396-404). Polyphemus' cannibalism is made even more horrible, because in various passages it is combined with the civilized institutions of sacrifice and cooking (244-6, 334-5, 361-71, 395-404).⁷¹ In the last and most extensive passage Polyphemus is called a μάγειρος Ἰδίου (397) and acts accordingly: he cuts the throat of his victims (398 ἔσφαζε), butchers them with the sacrificial knife (403 μαχαίραι) and roasts the fleshy parts over the fire (403 σάρκας ἐξώπτα πυρί), while he puts arms and legs in the cauldron to boil (404 τὰ δ' ἐς λέβητ' ἐφῆκεν ἔψεσθαι μέλη).⁷² The emphasis on the ritual of sacrifice in the context of the satyric drama is important: by making Polyphemus cook his meal, Euripides plays with the traditional epic image of Polyphemus, the cannibal; yet, the sacrifice does not serve to place Polyphemus at a high level of civilization, but, conversely, it intensifies the horror of his cannibalism, since it is ἀνθρωποφαγία, a savage and perverted sacrifice.⁷³ Although Polyphemus displays a horrible sophistication in the performance of his savage sacrifice (298 ῥυθμῶι θ' ἐνὶ), he remains θεοστυγής (396).⁷⁴ In a similar way, Paphlagon follows the example of his prototype and stays out of the world and the language of sacrifice. Moreover, Polyphemus in Homer is defeated by wine, fire and tool-making (cf. the drill-

⁷⁰ The fact that Polyphemus owns a herd and has milk and cheese also ambiguously straddles the line between savagery and civilisation. See Segal 1974: 299. According to him, the cheese stands close to the rotted or putrefied, a category where food approaches being a part of organic nature and no longer food at all.

⁷¹ See Seaford 1984: 181.

⁷² For a commentary on the sacrificial ritual see Berthiaume 1982: 14; Durand 1989: 121; Seaford 1984: 151-3 and 180-2. See also below p. 131.

⁷³ See Seaford 1984: 152.

⁷⁴ See Seaford 1984: 182.

simile of 9.384-8), which are all features of developed civilization; accordingly, as we shall see, the Sausage-seller prevails over the monstrous Paphlagon through the highest sign of human civilization, sacrifice.

Paphlagon confirms his association with Polyphemos later on, in the scene of his final defeat by the Sausage-seller (1229ff.). Paphlagon refuses to hand over his garland (and thus be deprived of his office) to the Sausage-seller before he makes sure that the Sausage-seller possesses all the qualifications laid down by the oracle for the man who would overthrow him. The scene (1232-53) in which the Sausage-seller affirms that he meets one by one all the criteria indicted by the oracle is modelled, according to Sommerstein (1981: 208), on discovery-scenes in tragedy. However, another model is also possible. During the “discovery scene” the Sausage-seller proves to be the man of whom Paphlagon was warned in his oracle and, after Paphlagon admits his defeat, the Sausage-seller reveals his name, Agorakritos. The revelation of his true name after he has escaped from his monstrous rival, reminds us, as Bowie (1993: 56-7) has suggested, of Odysseus, who reveals his true identity to Polyphemos only after he has managed to escape; at that point Polyphemos also realizes that Odysseus is the man of whom the oracles had warned him (9.506ff.). If we can make the association between Agorakritos and Odysseus, as Bowie suggests, we are even more entitled to consider a connection between Paphlagon and Polyphemos on the grounds of their previous assimilation. Through this association of Paphlagon with Polyphemos, we

are once more allowed to observe Paphlagon's consistent behaviour as a beast or a primordial creature.

6. Paphlagon and Cronus

Paphlagon's connection with bestiality and primitivism, as they existed before the establishment of alimentary sacrifice, provide an indication for his possible association also with Cronus.⁷⁵ According to the oracles which the two slaves steal from him while he is sleeping, Paphlagon is presented as part of a sequence of political leader-mongers, each one of them being worse than his predecessor (129 *στυππειώλης*, 132 *προβατοπώλης*, 136 *βυρσοπώλης*, 143 *άλλαντοπώλης*). This sequence alludes to and parodies succession myths, like for example Hesiod's account in the *Theogony* of the sequence Ouranos-Cronus-Zeus, as Bowie suggests.⁷⁶ One might note that both Cronus and Paphlagon are the second-to-last powerful links of the chain and are to be defeated by their successors, Zeus and Sausage-seller respectively.

Yet, the most conclusive evidence for Paphlagon's assimilation to Cronus is to be found in another part of the *Theogony*. In lines 453-67, we find out that once Cronus came to power, through fear that one of his children might dethrone him, he started swallowing them immediately after they were born. In this respect, he shares a feature with Paphlagon,

⁷⁵ Bowie (1993: 58ff.) notes that Paphlagon is a monstrous Titan-like figure, but he mostly associates him with Typhoeus, not Cronus.

⁷⁶ See Bowie 1993: 58-9.

since they both resort to cannibalistic practices for similar reasons: Cronus wanted to defend his power from future rivals,⁷⁷ just as Paphlagon wanted to discourage and threaten potential opponents:

691-3

{Αλ.} καὶ μὴν ὁ Παφλαγὼν οὕτοσὶ προσέρχεται,
ὠθῶν κολόκυμα καὶ ταραττων καὶ κυκῶν,
ὥς δὴ καταπιόμενός με.

698-9

οὔτοι μὰ τὴν Δήμητρά γ', εἰ μὴ σ' ἐκφάγω
ἐκ τῆσδε τῆς γῆς, οὐδέποτε βιώσομαι

The association of Paphlagon with Cronus is important: Paphlagon is shown once more to correspond to a primitive figure, who exercises his power in a way that rejects the sacrificial system. The implications of his practice are severe: instead of bringing about progress and prosperity in the house of Demos, Paphlagon holds it back at a primitive stage, where the era when people knew neither justice nor injustice and were reduced to an animal state does not seem so distant anymore. However, all this is about to change with the advent of the Sausage-seller – or, rather, Agorakritos.

7. Trust me, I am a μάγειρος!

We have already observed the way in which the practices of Paphlagon are associated with the alimentary codes of the play. I shall now examine the figure of the Sausage-seller, considering how his political practices are connected with the sacrificial

⁷⁷ See Detienne 1978: 64-66 and 1981a: 215-6.

system and in what ways they render him the winner of this political contest. I will show that the familiarity of the Sausage-seller with sacrificial meat and practices is an indication that he is more than a simple vendor of meat in the agora and the city gates: apart from the selling of the meat, he appears to be concerned with the sacrifice of animals and their cooking, as well. In this sense, he is a true μάγειρος.⁷⁸

The Sausage-seller is exclusively associated with meat which is sacrificial. The meat he sells at the agora, to begin with, follows the sacrificial rather than the culinary code, which is most common in comedy in general. In a number of comic passages listed by Athenaeus, sacrificial meat, like σπλάγχνα and ἔντερα are mixed with other food, like fish, hare or poultry, in line with the culinary practice:

Ath. 3.48.19-25:

Ἀξιόνικος δὲ ἐν Χαλκιδικῷ φησιν
ζωμὸν ποιῶ
θερμὸν ἰχθὺν ἐπαναπλάττων, ἡμίβρωτα λείψανα
συντιθείς, οἶνω διαίνων, ἔντερ' ἀλλ' καὶ σιλφίῳ
σφενδονῶν, ἀλλᾶντα τέμνων, παραφέρων χορδῆς
τόμον,
ρύγχος εἰς ὄξος πιέζων.

Ath. 3.49.30-5:

καὶ δῆθ' ὑπάρχει τέμαχος ἐγ-
χέλειον ὑμῖν, τευθίς, ἄρ-
νειον κρέας, φύσκης τόμος,
ποὺς ἐφθός, ἥπαρ, πλευρόν, ὀρ-
νίθεια πλήθει πολλά, τυ-
ρὸς ἐν μέλιτι, μερὶς κρεῶν.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ As before, in the sense of butcher, cook and vendor. For the Sausage-seller as a “sophistic butcher” see Worman 2008: 84ff. and 107ff.

⁷⁹ Cf. also Ar. fr. 333 and Wilkins 1993: 122.

However, the Sausage-seller follows the pure sacrificial code and sells none of the other meats to be found in comedy.⁸⁰ According to the sacrificial code, the parts of the animal are divided into σπλάγχνα, κρέα ἐφθά and ἔντερα. The σπλάγχνα were roasted on skewers, whereas the κρέα ἐφθά were put to boil in the cauldron. As for the ἔντερα, they were prepared as sausages.⁸¹ This last category is the Sausage-seller's domain:

160-1

{Αλ.} τί μ', ὦγάθ', οὐ πλύνειν ἔῃς τὰς **κοιλίας**
πωλεῖν τε τοὺς **ἀλλᾶντας**, ἀλλὰ καταγελαῖς;

200-1

[...] **κοιλιοπώλησιν** δὲ θεὸς μέγα κῦδος ὀπάζει,
αἴ κεν μὴ πωλεῖν **ἀλλᾶντας** μᾶλλον ἔλωνται."

315

εἰ δὲ μὴ σύ γ' οἶσθα κάττυμ', οὐδ' ἐγὼ **χορδεύματα**

Tripes and bellies (κοιλίαι), sausages and black-pudding (ἀλλᾶντες, χορδεύματα): these are the parts of the animals that the Sausage-seller deals with. That this meat was probably the excess from sacrifice or the priests' portions sold off is confirmed by Paphlagon's declaration in 300-1,⁸² where he threatens to expose Paphlagon for selling sacred tripe (ἱερὰς κοιλίας) on which no tithe had been paid:

καί σε φαίνω τοῖς πρυτάνεσιν
ἀδεκατεύτους τῶν θεῶν ἱερὰς ἔχοντα κοιλίας.

⁸⁰ The Sausage-seller's sacrificial meat comes from cows and pigs, rather than any other animal: 356 ἐγὼ δέ γ' ἥνυστρον βοδὸς καὶ κοιλίαν ὑείαν, 362 ἀλλὰ **σχελίδας** ἐδηδοκῶς, 1178-9 ἢ δ' Ὀβριμοπάτρα γ' **ἐφθὸν** ἐκ ζωμοῦ **κρέας**/καὶ **χόλικος ἥνυστρον** τε καὶ **γαστροὺς τόμον**. See Wilkins 1993: 123 and further below p. 133-4.

⁸¹ See schol. ad Eq. 198d τὰ γὰρ ἔντερα καὶ τοὺς ἀλλᾶντας μετὰ αἵματος καὶ πιμελῆς ἢ ἀλφίτων φυρῶσιν, 214b χορδὴ γάρ ἐστι τὸ λεπτὸν ἔντερον, ὃ εἰώθασιν πλέκειν οἱ μάγειροι, 214c χορδαὶ γάρ εἰσι τὰ τῶν τετραπόδων ἔντερα ἃ εἰώθασιν οἱ μάγειροι πλέκειν, ἢ πληροῦν τοῦ φυράματος. See Detienne 1989: 10 and Wilkins 1993: 121.

⁸² See Wilkins 1993: 121.

Moreover, in lines 488-9, the Sausage-seller is equipped with the knife of a μάγειρος:

ἀλλ' εἴμι· πρῶτον δ' ὥς ἔχω τὰς κοιλίας
καὶ τὰς μαχαίρας ἐνθαδὶ καταθήσομαι.

The μάχαιρα is not just any knife: it is the knife used in sacrifices for the slaughtering and the carving of the victim and its subsequent cooking.⁸³ Indeed, in several passages, the Sausage-seller appears to be familiar with the practices of a cook. For instance, in lines 213-6, the slave Demosthenes describes the Sausage-seller's preparation of meat and compares it with the political practice he has to follow. All that the Sausage-seller has to do is to make mince-meat or sausages of the state affairs⁸⁴ (χόρδευε, cf. χορδεύματα line 315), as well as sweeten the people with little cookery phrases:

213-6
φαυλότατον ἔργον· ταῦθ' ἅπερ ποιεῖς ποίει·
τάραττε καὶ χόρδευ' ὁμοῦ τὰ πράγματα

⁸³ For literary sources for the use of the μάχαιρα in sacrifice and cooking cf. Ar. Pax 1017-8 λαβὲ τὴν μάχαιραν· εἶθ' ὅπως μαγειρικῶς/σφάζεις τὸν οἶν and the scholia in Pax 948 εἰώθασι γὰρ ἐπὶ τὸ κανοῦν τὴν μάχαιραν φέρειν κατακρύπτοντες αὐτὴν ταῖς ὀλαῖς καὶ τοῖς στέμμασιν, Th. 693-5 ἀλλ' ἐνθάδ' ἐπὶ τῶν μηρίων/πληγὲν μαχαίρα τῇδε φοινίας φλέβας/καθαιματώσει βωμόν, E. Cyc. 396-404 (the Cyclops treating men as animals for sacrifice, see Berthiaume 1982: 14; Durand 1989: 121) and the scholia in E. Or. 194 ἔκανε, ἔθανε; ἐφόνευσας ὅθεν τὸ κανοῦν λέγεται, εἰς ὃ φέρεται ἡ ἱεουργικὴ μάχαιρα, Alex. fr. 174K διακενῆς δ' ἔστηκ' ἐγὼ/ἔχων μάχαιραν, Philem. Jun. fr. 1K (=Ath. 291e) μάγειρός ἐστιν οὐκ ἐὰν ζωμήρυσιν/ἔχων τις ἔλθῃ καὶ μάχαιραν πρὸς τινα, and Philostr. VA 1.1 (about Pythagoras abstaining from sacrifices) ὥς ἀσπάζοιντο τὰ τοιαῦτα οἱ θεοὶ μᾶλλον ἢ τὰς ἐκατόμβας καὶ τὴν μάχαιραν ἐπὶ τοῦ κανοῦ. See Dohm 1964: 34; Berthiaume 1982: 109; Detienne and Svenbro 1989: 162; Detienne 1989: 12-3 "it is the *makhaira*, the cutthroat, that faithful servants presented as sacrificers wear on their belts in the lifesized statues placed near the temple of Apollo *Magieiros* and *Lakeutes* (sacrifice and augur) at Pyla (Cyprus), as well as in Phocis" (cf. Delcourt 1965: 39-40 and Seaford 1994: 48 for the story of Pyrrhos killed in the Delphic sanctuary with a μάχαιρα). For several depictions in vases of the μάχαιρα at the moment of killing see Durand 1989: 122-8; Van Straten 1995: 103-7; Georgoudi 2005: 123-7 and esp. 122n.21 and 127n.49 about the μάχαιρα in the inventory of sanctuaries among other cooking instruments; Parnell 2013 for the portrayal of μάχαιρα and κοπίς in domestic and sacrificial contexts.

⁸⁴ See schol. at 214b χόρδευε: τὰ ἔντερα τῶν τετραπόδων χορδὰς καλοῦσι καὶ τοῦτο οὖν ἀπὸ τῆς τέχνης τοῦ ἀλλαντοπώλου εἴρηται. ὥπερ γάρ, φησί, γεμίζεις καὶ πληροῖς τὰ ἔντερα πάντα τοῦ φυράματος, οὕτως ὁ χόρδευε καὶ τὰ πολιτικά, τουτέστι σύμπλεκε ἀλλήλοις καὶ συγκύκα.

ἅπαντα, καὶ τὸν δῆμον ἀεὶ προσποιοῦ
ὑπογλυκαίνων ῥηματίοις μαγειρικοῖς.

Most of the references to sacrificial meat and sacrificial practices are to be found, however, in the course of the Sausage-seller's competition with Paphlagon. The aim is twofold: on the one hand the Sausage-seller tries to entice Demos and cap the offers of Paphlagon with offers of sacrificial meat; on the other hand, he uses the sacrificial meat as a means to display his power to Paphlagon and phrase his threats against him. The Sausage-seller offers sacrificial meat twice as an enticement to Demos, so as to win his favour: at one time he offers to Demos pork bellies and broth from the boiled meat (1178-9 ἡ δ' Ὀβριμοπάτρα γ' ἐφθὸν ἐκ ζωμοῦ κρέας/καὶ χόλικος ἡνύστρου τε καὶ γαστρὸς τόμον), and at another intestines (1184 ἐντέροις), to serve as planks for the interior of his ships (1185 ἐντερόνειαν).⁸⁵ The latter suggestion comes as a response to Paphlagon's offer of a beaten-cake (1182 ἐλατῆρος) to Demos: the Sausage-seller's sacrificial meat competes with Paphlagon's non-sacrificial food.

The Sausage seller competes with Paphlagon in this way in other passages too, in which he explicitly uses the sacrificial meat and sacrificial practices as a display of his power and expertise. Paphlagon first rouses him by questioning whether he has any other skills but that of a μάγειρος. To the Sausage-seller's claim that he is as able to speak as to spice his meat (343 καρυκοποιεῖν) Paphlagon responds with the firm belief that the

⁸⁵ For this word see the scholia ad loc.: τὰ ἐγκοίλια, τὰ ἀπὸ τῆς τρόπιδος ἀνερχόμενα ξύλα, ἐντερόνεια καλεῖται. Chantraine (1961) thinks that Aristophanes coined the word for this passage.

Sausage-seller is only good at preparing the torn and raw meat for consumption and advises him to stick to this practice:

343-5

{Αλ.} ὅτι ἡ λέγειν οἷός τε κὰγὼ καὶ καρυκοποιεῖν.

{Πα.} ἰδοὺ λέγειν. καλῶς γ' ἂν οὖν σὺ πρᾶγμα προσπείσῃ σοι

ὠμοσπάρακτον παραλαβὼν μεταχειρίσαιο χρηστῶς.

Paphlagon then goes on to display his power by boasting of his endless consumption of fish (353-5, 361). On his part, the Sausage-seller tries to counterbalance Paphlagon's claims by boasting of his capacity to gobble up, at one go, the paunch of a cow and the tripe of a pig together with their broth (356-8 ἐγὼ δέ γ' ἥνυστρον βοῶς καὶ κοιλίαν υἱείαν/καταβροχθίσας, κᾶτ' ἐκπιὼν τὸν ζωμὸν ἀναπόνιπτος/λαρυγγίῳ τοὺς ῥήτορας καὶ Νικίαν λαπάξω), and, in another instance, ribs of beef (362 ἀλλὰ **σχελίδας** ἐδηδοκῶς ὠνήσομαι μέταλλα), namely pure sacrificial meat. In the former threat, one may trace a reference to a sacrificial practice: as the scholia suggest, the verb λαρυγγίζω has the sense of both shout someone down (καταβοήσομαι) and slit someone's throat (τὴν φάρυγγα ἐκτεμῶ).⁸⁶ Even though the outcome is the same - the politicians are silenced either way⁸⁷ - one may interpret the verb in the latter way, since the slitting of throat is part of a butcher's expertise (cf. 374 below).

Indeed, the Sausage-seller's threats against Paphlagon make much use of the imagery of sacrificial practices and the preparation of the sacrificial meat. He threatens to “stuff” Paphlagon's ass, as if it were a sausage (364 ἐγὼ δέ βυθήσω γέ σοι τὸν πρωκτὸν ἀντὶ

⁸⁶ Note that “throttle” is also the translation chosen by Sommerstein (1981).

⁸⁷ As the scholia vividly explain “τμηθείσης γὰρ τῆς φάρυγγος οὐχ οἷόν τε τὴν φωνὴν προῖεσθαι”.

φύσκης),⁸⁸ to cut him into pieces, as he cuts pieces out of the sacrificial crop (372 περικόμματ' ἔκ σου σκευάσω),⁸⁹ to slit his throat, as if he were a sacrificial victim (374 τὸν πρηγορεῶνά σου κτεμῶ),⁹⁰ and declares that he will furl his sausages, and not his sails, (432-3 ἐγὼ δὲ συστείλας γε τοὺς ἀλλᾶντας εἴτ' ἀφήσω/κατὰ κῦμ' ἑμαυτὸν οὐρίον, κλάειν σε μακρὰ κελεύων) in order to face the strong gale of Paphlagon (430-1).

The most striking example which best illustrates the familiarity of the Sausage-seller with sacrificial practices is to be found in lines 375-81. There, Demosthenes suggests that the Sausage-seller should apply his sacrificial skills to Paphlagon and thus treat him as a pig for sacrifice:⁹¹

καὶ νῆ Δί' ἐμβαλόντες αὐ-
 τῷ πάτταλον μαγειρικῶς
 εἰς τὸ στόμ', εἴτα δ' ἔνδοθεν
 τὴν γλῶτταν ἐξείραντες αὐ-
 τοῦ σκεψόμεσθ' εὖ κἀνδρικῶς
 κεχηνότος
 τὸν πρωκτόν, εἰ χαλαζᾷ.

The suggestion begins as a reference to the butchers' practice of examining pigs before the sacrifice and checking if they showed signs of tapeworm, such as cysts on the tongue. It ends, however, with an anti-climax: the mouth of the pig is replaced by the

⁸⁸ Cf. the scholiast's note ad loc.: φύσκη ἔντερόν ἐστι παχύ, εἰς ὃ ἐμβάλλεται ἄλευρα καὶ κρέα [καὶ μάσσουσιν], ἐξ οὗ γίνεται ὁ ἀλλᾶς, ὡς ἀλλαντοπώλης δὲ τῆς φύσκης ἐμνημόνευσεν.

⁸⁹ Cf. the scholia ad loc.: περικόμματα τὰ ἐκ τῶν μαγείρων περιαιρέματα τῶν κρεῶν. ὃ δὲ βούλεται λέγειν, τοιοῦτόν ἐστι [τουτέστι] κατὰ μέρος σου κόψω τὸ σῶμα. ὡς μάγειρος δὲ λέγει. For the περικόμματα as stuffing for sausages see Alex. fr. 1M.

⁹⁰ See Sommerstein 1981: 163 "like a butcher dealing with a fowl".

⁹¹ See Wilkins 1993: 124; Worman 2008: 87, 90.

bottom of Paphlagon, and it is signs of sexual passivity, and not of any sickness, the inspectors should be attentive to.⁹²

Later on, it is the Sausage-seller who offers himself as a sacrificial victim to Demos in order to prove his loyalty to him:

769-72

κᾶγωγ', ὦ Δῆμ', εἰ μή σε φιλῶ καὶ μὴ στέργω, κατατμηθεὶς
ἐψοίμην ἐν περικομματίοις· κεῖ μὴ τούτοισι πέποιθας,
ἐπὶ ταυτησὶ κατακνησθεῖην ἐν μυττωτῷ μετὰ τυροῦ
καὶ τῇ κρεάγρᾳ τῶν ὀρχιπέδων ἐλκοίμην εἰς Κεραμεικόν.

The Sausage-seller invites Demos, if Demos finds that the Sausage-seller does not love him, to treat him in the way in which the Sausage-seller himself was threatening to treat Paphlagon before: as a sacrificial victim. He gives Demos the permission to cut him into little pieces (cf. 372 περικόμματα), as if he were meat, and then boil him. If Demos still remains unconvinced by this gesture, the Sausage-seller urges that he be placed on his own cooking table (ἐπὶ ταυτησί), made into a savoury mash with cheese and dragged, by his testicles, with the meat hook out of the pot⁹³ and up to Kerameikos. The image reveals once

⁹² Cf. the accusation of sexual passivity against Paphlagon in lines 78, 364 and 878-80. According to the play's logic, sexual passivity is a sure sign of the future leader (428-9). The emphasis on sexual passivity in the first part of the play, before the emergence of Agorakritos, denotes the violation of the sexual code along with that of the dietary and the linguistic. The restoration of the sacrificial code at the end of the play brings about also the reinstatement of the sexual code, since Demos breaks the circle of the play's debased erotics and is presented as sexually active (1383-90). For an extensive discussion of prostitution as the model for the debased politics of the play see Wohl 2002. For sexual passivity as a common trait of politicians in Aristophanes cf. *Nu.* 1083-5, 1099-100, *Ec.* 112-4.

⁹³ See the scholia at 772 for κρεάγρᾳ and Sommerstein 1981 ad loc.

more the Sausage-seller's familiarity with the duties of a μάγειρος; at the same time it also conveys the Sausage-seller's submissiveness to the sexual caprices of Demos.⁹⁴

There are only two cases where the Sausage-seller seems to abandon the strict sacrificial code:⁹⁵ the first one is to be found in the contest before the Council, where the Sausage-seller reveals that the price of the sardines (ἀφύαι) has dropped considerably and urges the councillors to buy those (644-50). By this trick he manages to distract their attention from Paphlagon's accusations of conspiracy. Yet, if we take a closer look at the text, what finally wins over the councillors to his side is not the sardines. Following the announcement of the Sausage-seller about the sardines, Paphlagon proposes the sacrifice of one hundred oxen to Athena (but does not actually do it), with the aim of pleasing the council and making them incline in his direction again, in which he succeeds. The Sausage-seller, seeing that he was going to be defeated, decides to take action and cap Paphlagon's suggestion with one for an even greater sacrifice. It was this suggestion for a grand sacrifice, the Sausage-seller states, that attracted the council's attention once more and finally defeated Paphlagon:

658-65

κᾶγωγ' ὅτε δὴ ἔγνω τῷς βολίτοις ἡττώμενος,
διηκοσίησι βουσὶν ὑπερκόντισα,

⁹⁴ The image of a man offensively dragged by his testicles can be regarded as another violation of the sexual code and reminds us of the relevant scene in *Lysistrata* (1119-21), where Lysistrata urges the women to drag the men by their erected penises, so as to reason with them, and in *Ecclesiazusae* (1019-20), where the women have the power to make a man submit to their sexual appetites by dragging him by his phallus. On κιναΐδεια in *Knights* as the stellar of a political career see Wohl 2002: 73-123.

⁹⁵ These two cases are also mentioned by Wilkins (1993: 124) as exceptions to the rule, but their function is not explained.

τῇ δ' Ἀγροτέρῃ **κατὰ χιλίων** παρήνεσα
 εὐχὴν ποιήσασθαι **χιμάρων** εἰς αὔριον,
 αἱ τριχίδες εἰ γενοῖαθ' ἑκατὸν τοῦβολοῦ.
ἐκαραδόκησεν εἰς ἔμ' ἡ βουλή πάλιν.
 ὁ δὲ ταῦτ' ἀκούσας ἐκπλαγεὶς ἐφληνάφα.
 κᾷθ' εἵλκον αὐτὸν οἱ πρυτάνεις χοῖ τοξόται.

The second instance where the Sausage-seller does not apply the language of the sacrificial meat is to be found towards the end of the play with his theft of the hare from Paphlagon (1193-200). And yet the emphasis here is not to be put on the hare, the offer of which to Demos was Paphlagon's idea, but on the act of the theft: the Sausage-seller wants to find βωμολόχον τι (1194 ὦ θυμέ, νυνὶ βωμολόχον ἔξευρέ τι). The βωμολόχος was the sort of character who frequented altars, seeking shamelessly through flattery, deceit or theft to get illicit shares of sacrificial food and drink.⁹⁶ Indeed, the Sausage-seller has previously boasted about his achievements in his youth, when he was stealing meat from the μάγειροι (417-20). The theft of the hare simply reaffirms his words and proves that he kept up with the practice of βωμολοχία.⁹⁷ Thus, the theft of the hare, instead of serving to

⁹⁶ Cf. Pherecr. fr. 150 KA κᾷπειθ' ἵνα μὴ πρὸς τοῖσι βωμοῖς πανταχοῦ/ἀεὶ λοχῶντες βωμολόχοι καλώμεθα,/ἐποίησεν ὁ Ζεὺς καπνοδόκην μεγάλην πάνυ. Harpokration s.v. βωμολοχεύεσθαι: κυρίως ἐλέγοντο βωμολόχοι οἱ ἐπὶ τῶν θυσιῶν ὑπὸ τοὺς βωμοὺς καθίζοντες καὶ μετὰ κολακείας προσαιτοῦντες, ἔτι δὲ καὶ οἱ παραλαμβάνόμενοι ταῖς θυσίαις αὐληταὶ τε καὶ μάντιες. For this meaning of βωμολόχος see Nagy 1999: 245n.3; Orfanos 2000: 47-57; Wilkins 2000: 88-90; Rosenbloom 2002: 329-37; Fisher 2008: 185; Halliwell 2008: 311. See also Frontisi-Ducroux 1984, who begins from the same point of view, and connects the βωμολόχος to an ephebic Spartan ritual. Later on βωμολόχος acquired the meaning of someone who made vulgar or incessant jokes or generally fooled around. For the view that the original meaning of the βωμολόχος was fool or buffoon and not altar-ambusher see Kidd 2012: he regards the passages from Pherecr. fr. 150 KA and Ar. Eq. 1194 as making a pun on the root of the word βωμολόχος and not as conveying that its original meaning was altar-ambusher. The fact remains that in the passage from *Knights*, the Sausage-seller presents himself as stealing sacrificial meat. Kidd (2012: 247) even claims that there was an orchestra-altar behind Demos, which allowed the Sausage-seller's theft to occur in full view of the audience.

⁹⁷ See Wilkins 1993: 124.

disassociate the Sausage-seller from the world of sacrifice, reveals once more his strong link with it.

All the above provide indications that the Sausage-seller will rise from the depth of the butcher's profession to its height, that of a reverent sacrificer. His destructive power, with which he has often threatened his rival, namely that of butchering, carving and cooking meat, will turn into a nurturing and re-creative power, the kind of power a leader must possess. The Sausage-seller will rise to the position of the great μάγειρος, the sacrificial cook, and will help and supervise Demos, who will preside over the city. However, before the Sausage-seller performs his great sacrifice, Aristophanes turns the tables and presents us with another possibility: that of Demos as a sacrificer/cannibal.

8. Demos' sacrificial practices

Even though Demos is supposed to be the master of the house, he makes a relatively late appearance in the play (727) and from that point onwards stays inactive while the two rivals compete with one another. However, at a certain point of the play (1125-40), he appears to regard himself as the leader of the house and the city and boasts of his political tactics. He reveals that he has been acting all this time as a sacrificer, who fattens, like animals, all the politicians who wish to control him, and then sacrifices them and consumes them at the appropriate time:

1125-40

{Δη.} αὐτός τε γὰρ ἥδομαι
 βρύλλων τὸ καθ' ἡμέραν,
 κλέπτοντά τε βούλομαι
τρέφειν ἕνα προστάτην·
 τοῦτον δ', ὅταν ἦ **πλέως**,
ἄρας ἐπάταξα.
 {Χο.} οὕτω μὲν ἄρ' εὖ ποιεῖς,
 καί σοι πυκνότης ἔνεστ'
 ἐν τῷ τρόπῳ, ὡς λέγεις,
 τούτῳ πάνυ πολλή
 εἰ τοῦσδ' ἐπίτηδες ὥσ-
 περ δημοσίους **τρέφεις**
 ἐν τῇ Πυκνί, καὶ ὅταν
 μή σοι τύχῃ **ῥψον** ὄν,
 τούτων ὅς ἂν ἦ **παχύς**,
θύσας ἐπιδειπνεῖς.

While we were left with the impression that it is the Sausage-seller who will perform the ritual of sacrifice, suddenly it appears that it is Demos who has assumed this role and, what is more, that both of the two rivals may become his sacrificial meat. Even though the two rivals compete as to who will bring Demos more food,⁹⁸ Demos reveals that food is the least of his cares: whenever he is short of any ῥψον, he can always sacrifice (θύσας) one of his stewards and feast on him (ἐπιδειπνεῖς).

If we take Demos' words at face value, it seems that the political practices he has been employing all the way resemble the ritual of sacrifice, with Demos being both the sacrificer and the consumer, and politicians, like Paphlagon and the Sausage-seller, the victims.⁹⁹ Yet, it is also a cannibalistic practice, since Demos feasts on human flesh.

⁹⁸ Cf. 1166-208, esp. 1207-8: τί οὐ διακρίνεις, Δῆμ', ὁπότερός ἐστι νῶν/ἀνὴρ ἀμείνων περὶ σὲ καὶ τὴν γαστέρα;

⁹⁹ Consistent with this image of Demos as the sacrificer is the behaviour of the Sausage-seller earlier in the play, during the contest on the Pnyx, when he claims that he is willing to become a sacrificial victim for

Although Demos seems to be on the right path, when he decides to employ the ritual of sacrifice, his practice is still problematic: he, too, adopts the old cannibalistic model which Paphlagon represented, but which, as we will see, is doomed to fail.

The idea of Demos as a leader who takes advantage of and feasts on his stewards once more reminds us of Plato. In the argument between Socrates and Thrasymachus in the first book of the *Republic*, Thrasymachus expresses the view that the ruler has in mind his own interest and not that of the people he rules and draws a comparison between the ruler and the shepherd (343b):

Ὅτι οἶει τοὺς ποιμένας ἢ τοὺς βουκόλους τὸ τῶν προβάτων ἢ τὸ τῶν βοῶν ἀγαθὸν σκοπεῖν καὶ παχύνειν αὐτοὺς καὶ θεραπεύειν πρὸς ἄλλο τι βλέποντας ἢ τὸ τῶν δεσποτῶν ἀγαθὸν καὶ τὸ αὐτῶν, καὶ δὴ καὶ τοὺς ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν ἄρχοντας, οἱ ὡς ἀληθῶς ἄρχουσιν, ἄλλως πως ἢ διανοεῖσθαι πρὸς τοὺς ἀρχομένους ἢ ὥσπερ ἂν τις πρὸς πρόβατα διατεθείη, καὶ ἄλλο τι σκοπεῖν αὐτοὺς διὰ νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας ἢ τοῦτο, ὅθεν αὐτοὶ ὠφελήσονται.

According to Thrasymachus, the ruler regards his subjects exactly like sheep or oxen, which he fattens and tends for his own interest and good, just as Demos does. Clever though he may think his idea is, Demos deceives himself: he stays trapped in a vicious circle of bad politicians, as he himself acknowledges and as the Sausage-seller points out:

734-40
ἐρῶν πάλαι σου βουλόμενός τέ σ' εὖ ποιεῖν,
ἄλλοι τε πολλοὶ καὶ καλοὶ τε κάγαθοί.
ἀλλ' οὐχ οἷοί τ' ἐσμέν διὰ τουτονί. σὺ γὰρ
ὅμοιος εἶ τοῖς παισὶ τοῖς ἐρωμένοις·

Demos' sake (769-71). This statement can be seen as if in accordance with the sacrificial practice of seeking a sign of the victim's assent before the sacrifice (Plu. *Quaes. Conv.* 729f ἄχρι δὲ νῦν παραφυλάττουσιν ἰσχυρῶς τὸ μὴ σφάττειν πρὶν ἐπινεῦσαι κατασπενδόμενον). See below note 100.

τοὺς μὲν καλοὺς τε κάγαθούς οὐ προσδέχει,
σαυτὸν δὲ λυχνοπώλαισι καὶ νευρορράφοις
καὶ σκυτοτόμοις καὶ βυρσοπώλαισιν δίδως.

1156-7

ἐγὼ δὲ προσδοκῶν γε τρισυριόπαλαι
βδελύττομαί σφω καὶ προπαλαιπαλαίπαλαι

However, this time the political model will change: neither of the politicians will be sacrificed.¹⁰⁰ The sacrifice will be finally carried out by the Sausage-seller, who emerges as Agorakritos, the new προστάτης and sacrificer of Demos.

9. The emergence of Agorakritos and the sacrifice of Demos

After the strong association of the Sausage-seller with sacrificial meat and sacrificial practices throughout the play, one reasonably expects the enactment of the great sacrifice and the revelation of the sacrificial victim. The aforementioned threats of the Sausage-seller against Paphlagon may lead one to expect that Paphlagon is to be sacrificed. However, we have already stressed the fact that Paphlagon has placed himself out of the

¹⁰⁰ One might argue that there are some hints as to why the sacrifice of Paphlagon or the Sausage-seller will not take place. A sacrificial ritual was deemed to be perverted and corrupted, and, thus, did not take place, when the sacrificial animals rushed forward to kill one another (Paus. *Graeciae descriptio* 4.13.1) or when the animal did not approach the altar willingly (Plu. *Quaes. Conv.* 729f ἄχρι δὲ νῦν παραφυλάττουσιν ἰσχυρῶς τὸ μὴ σφάττειν πρὶν ἐπινεῦσαι κατασπενδόμενον). A similar case is to be found in *Knights*. The two potential sacrificial victims have repeatedly shown their aggression to one another and have also threatened one another with death (see for example 294, 364-5, 369-74, 698-701). What is more, Paphlagon is asked to remove the garland from his head (1227 κατάθου ταχέως τὸν στέφανον), which could be considered as an indication for the annulment of the sacrifice, since sacrificial victims wore garlands before their sacrifice (see Bowie 1995: 464). Therefore, taking into consideration the conventions of the sacrificial ritual, it is not unreasonable that this sacrifice will not be executed. For the idea that the sacrificial animals must appear to assent to being killed see Parker 1983: 305; Burkert 1985: 56 and 2001; Vernant 1981a: 7 and 1991: 290-303; Detienne 1989. However, the visual evidence provides some scepticism: see Georgoudi 2005: 123-7; Naiden 2007.

sacrificial system. Consistently with his behaviour so far, he will have no implication at all in the ritual of sacrifice, not even by assuming the role of the sacrificial victim. Moreover, the aim of the sacrifice is to bring about a cathartic effect with regard to the political situation in the house and the city of Demos. This can only be achieved through the purging and the transformation of Demos, of the person, that is, who is the master of the house and should be in control of the political situation. For things to change, Demos must be restored to his leading position, which will be effected through his sacrifice.

Even before the sacrifice is carried out, there is an indication that Demos will be the sacrificial victim. When Paphlagon loses Demos' favour, Demos asks for his ring back (946-8): this ring, which carried Demos' seal, enabled Paphlagon to transact important businesses in Demos' name. Thus, the handing back of the ring officially declares Paphlagon's lapse from the position of Demos' steward. However, upon Paphlagon's return of the ring, as described before, Demos realizes that this is not the ring he had originally given him, since he does not recognize the seal as his own: this one has a sea-gull making a speech on a rock, while Demos' had the fat of a bull (δημός βοείος) covered with a fig leaf (θρῖον):

953-6

{Αλ.} φέρ' ἴδω, τί σοι σημεῖον ἦν;

{Δημ.} δημοῦ βοείου θρῖον ἐξωπτημένον.

{Αλ.} οὐ τοῦτ' ἔνεστιν.

{Δημ.} οὐ τὸ θρῖον; ἀλλὰ τί;

{Αλ.} λάρος κεχηνῶς ἐπὶ πέτρας δημηγορῶν.

The passage refers to a recipe of a rissole of cow fat, wrapped in a fig-leaf.¹⁰¹ As the scholia observe,¹⁰² Aristophanes makes a pun with the fat (δημός) of the seal and the name of Demos (Δῆμος), in order to make fun of Demos' stupidity. I wish to suggest that the pun allows for another interpretation too: it aims at creating the impression that Demos falls into the category of one of the Sausage-seller's meats and that he will be treated as such: he will be the Sausage-seller's next sacrificial victim, one of his "most sensational ἐξ ὕδατος κρέα".¹⁰³

After the Sausage-seller is officially appointed by Demos as his new προστάτης, he reveals his real name (1257-8) and promises to take good care of Demos (1261 καὶ μὴν ἐγώ σ', ὦ Δῆμε, θεραπεύσω καλῶς). The verb θεραπεύω appears in the play in two more instances:

59-61

ἡμᾶς δ' ἀπελαύνει κοῦκ ἐᾷ τὸν δεσπότην
ἄλλον **θεραπεύειν**, ἀλλὰ βυρσίνην ἔχων
δειπνοῦντος ἐστὼς ἀποσοβεῖ τοὺς ῥήτορας.

799-800

πάντως δ' αὐτὸν θρέψω ἄγω καὶ **θεραπεύσω**,
ἐξευρίσκων εὖ καὶ μιανῶς ὀπόθεν τὸ τριώβολον ἔξει.

In both instances it denotes Paphlagon's care (or monopolization of care) for Demos. As used here by Agorakritos, it marks first of all the official transition of power from Paphlagon to him. What is more, taking into account that θεραπεύω is also used as a

¹⁰¹ See the scholia ad loc. Cf. schol. at *Ach.* 1102; *Ar. Ran.* 134 and Sommerstein 1981 ad loc.

¹⁰² παρὰ τὸν δῆμον ἐποίησε δημόν ὀξυτόνως. ὀλίγον οὖν δεῖ τῷ τόνῳ παρεγκλίνειν. [οὐ τὸ ὄνομα]. λέγει δὲ καὶ ταῦτα ἐπειδὴ ὡς ἀνάισθητον διαβάλλει τὸν Δῆμον. ἐπειδὴ τῷ θρίῳ περιβάλλοντες τὸ λίπος ὥπτων.

¹⁰³ Wilkins 1993: 125.

medical term, meaning treat and cure,¹⁰⁴ it foreshadows the radical measures Agorakritos will have to take and creates a nice foil to Paphlagon's superficial, and often fake, acts of service towards Demos.

After the Sausage-seller has revealed his true identity as Agorakritos, he reappears on stage and addresses the chorus in a formulaic phrase, as if a religious rite were being held.¹⁰⁵

1316-18

{Αλ.} εὐφημεῖν χρή καὶ στόμα κλῆειν καὶ μαρτυριῶν ἀπέχεσθαι,
καὶ τὰ δικαστήρια συγκλῆειν, οἷς ἡ πόλις ἤδε γέγηθεν,
ἐπὶ καιναῖσιν δ' εὐτυχίαισιν παιωνίζειν τὸ θέατρον.

The verb εὐφημεῖν is normally used to herald the opening (or at any rate the most important moment, as, for instance here, the killing) of a religious rite, including sacrificial rituals.¹⁰⁶ Moreover, it is used in three more instances in Aristophanes before a sacrifice takes place. In *Acharnians*, before Dicaeopolis' procession in honour of Dionysus takes place, he calls for silence (237 and 241 εὐφημεῖτε, εὐφημεῖτε) and the chorus understands from this call that a sacrifice is going to be offered:

238-40

σῖγα πᾶς. ἠκούσατ', ἄνδρες, ἄρα τῆς εὐφημίας;
οὗτος αὐτός ἐστιν ὃν ζητοῦμεν. ἀλλὰ δεῦρο πᾶς
ἐκποδών· **θύσων γὰρ ἀνὴρ, ὥς ἔοικ', ἐξέρχεται.**

¹⁰⁴ See Liddell-Scott s.v. θεραπεύω.

¹⁰⁵ Sommerstein 1981: 214. See also Bowie (1993: 54) who remarks that Agorakritos is hailed in the language associated with divine epiphanies.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. *Ar. Nu.* 297; *V.* 868; *Ra.* 354; *A. Eu.* 1035 with Sommerstein ad loc. See also Austin and Douglas 2004: 66 "εὐφημία is routinely requested before a solemn or significant speech or action". For the description of a sacrificial ritual see Burkert 1985: 56 and Bowie 1995: 464.

The second instance is to be found in *Birds* (958-9): when Peisetairus is ready to sacrifice a goat for the construction of the new city of the birds he also asks for εὐφημία, but is interrupted by the arrival of the oracle seller:

{Πεισ.} αὐθις σὺ περιχώρει λαβὼν τὴν χέρνιβα
εὐφημία 'στω
{Χρησμ.} μὴ κατάρξῃ τοῦ τράγου.

Lastly, in *Thesmophoriazusae* (36-40) when Agathon's servant comes on stage and asks for εὐφημία (39-40 εὐφημος πᾶς ἔστω λαός,/στόμα συγκλήσας), Euripides says he intends to make a sacrifice in support of Agathon's poetic efforts (36-8 ἀλλ' ἐκποδὼν πτήξωμεν, ὡς ἐξέρχεται/θεράπων τις αὐτοῦ, πῦρ ἔχων καὶ μυρρίνας,/προθυσόμενος, ἔοικε, τῆς ποιήσεως).¹⁰⁷

The verb παιωνίζειν also suggests a solemn song: paeon is a ritual cry or a hymn, which can be sung on various occasions and especially in thanksgiving for victory, success, or deliverance¹⁰⁸ (cf. *Pax* 453, 555, *Av.* 1763, *Lys.* 1291). Therefore, there are strong reasons to infer that the formulaic phrase in *Knights* suggests a religious ritual, namely the sacrifice of Demos by Agorakritos. Indeed, the chorus responds in the same elevated tone, by hailing Agorakritos in the language of divine epiphanies and by asking the reason why they should fill the streets with κνῖσα, the savour of sacrificial meat. Agorakritos then makes the surprising statement that he has boiled Demos down:

¹⁰⁷ See Austin and Olson 2004: 64-5. Even though an actual sacrifice does not take place, it is important that the context is suggestive of it.

¹⁰⁸ See Liddell-Scott s.v. παιάν.

1319-21

{Χο.} ὦ ταῖς ἱεραῖς φέγγος Ἀθήναις καὶ ταῖς νήσοις ἐπίκουρε,
τίν' ἔχων φήμην ἀγαθὴν ἤκεις, ἐφ' ὅτῳ κνισῶμεν ἀγυιάς;
{Αλ.} τὸν Δῆμον ἀφεψήσας ὑμῖν καλὸν ἐξ αἰσχροῦ πεποίηκα

As already stated, boiling (ἀφεψήσας) was a standard part of the sacrificial practice: after the victim was sacrificed, its entrails were roasted on skewers, whereas the rest of the meat was put to boil in the cauldron. We are, therefore, invited to think along the lines of a sacrificial procedure.

Later on, Agorakritos invites the chorus to shout out with joy: the word used is ὀλολύζω, which brings to mind the ὀλολυγή, the sacrificial cry that the women let out during the sacrifice of the victim:¹⁰⁹

1327-8

ἀλλ' **ὀλολύξατε** φαινομέναισιν ταῖς ἀρχαίαισιν Ἀθήναις
ταῖς θαυμασταῖς καὶ πολυύμνοις, ἵν' ὁ κλεινὸς Δῆμος ἐνοικεῖ.

As suggested before, the Sausage-seller far from being just a random cook and seller of meat finally reveals himself as a sacrificer, who performs Demos' sacrifice. By doing so, Agorakritos establishes a new political practice, which does not lead to yet another cannibalistic meal, but to Demos' total transformation: he is rejuvenated, he has but little recollection of the way he behaved in the past and, ashamed of his old practices, promises to apply a completely new policy regarding the affairs of the city. Thus, Agorakritos shakes off the old cannibalistic model that Paphlagon applied and brings to the house and the city of Demos a different political practice, which is based on the ritual of sacrifice. This very

¹⁰⁹ See Vernant 1981a: 4 and Burkert 1985: 56.

much resembles the initiation of sacrifice, as described in the *Theogony*: the first alimentary sacrifice, which was initiated by Prometheus in the new reign of Zeus, led mankind away from their primitive state and established a reign of stability in which cannibalistic practices, like that of Cronus, were out of place. Accordingly, Agorakritos inaugurates a new era, in which politics are exercised through the ritual of sacrifice; any forms of primitivism and bestiality, such as omophagy and cannibalism, cease to exist. To establish the fact that no more cannibalism will be tolerated nor exercised, Agorakritos spares Paphlagon and, instead of killing him, expels him to the city gates to sell non-sacrificial meat (1397-400). And, as is the norm after every sacrifice, a meal has to follow: Demos and his new political advisor make their way to the Prytaneum to dine and celebrate on account of the recent political change (1404-5).¹¹⁰

10. Consecration and divinisation

In the new era that comes after Agorakritos' sacrifice, both of the people involved, the Sausage-seller, as the sacrificer, and Demos, as the victim, undergo a change. From the time that the Sausage-seller was picked as a rival of the Paphlagonian slave, we watched

¹¹⁰ A similar case can be argued for Aristaeus' animal sacrifice at the end of book 4 of Vergil's *Georgics*. For a discussion of the two rituals that result in the birth of bees from a slaughtered ox in *Georgics* and the implications of the second as a sacrificial ritual see Habinek 1990. The result of Aristaeus' sacrifice is the miracle of rebirth: the swarm of Aristaeus' bees is reborn and, insofar as the bees are representative of people, so is human society. Cf. Habinek 1990: 6 "in a purely technical sense the blood sacrifice performed by Aristaeus completes the metaphorical account of the birth, evolution, death, and rebirth of the human society that was implicit in the story of the bees. The bees will be reborn through an impossible, exotic and unbelievable technological marvel: but civilized human society must forever restore itself by re-establishing the right relations between humans, gods, and beasts in the act of sacrifice and all that it stands for".

him trying to defeat him by using the very weapons Paphlagon used: πανουργία and ἀναίδεια. He played rough and fought dirty. Yet, in the end he turns from a vile, obnoxious demagogue to a sane, benevolent political advisor of Demos. On the other hand, Demos who used to be senile, disoriented and inactive (or even a cannibal) now appears on stage as younger and wiser: he expresses his feelings of shame and regret about his earlier behaviour (1349 οὕτως ἀνόητος ἐγεγενήμην καὶ γέρων; 1355 αἰσχύνομαί τοι ταῖς πρότερον ἁμαρτίαις) and seems to adopt a more active participation in the political scene and to regain his power of decision-making (1356-83).

This change of the Sausage-seller and Demos comes as a surprising twist of the plot. Some scholars have had such a hard time reconciling the ending with what precedes it, that they invented the concept of a double plot.¹¹¹ Yet, if we place the transformation of the Sausage-seller and Demos in the context of the sacrificial ritual, it makes perfect sense. At this point, the theory proposed by Hubert and Mauss (1964) is enlightening. According to Hubert and Mauss, the sacrificial ritual is a double process of communication between the sacred and the profane by means of a victim called to play a mediating role between the sacrificer and the divinity: “sacrifice is a religious act which through the consecration of a victim modifies the condition of the moral person who accomplishes it or that of certain

¹¹¹ Ford 1965 and Brock 1986. For Brock (1986: 16) “the completion of the first of these plot lines (i.e. the realistic) brings the play to a false conclusion, which is superseded by the real ending”. Both Ford and Brock accept the transformation of the Sausage-seller and Demos as being part of an idealistic second plot, which follows the realistic and more cynical one in the beginning.

objects with which he is concerned”.¹¹² Before the ritual takes place, both sacrificer and victim are profane; yet through the sacrifice, the victim is separated definitively from the profane world and is consecrated, in the same way that the sacrificer’s moral status is altered and he is reborn sacred.¹¹³ In this light, the transformation of the Sausage-seller and Demos are not surprising and unexpected. After the sacrificial ritual takes place, the sacrificer Agorakritos and the sacrificed Demos have experienced a sacralisation which argues for the modification of their moral status.

This change of behaviour and mentality for the two participants comes in the sacrificial ritual with a change of status as well: Agorakritos is invited by Demos to take Paphlagon’s place in the prytaneion (1404-6) and we might well imagine that from now on he will have, along with Demos, the place of the great sacrificer in the city. Demos, on the other hand, is hailed as a monarch and a king¹¹⁴ (1330 δείξατε τὸν τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἡμῖν καὶ τῆς

¹¹² Hubert and Mauss 1964: 13.

¹¹³ See Hubert and Mauss 1964: 35. See also Vernant 1981a: 5 “le sacrifiant a suivi une courbe semblable à celle de la victime. Il s’est hissé vers le sacré, mais moins haut puisqu’il n’accompagne pas la bête jusque dans la mort. Aussi pourra-t-il faire retour au terme de son trajet et revenir à son point de départ avec des forces rajeunies, une vitalité nouvelle”; Burkert 1985: 38-40; Seaford 1994 also argues for a strong connection between sacrifice and initiation, see esp. 285-8.

¹¹⁴ Demos’ rising to power after his sacrifice may be linked with the idea of sacralisation and deification following a sacrificial death, which is not uncommon in Greek myth (see Burkert 1985: 39, esp. n. 21). Many hero cults were established after and, probably, on the account of the heroes’ sacrificial deaths. Cf., for instance, the cases of Agamemnon and Cassandra, who in Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon* are presented as being killed in a ritual, sacrificial slaughter (see Zeitlin 1965 and 1966; Foley 1985; Burkert 2001) and appear to be worshipped in rituals after their sacrifice (on Agamemnon see Duke 1954; Vernant 1981a: 96; Burkert 2001: 20; on the cult of Cassandra see Farnell 1921: 329-32). For Heracles’ death in *Trachiniae* as a kind of sacrifice which precedes his divinization see Segal 1981: 98-102; Easterling 1982 *passim*; Holt 1989: 73; Calame 1997; Hahnemann 1999: 69. Note also the Corinthian cult in honour of Medea’s children (schol. Pindar, *Olympian* 13.74 and Euripides’ *Medea* 1378-83) after their sacrificial deaths (on the language of sacrifice see Pucci 1977 and 1980). An interesting case with regard to exultation following sacrifice is the orphic myth about the

γῆς τῆσδε μόναρχον, 1333 χαῖρ', ὦ βασιλεῦ τῶν Ἑλλήνων). It becomes evident then that both Agorakritos and Demos eventually rise to power through their involvement with the sacrificial procedure as a sacrificer and a victim respectively: the former will from now on be the new political advisor of Demos and the latter is restored to his position as a leader of the house and the city.

11. Conclusions: *Knights* and the comic/tragic human sacrifice

At the beginning of this chapter I briefly mentioned the prominent role of sacrifice in tragedy and its problematic aspects. I noted that the sacrificial crisis in the tragic environment often reflects a social, political or moral crisis; that the inability of the hero to

sacrifice of Dionysus by the Titans, which has often been compared to the Christian eucharist (see Kott 1973: 186-230 and 309-22 and Henrichs 1981: 230-1). The myth survives in the Orphic theogonies and is also handed down to us by later sources. See Guthrie (1935) and the new edition of the Orphic fragments in Bernabé (2004, v.11, p. 260-70). For a reconstruction of the myth, as well as more information about the orphic theogonies see West (1983) and Brisson (1995), who opposes West's stem of the Orphic theogonies. Unfortunately we are in no position to pursue a systematic comparison of Demos' sacrifice in *Knights* with the sacrifice of Dionysus in the orphic myth due to the fact that there is much controversy as to whether orphic myths were widely known in the 5th century: except for the surviving fragments, all of our sources on the myth are dated late and we do not know whether the orphic doctrines were kept secret or circulated at least within small circles (see Parker 1995: 485-7). It is, however, worth making a brief note. For the analysis that follows, I am heavily indebted to the interpretation of the myth by Detienne (1979: 53-94 and 1989: 1-20): Dionysus is sacrificed by the Titans, boiled and roasted. Zeus blasts the Titans with his thunderbolt and from their ashes springs the human race. Dionysus is brought back to life and will probably be, as Zeus had pronounced, the new king of gods (the sources are vague at this point. See Parker 1995: 494-5). In *Knights*, similarly, Demos is sacrificed, boiled and then rejuvenated. Just as Dionysus' sacrifice signals the end of the fifth generation of gods and the birth of the human race, Demos' sacrifice brings about the end of a series of vile politicians and the creation of a new political era. In this model, Demos suits well the role of Dionysus, since earlier on in the play he practiced allelophagy and omophagy by feasting on the politicians; these features also constitute a vital part of the cult of Dionysos, at least on the level of the myth (see Detienne 1979: 57 and 62ff.; Hughes 1991: 88; Seaford 1994: 281ff.). Despite these similarities, we have no way of knowing whether the audience (or Aristophanes indeed) would know their orphic mythology well enough so as to be encouraged to think along these lines.

perform a sacrifice shows failure of authority; and that tragic sacrifice is often perverted into the killing of kin, as human victims take the place of animals and the terminology for ritual killing is metaphorically applied to the death of humans. It must now be evident that the above remarks are relevant to the case of *Knights*. The political crisis in the house and city of Demos is reflected in the sacrificial crisis of the play: Demos, as the representative of the Athenian people, should have the political power and make all the decisions; instead, he appears to be readily influenced and manipulated by the arguments and flattery of demagogues like the Paphlagonian slave. The consequence is that he loses every means of control he could exercise over politics. The disrespect for the ritual of sacrifice mirrors the corrupted political situation: bad politicians, like Paphlagon, and incompetent leaders, like Demos, keep the city in a primitive, non-evolving condition by applying political practices of endless consumption, omophagy and cannibalism. The crisis finally finds its outlet in the sacrificial cooking of Demos.

Subsequently, sacrifice in *Knights* appears to have more features in common with its tragic counterpart rather than with other examples of comic sacrifice, which are of the celebratory type. Yet all the problematic aspects of the human sacrifice which are very prominent in tragedy are largely suppressed in the comic context. Let us take one of the most representative tragic examples, where a series of murders is invested with the language of sacrifice: in Aeschylus' *Oresteia* sacrifice becomes "an atavistic regression to

primitive bestiality”¹¹⁵ and brings about “the collapse of the political order into a tyranny dominated by a woman and a sense of theological crisis”.¹¹⁶ Even though the tragic heroes present themselves as righteous avengers and the murders they commit as sacrificial deaths, their actions are motivated by a corrupted sense of justice—or revenge.¹¹⁷ The sacrificial ritual suffers a number of improprieties (in *Agamemnon* the wife kills the husband and in *Choephoroi* the son kills the mother) which communicate a sense of unbridled violence and social disorder.¹¹⁸ Hence, in the tragic environment, the human sacrifice works as a symbol for the exploration of a crisis (socio-political and marital) which forms the basis of the tragic plot.

In this light, the sacrifice in *Knights* can be perceived as an ironic comment on its function in the tragic context: *Knights* demonstrates the successful performance of a (human) sacrificial ritual, during which the sacrificial victim does not perish violently and miserably, but is reborn wise, thoughtful and content despite the “violence” effected on him. This sacrifice is no profane and violent murder, it does not raise any moral issues and there is no unhappy resolution either for the sacrificer or the sacrificial victim. Quite the contrary: the Sausage-seller establishes his authority as the new steward of Demos by performing his sacrifice, while the successful performance of the sacrificial ritual brings about the end of a series of vile politicians and inaugurates a new prolific era of politics for

¹¹⁵ Zeitlin 1965: 498.

¹¹⁶ Foley 1985: 41.

¹¹⁷ See Zeitlin 1965: 493-4.

¹¹⁸ Foley 1985: 40-1.

the city of Athens. In the aftermath of the sacrifice, Demos acquires an essentially different notion of leadership from the one he had so far and a new stable political situation arises for the city of Athens.

But does this reading suggest that we are supposed to rejoice in the good luck of Demos and the city? Is it not true that “nine-tenths of the play is deeply pessimistic”?¹¹⁹ It might look as if leadership in Athens is about to be taking on unexpectedly good aspects, yet the case remains that it did so only by moving away from the world of achievable realities into the realm of mythology and religion. As Bowie (1993: 76) puts it “the myth offers a hopeful reading of a political situation that is so disagreeable as to admit only of mythical solutions”. If only it were true that a sacrificial ritual could suffice to purge a rotten political situation and bring about a radical reform.

¹¹⁹ Sommerstein 1981: 2.

CHAPTER III

RHETORICAL AND SEXUAL MANIPULATION: THE POWER OF *LOGOS* AND *EROS* IN *BIRDS*

1. Introduction

In the preceding two chapters I discussed two cases, one of a female and one of a male leadership, in which there is a change of political landscape and a shift of power, which is expressed through and affects two important institutions of the city. In these two plays political power, although changing hands temporarily, finally returns to the people who exercised it or were entitled to it in the first place: in *Lysistrata* women temporarily remove all political power and decisions from men and take up the control of the city, but in the end they hand the leadership back to men and withdraw from the political stage back to their houses, as normal. After a glimpse of a female leadership, men become the rightful exercisers of political power once again. In *Knights*, Demos features from the beginning as the master of the house and the city, but, in effect, political power lies in the hands of his Paphlagonian slave. The sacrifice of Demos restores him to his rightful position as the leader of the city and brings to his side, in the place of the foul Paphlagon, the wise political advisor Agorakritos. Thus, neither of the two cases of leadership involves a great change of affairs, a total upheaval or a complete transformation of

political power: either men (in *Lysistrata*) or Demos (in *Knights*) are reinstated in their ruling position at the end of the play.¹

In the two cases of male (*Birds*) and female (*Ecclesiazusae*) leadership that I will move on to discuss, the new political status quo that emerges deviates from the old state of affairs in a more obvious way than in *Lysistrata* and in *Knights*. The plot moves closer to fantasy solutions, since birds (or bird-men) and women undertake power for good, brushing aside former leaders. In *Birds* I propose that the ascendance of Peisetairos to power is effected through a battle for leadership taking place in the city of Birds. I set out to examine the distribution of power within the Birds' society before the arrival of Peisetairos and Euelpides, thereby suggesting that the Birds, far from living free in a natural and idyllic utopia,² are dominated and controlled by an appointed leader, the bird-man Tereus. After depicting the Birds' society and demonstrating the leading role of Tereus among the Birds, I move on to show how the arrival of the two men changes the dynamics in the exertion of power. A new potential leader emerges, Peisetairos, who challenges the authority of Tereus, while at the same time manipulating the Birds with promises of leadership.

¹ It must be noted that in *Knights* the address of the chorus to Demos as μόναρχος (1330 δείξατε τὸν τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἡμῖν καὶ τῆς γῆς τῆσδε μόναρχον) and βασιλεύς (1333 ὃ βασιλεῦ τῶν Ἑλλήνων) do not imply a change of constitution, but rather a reinforcement of democracy. As Kallet (2003: 138-40) notes, the notion of δῆμος τύραννος is accompanied by positive nuances in Aristophanes. In *Knights* especially it serves to emphasize the right of the people (the *demos*) to rule and the reestablishment of Demos to power.

² So Holmes 2011; Pozzi 1991; Konstan 1990; Arrowsmith 1973.

My aim is to examine the devices Peisetairos employs in order to exhibit his power and outdo Tereus. I proceed to claim that Peisetairos seeks to establish his authority initially by assuming the role of the sophistic teacher and the skilful orator. In order to compete with Tereus, he adopts a deceitful and highly persuasive sophistic λόγος, thus using trickery to achieve personal ends: in this way, he uses speech not for the good of the community, but as a private tool, which is destructive of justice and commands an automatic obedience among the Birds. This abuse of rhetoric by Peisetairos foreshadows the various violations of the social order that he goes on to commit in his attempt to rise to power: he behaves as a disrespectful guest by breaching Tereus' hospitality and exhibits a sexually aggressive behaviour. These transgressions are facilitated by his metamorphosis from a man to a bird-man, which enhances his affinity with a wild, uncivilized nature. Through these violations of the social order Peisetairos will be shown to have a lot in common not only with the comic Tereus, whose place he takes, but also with his prototype, the king Tereus from the Sophoclean tragedy. In this sense, the fight for leadership becomes also a literary fight: in the end, Peisetairos emerges as another, though more successful version, of both the comic and the tragic Tereus, and presides over birds, men and gods alike.

2. Birds before the arrival of men: a bird-human society

Scholars have taken for granted that, in its original phase, the community of the Birds was a natural one, a true idyllic utopia.³ However, this is not exactly the case. Bowie (1993) has rightly called attention to the fact that often in the play “men and Birds...come to seem close in nature” and breaks the similarities down to two principal devices: “the complementarities in lives and institutions” and “the language used by and of Birds and men”.⁴ He concludes that these similarities throughout the play serve to deconstruct the fantasy and show that “one can never get away from the πράγματα that afflict Peisetairos and Euelpides”.⁵ I want to elaborate on this point further, thereby suggesting that, far from being “anomian” and pre-civilised, the Birds’ society, even before the arrival of the humans, is represented as well-organized and resembles to a great extent a human one. Having demonstrated that, I will proceed to claim that the adulteration of the Birds’ society with human elements is due to the fact that Tereus, as the established leader of the

³ For this theme of natural simplicity see Whitman 1964: 167, 176-8 and Moulton 1981: 101 who see pastoral motifs in the serenade the hoopoe sings for the nightingale; Arrowsmith 1973: 142 traces “a nostalgic vision of a golden age” in the Birds’ life, who, however, later in the course of the play “under the blandishments of political suasion, become estranged from *apragmosyne* and *hesychia*”; Konstan 1990: 192 finds that the Birds live in a “primitive or natural condition” before they have “experienced the benefits of their encounter with humans”; Pozzi (1991) traces a pastoral theme in the “perpetual honeymoon” that Tereus and Procne live among the Birds and in the vibrant song of the nightingale.

⁴ Bowie 1993: 172.

⁵ Bowie 1993: 172ff.

Birds who has retained most of his human characteristics, imposed these human practices and institutions on the Birds.

There are various hints in the play that the Birds' community is adulterated with human elements, even before the arrival of the two men. First of all, the Birds resemble men as far as linguistic matters are concerned; apart from the command of a human language (199-200), they also think in human terms.⁶ They have oaths like humans, since they accuse Tereus of breaking them when he introduces the men to the Birds (331). They also seem to apply the Greek custom of the father naming the eldest son after his own father (281-2).⁷ In line 369, when they face the two men, they wonder “φεισόμεσθα γάρ τι τῶνδε μᾶλλον ἡμεῖς ἢ λύκων;”, as if they were humans themselves who consider wolves as their enemies.⁸ Lastly, they are clearly in the position of discerning moral categories, such as self-interest and selflessness, and applying moral evaluations, since they suspect that self-interested motives may lie behind Peisetairos' desire to live among them (417-21):

ὄρᾳ τι κέρδος ἐνθάδ' ἄξιον μονῆς,
ὅτῳ πέποιθ' ἔμοι ξυνῶν
κρατεῖν ἄν ἢ τὸν ἐχθρὸν ἢ
φίλοισιν ὠφελεῖν ἔχειν;

⁶ See Bowie 1993: 173 “the very act of giving the birds Greek speech immediately brings them close to men, because they will inevitably use the same words, concepts, value judgements etc.”.

⁷ On the interpretation of these lines see Dunbar 1995: 234-5.

⁸ See Dunbar 1995: 277-8 who sees comic incongruity in the fact that “the question does not fit birds, for whom wolves are not an obvious enemy”. However, this could be a sign of birds behaving as humans.

One might also add that the Birds here seem to share a typical Greek thought, that it is ideal for a man to be in the position to overcome his enemy and help his friend.⁹

Apart from the linguistic similarities, the Birds seem to share with men certain practices as well as institutions. For example, the gathering of the Birds on stage resembles an assembly-meeting. One may also assume that the song which Tereus sings to summon them (227-62) is a usual procedure for such a meeting to be called. Moreover, the Birds' behaviour, when finally gathered, is very similar to that of people in assembly-meetings as described elsewhere by Aristophanes and other writers. For example, the verb χάσκω, which is literally used here for the Birds (308-9 οἷμοι, κεχήνασιν γέ τοι/καὶ βλέπουσιν εἰς σὲ κάμῃ) is elsewhere used by Aristophanes to describe the behaviour of the demos in political debates (*Eq.* 753-5 οἴκοι μὲν ἀνδρῶν ἐστὶ δεξιώτατος/ὅταν δ' ἐπὶ ταυτησὶ καθῆται τῆς πέτρας,/κέχηνεν ὥσπερ ἐμποδίζων ἰσχάδας, *Ach.* 133 ὑμεῖς δὲ πρεσβεύεσθε καὶ κεχύνετε). The second element in the Birds' behaviour, the shouting and hubbub (307 οἷα πιπίζουσι καὶ τρέχουσι διακεκραγότες), is also attributed to the demos in assembly meetings and courts.¹⁰ It seems then that Birds' assemblies do not differ much from those of the people.

⁹ See Sommerstein 1987: 223; Dunbar 1995: 297.

¹⁰ Cf. Plato *R.* 492b-c ὅταν, εἶπον, συγκαθεζόμενοι ἄθροοι πολλοὶ εἰς ἐκκλησίαν ἢ εἰς δικαστήριον ἢ θέατρα ἢ στρατόπεδα ἢ τινα ἄλλον κοινὸν πλήθους σύλλογον σὺν πολλῷ θορύβῳ τὰ μὲν ψέγῳσι τῶν

When the Birds are finally gathered on stage, they react to the sight of men before them by making use of a strong military language.¹¹ The use of this language reveals the existence of an organized military power in the Birds' society, which also happens to be one of the most important institutions in a civilised city. Thus, in line 352 the koryphaios "speaks like a general giving orders to a junior officer"¹² (ποῦ 'σθ' ὁ ταξίαρχος; ἐπαγέτω τὸ δεξιὸν κέρας), but at the same time we may infer that the birds possess an infantry, which is under the command of appointed taxiarchs.¹³ This impression of military force is further accentuated by lines 399-401 where the Birds refer to themselves as ὀπλῖται (ἄναγ' εἰς τάξιν πάλιν εἰς ταῦτόν,/καὶ τὸν θυμὸν κατὰθου κύψας/παρὰ τὴν ὀργὴν ὥσπερ ὀπλίτης).

All the above features, the command of a human language, the ability to share human concepts and moral evaluations and the establishment of human institutions, such as an assembly and a military force, reveal a level of organization that one would least expect to find in a primitive bird community.¹⁴ Thus, it is not

λεγομένων ἢ πραττομένων, τὰ δὲ ἐπαινῶσιν, ὑπερβαλλόντως ἐκάτερα, καὶ ἐκβοῶντες καὶ κροτοῦντες, πρὸς δ' αὐτοῖς αἱ τε πέτραι καὶ ὁ τόπος ἐν ᾧ ἂν ὦσιν ἐπηχοῦντες διπλάσιον θόρυβον παρέχωσι τοῦ ψόγου καὶ ἐπαίνου.

¹¹ See Sommerstein 1987: 220.

¹² See Dunbar 1995: 272.

¹³ See Bowie 1993: 172 "the Birds adopt hoplite tactics in their confrontation with Peisetairos and Euelpides".

¹⁴ This might explain the fact that later, when the plan is put into effect, the Birds respond with admirable promptness to Peisetairos' orders and complete the fortification very quickly (1164-7 X.: οὗτος, τί ποιεῖς; Ἄρα θαυμάζεις ὅτι/οὕτω τὸ τεῖχος ἐκτετείσχεται ταχύ;/Πεισ.: νῆ τοὺς θεοὺς ἔγωγε καὶ γὰρ ἄξιον'/ἴσα γὰρ ἀληθῶς φαίνεται μοι ψεύδεσιν).

surprising that this human-like well-organized society has also a leader, the bird-man Tereus.

3. Tereus' authority over the Birds

There are hints in the play that Tereus is not merely an influential φίλος, “able only to persuade, not to order, the birds to act”.¹⁵ He has retained most of his human characteristics and, for that reason, it seems that he is placed in a higher position than the rest of the Birds. First of all, he does not look at all like an original bird, but has a rather peculiar appearance, which makes him a target of jokes (93-4 ὦ Ἡράκλεις, τουτὶ τί ποτ' ἐστὶ θηρίον;/Τίς ἢ πτέρωσις; Τίς ὁ τρόπος τῆς τριλοφίας;, 95-6 οἱ δώδεκα θεοὶ/εἴξασιν ἐπιτρίψαί σε, 99 τὸ ράμφος ἡμῖν σου γέλοιον φαίνεται). Dobrov (1993: 220-1) suggests that this distortion of the hoopoe's appearance in the comic context corresponds to his new role as a guide and a happy husband. However, it could also serve to emphasize the human side of Tereus, which has not been eliminated by his bird-side. In fact, the two men do not identify Tereus either with a bird known to them¹⁶ or with a man (102 Τηρεὺς γὰρ εἴ σύ; πότερον ὄρνις ἢ τᾶν;). Moreover, the extended discussion about Tereus' weird bird-like appearance serves to disrupt the dramatic illusion and to emphasize the fact that the bird outfit is nothing but a costume which the actor (and Tereus) wears on top of his clothes:

¹⁵ Dunbar 1995: 308.

¹⁶ See Dunbar 1995: 165.

they comment on Tereus' beak (99), on his wings and feathers (97, 103) and they ask why he is missing his flight wings.¹⁷ The men's sarcastic comments on Tereus' appearance, and especially his beak, anticipate their comments about Procne later on (667-74): in the case of Procne, the men conveniently choose to disregard the fact that she is a bird and comment on her appearance as a woman. Even when Peisetairos points out to Euelpides the most obvious sign of Procne's avian nature, the beak (672 ἀλλ', ὦ κακόδαιμον, ῥύγχος ὀβελίσκοιν ἔχει), Euelpides insists he can take it off her face and treat her like a real woman (673-4 ἀλλ' ὥσπερ ὦδ' ἂν Δί' ἀπολέψαντα χρή/ἀπὸ τῆς κεφαλῆς τὸ λέμμα κᾶθ' οὕτω φιλεῖν). Likewise, Tereus' avian nature relies on nothing more than a cheap costume, which, to make thing worse, has no wings for no apparent comic reason.¹⁸ It is, therefore, obvious that his metamorphosis is incomplete.¹⁹ This differentiation of Tereus from the rest of the Birds facilitates his exercise of power over them.

Even before Tereus appears on stage, we find out that he enjoys more privileges than the rest of the Birds. The shouts of the two men to Tereus are answered by his slave-bird, who explains that Tereus needs a slave, because he used to be a man (74-5 δεῖται γὰρ ὄρνις καὶ διακόνου τινός; οὗτός γ', ἄτ', οἶμαι, πρότερον ἄνθρωπος ποτ' ὦν, cf. 97-8 ἦ γάρ, ὦ ξένοι,/ἄνθρωπος). Apparently, no other bird has

¹⁷ For Tereus' costume and his lack of flight wings or body feathers see Dunbar 1995: 128.

¹⁸ See Dunbar 1995: 128 "why Aristophanes gave Tereus no πτερά we do not know: the dramatic explanation is brief and not very funny".

¹⁹ See Dobrov 1993: 220.

such a benefit. Moreover, Tereus is the Birds' teacher of the Greek language (199-200 ἐγὼ γὰρ αὐτοὺς βαρβάρους ὄντας πρὸ τοῦ/ἐδίδαξα τὴν φωνήν, ξυνὼν πολὺν χρόνον). Dobrov (1993 and 2001) has regarded the position of Tereus as a teacher of Greek as part of the metamorphosis he undergoes from the tragic to the comic context. According to him, the comic Tereus is the polar opposite of the Sophoclean Tereus, who is a barbarian and an enemy of the intellectual sphere, and this transformation serves to eliminate the Atheno-thracian antithesis existent in the tragic play.²⁰ However, the depiction of Tereus as a teacher first and foremost shows that he still carries human characteristics and exercises some kind of authority over the Birds.²¹

Apart from being their teacher, it seems that Tereus maintains the right of calling a Birds' meeting when necessary. When conversing with the two men, he ensures them that, as soon as he summons the Birds along with his wife, they will come running (204-5 οἱ δὲ νῶν τοῦ φθέγματος/ἐάνπερ ἐπακούσωσι θεύσονται δρόμῳ) and, indeed, they do. While the Birds gather for the meeting, Tereus shows that he is in the position to provide answers to the men's consecutive questions about the Birds' species, just as a good leader would be able to name his people.²²

²⁰ See Dobrov 1993: 226 and 2001: 119.

²¹ See Holmes 2011, who argues that Tereus shows from the beginning latent tyrannical qualities and provides the bridge between Peisetairos and the Birds.

²² 271 οὗτος οὐ τῶν ἡθάδων τῶνδ' ὧν ὀράθ' ὑμεῖς αἰεῖ, ἀλλὰ λιμναῖος, 273 καὶ γὰρ ὄνομ' αὐτῷ 'στὶ φοινικόπτερος, 277 ὄνομα τούτῳ Μῆδός ἐστι, 281-2 οὗτοσὶ μὲν ἐστι Φιλοκλέους/ἔξ ἔποπος, 288

During the meeting, one may gather from the authority with which Tereus reprimands the Birds when they intend to attack the two men (366-8 εἰπέ μοι, τί μέλλετ', ὧ πάντων κάκιστα θηρίων,/ἀπολέσαι παθόντες οὐδὲν ἄνδρε καὶ διασπάσαι/τῆς ἐμῆς γυναικὸς ὄντε ξυγγενεῖ καὶ φυλέτα;), that it is not unusual for him to control their behaviour when they are disobedient. This suggestion is supported by the Birds' admission a few lines later that they have never acted against Tereus' will (385 ἀλλὰ μὴν οὐδ' ἄλλο σοί πω πρᾶγμ' ἐνηντιώμεθα).

Consequently, it appears that Tereus holds a higher position among the Birds, which enables him to impose on them human practices, such as slavery, the use of a human language and the summoning of assembly meetings.

4. The power of *logos*

It has long been noticed that in *Birds* there is much emphasis on language and language play: Whitman (1964: 172) notes that “the *Birds* plays with language in a way far beyond any of the other comedies, and the sense of reality undergoes considerable change as a consequence”. Arrowsmith (1973) connects the power of words with the fantasy politics of the play and claims that words “are above all else the omnipotent instruments of a politics which, both in its topicality and its

οὔτοσὶ κατωφαγᾶς, 299 ὅστις ἐστί; κειρύλος, 301 χαὔτη γέ γλαῦξ, 302-4 κίττα, τρυγῶν, κορυδός, ἐλεᾶς, ὑποθυμῖς, περιστερὰ,/νέρτος, ἰέραξ, φάττα, κόκκυξ, ἐρυθρόπους, κεβλήπυρις,/πορφυρίς, κερχνής, κολυμβίς, ἀμπελὶς, φήνη, δρύοψ.

existential timelessness, is the real subject of the play”,²³ while Dobrov (1990) points to the metaphoric language as the source of *Birds*.²⁴ I wish to draw attention to the systematic use and abuse of rhetoric in the play, which assists the competing leaders in occupying a position of power, and at the same time confirms the play’s fascination with language.²⁵

In the last quarter of the fifth century the increasing prominence of speech and rhetorical technique as a means used by orators-leaders to appeal to the demos was accompanied by increasing controversy about the nature of λόγος. Traditionally λόγος had an essential and well-recognized role in distinguishing men from animals and was thought to uphold the laws and the rule of justice, which preserve the social order in a community.²⁶ However, the λόγος associated with the rise of the sophists and their rhetoric was no longer a communal good, but a private tool, which was exploited by the speakers to meet their personal ends through

²³ Arrowsmith 1973: 146.

²⁴ Dobrov 1990: 218 “Aristophanes has derived *Birds* as a projection of the central metaphor so that its content and theme are defined, first and foremost, by play of the sign. [...] In distinction from the earlier plays, in which metaphor figures as a more or less important accomplice to the plot, *Birds* is essentially dependent on the collision and collusion of signifiers for even its most general ‘meaning’.”

²⁵ The focus on *logos* and the power of rhetoric in the Aristophanic plays has been particularly studied with reference to *Clouds*: see O’Regan 1992; Kastely 1997. For an overview of rhetoric in Attic comedy see Hubbard 2007, who holds that “Aristophanes was familiar with at least some form of rhetorical theory and education”, but does not refer extensively to *Birds*.

²⁶ Eur. *Supp.* 201-4 αἰνῶ δ’ ὃς ἡμῖν βίοντον ἐκ πεφυρμένου/καὶ θηριώδους θεῶν διεσταθήσατο,/πρῶτον μὲν ἐνθεῖς σύνεσιν, εἴτα δ’ ἄγγελον/γλῶσσαν λόγων δούς, ὥστε γινώσκειν ὅπα, Lys. 2.19 ἡγησάμενοι θηρίων μὲν ἔργον εἶναι ὑπ’ ἀλλήλων βία κρατεῖσθαι, ἀνθρώποις δὲ προσήκειν νόμῳ μὲν ὀρίσαι τὸ δίκαιον, λόγῳ δὲ πείσαι, ἔργῳ δὲ τούτοις ὑπηρετεῖν, ὑπὸ νόμου μὲν βασιλευμένους, ὑπὸ λόγου δὲ διδασκομένους. For more references see Buxton 1982: 58-62; O’Regan 1992: 17-21.

trickery and lies. Such use of rhetoric is δόλος, a subversive activity, which uses its seductiveness to put the values of the city in jeopardy, and must be opposed to πειθώ, as a socially desirable quality which cements the values of the city.²⁷ According to Gorgias, λόγος operates through deception and thus a skilful speech may persuade an audience sooner than a speech which is true (*Enc.* 13 δεύτερον δὲ τοὺς ἀναγκαίους διὰ λόγων ἀγῶνας, ἐν οἷς εἷς λόγος πολὺν ὄχλον ἔτερψε καὶ ἔπεισε τέχνῃ γραφεῖς, οὐκ ἀληθείαι λεχθεῖς). The power of speech to deceive is based on people's inability to know the truth and their necessary reliance on unstable opinion (δόξα) alone, which renders them powerless at the mercy of every skilful speaker (*Enc.* 11, 14).²⁸ The use of the sophistic *logos* which commands the souls of the listeners through deception can be paralleled to an act of violence, effected though not through blows but through words.²⁹

The familiarity of Peisetairos with the doctrines of sophists has been briefly noted by scholars,³⁰ but his affinity with the deceptive aspect of persuasion and the potential violence of the language has not been systematically pursued. Moreover, it must be noted that, before Peisetairos overpowers his audience by means of his

²⁷ Cf. the cases of *Philoctetes* and *Eumenides*, where πειθώ as frankness is opposed to δόλος as cunning deceit. See Buxton 1982: 64-6.

²⁸ See Segal 1962: 111-3, 121, 130. O'Regan 1992: 14-5

²⁹ This is very well demonstrated in Gorgias' *Encomium of Helen* (6), where being snatched away by force is presented as the equivalent of being persuaded by words. See O'Regan 1992 for a discussion of this negative perspective of language in *Clouds*.

³⁰ Whitman 1964: 173-6; Hubbard 1997.

skilful λόγος, Tereus also manifests himself as a capable sophistic orator. In this way, Peisetairos appears to emulate and surpass his rival in a sophistic/rhetorical contest: through deceitful speech he lures his audience with promises of power, while he promotes his personal goal to become the leader of the new Bird city.

Thus, both rivals apply certain rhetorical devices as if they were drawing from Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. At this point, an important clarification has to be made: at the time of Aristophanes some conception of rhetoric certainly existed, although the definition and extensive study of rhetorical theory was formed much later:³¹ Aristotle in his *Rhetoric* analyzed and systematized what people had long been using instinctively. Handbooks and speeches, which displayed features of what was called rhetoric in Aristotle's time, circulated and were probably well known to both Aristophanes and to members of his audience who could read. Thus, even though Aristotle's *Rhetoric* was produced much later, I shall apply its terminology to the rhetorical devices that Tereus and Peisetairos use in order to appeal to their audience.

Aristotle distinguishes two kinds of proofs: "atechnic" or "nonartistic", which the speaker devises and produces, and "entechnic" or "artistic",³² which are

³¹ See Hubbard 2007; 491 "fifth-century rhetoric may not have yet developed the widely accepted technical vocabulary and analytic categories of the fourth century, but comedy clearly shows speakers engaged in self-conscious linguistic and discursive strategies to succeed in persuading a specific target audience".

³² I borrow Kennedy's (1991) translation of the terms.

direct evidence and are not a product of the speaker's skills.³³ He then makes a list of the so-called entechnic proofs and divides them into three types: the ones based on the character of the speaker, the ones focusing on putting the audience in a certain frame of mind³⁴ and the arguments from probability, which are found in the speech itself.³⁵ As we will see, both Tereus and Peisetairos appear to be familiar with all these categories. However, Peisetairos surpasses his predecessor in rhetorical dexterity and cunning, as he employs the rhetorical categories more systematically and exploits them to his own ends.

³³ Aristot. *Rh.* 1355b35-9 τῶν δὲ πίστεων αἱ μὲν ἄτεχνοί εἰσιν αἱ δ' ἔντεχνοι. ἄτεχνα δὲ λέγω ὅσα μὴ δι' ἡμῶν πεπóρισται ἀλλὰ προὔπηρχεν, οἷον μάρτυρες βάσανοι συγγραφὰ καὶ ὅσα τοιαῦτα, ἔντεχνα δὲ ὅσα διὰ τῆς μεθόδου καὶ δι' ἡμῶν κατασκευασθῆναι δυνατόν, ὥστε δεῖ τούτων τοῖς μὲν χρῆσασθαι, τὰ δὲ εὐρεῖν.

³⁴ Cf. Gorgias who spoke of the emotive process of persuasion provoked by the pleasures of skilful speech (*Enc.* 10 αἱ γὰρ ἔνθεοι διὰ λόγων ἐπιδοαὶ ἐπαγωγὴ ἡδονῆς, ἀπαγωγὴ λύπης γίνονται· συγγινομένη γὰρ τῇ δόξῃ τῆς ψυχῆς ἡ δύναμις τῆς ἐπιδοῆς ἔθελξε καὶ ἔπεισε καὶ μετέστησεν αὐτὴν γοητεία, 13 δεύτερον δὲ τοὺς ἀναγκαίους διὰ λόγων ἀγῶνας, ἐν οἷς εἷς λόγος πολὺν ὄχλον ἔτερψε) and Plato, who defined the oratorical ability as *ψυχαγωγία*, the art of enchanting the soul (*Phdr.* 271c10-12 ἐπειδὴ λόγου δύναμις τυγχάνει ψυχαγωγία οὖσα, τὸν μέλλοντα ῥητορικὸν ἔσεσθαι ἀνάγκη εἰδέναι ψυχὴ ὅσα εἶδη ἔχει). For Plato's criticism of Gorgias' poetic γοητεία as morally reprehensible, see *Rep.* 10.602d. See also Segal 1962: 121-9, 133.

³⁵ Aristot., *Rh.* 1356a3-5 τῶν δὲ διὰ τοῦ λόγου ποριζομένων πίστεων τρία εἶδη ἔστιν· αἱ μὲν γὰρ εἰσιν ἐν τῷ ἥθει τοῦ λέγοντος, αἱ δὲ ἐν τῷ τὸν ἀκροατὴν διαθεῖναι πως, αἱ δὲ ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ λόγῳ διὰ τοῦ δεικνύναι ἢ φαίνεσθαι δεικνύναι. διὰ μὲν οὖν τοῦ ἥθους, ὅταν οὕτω λεχθῇ ὁ λόγος ὥστε ἀξιόπιστον ποιῆσαι τὸν λέγοντα. [...] διὰ δὲ τῶν ἀκροατῶν, ὅταν εἰς πάθος ὑπὸ τοῦ λόγου προαχθῶσιν· οὐ γὰρ ὁμοίως ἀποδίδομεν τὰς κρίσεις λυπούμενοι καὶ χαίροντες, ἢ φιλοῦντες καὶ μισοῦντες. [...] διὰ δὲ τοῦ λόγου πιστεύουσιν, ὅταν ἀληθὲς ἢ φαινόμενον δεῖξωμεν ἐκ τῶν περὶ ἕκαστα πιθανῶν. Cf. Pl. *Phdr.* 272e-273a about arguments from probability in judicial rhetoric.

5. Tereus as orator

Upon the Birds' arrival for the meeting, Tereus is careful to state, in an elevated tragic tone,³⁶ that he will never abandon his friends (313 οὐτοσὶ πάλαι πάρειμι κούκ ἀποστατῶ φίλων). By presenting himself as a trustworthy man, Tereus seeks to render himself worthy of confidence (ῆθος, *Rh.* 1356a4-6) and thus predisposes the Birds favourably towards what is to follow. It is only after Tereus has described the message he will communicate to them as κοινόν, ἀσφαλῆ, δίκαιον, ἡδύν, ὠφελήσιμον (316) and the two men as λεπτῶ λογιστά (317) that the actual reason of the meeting is given – and then again the issue is described by a high-flown phrase (320-1 φήμ' ἀπ' ἀνθρώπων ἀφῖχθαι δεῦρο πρεσβύτα δύο· ἤκετον δ' ἔχοντε πρέμνον πράγματος πελωρίου). In that way, Tereus seeks to arouse among the Birds emotions of desire and interest in the plan the men will unfold (πάθος, *Rh.* 1356a14-6).

Yet, upon Tereus' new revelations, the Birds' initial shock (318 ποῦ; πᾶ; πῶς φής;) soon gives way to terror and feelings of rage and betrayal against him (322-3, 327-35). These hard feelings make the Birds pronounce a threat against Tereus (336 ἀλλὰ πρὸς μὲν τοῦτον ἡμῖν ἔστιν ὕστερος λόγος) and, finally, they seek to attack the two men (343-54, 364-5).

³⁶ See Dunbar 1995: 185

The turn of events seems a hard one for Tereus to handle. However, he intervenes by applying this time the third Aristotelian category of proofs: arguments which are generally accepted and true for the most part. This kind of argument is called an “enthymeme” and falls under the category of logical deductive argumentation.³⁷ Tereus argues that it is absurd to harm someone when not harmed by them (366-7 εἰπέ μοι, τί μέλλετ', ὧ πάντων κάκιστα θηρίων,/ἀπολέσαι παθόντες οὐδὲν ἄνδρε καὶ διασπάσαι) and subtly inserts a reference to his relationship with people to stir the Birds' sympathy towards him (368 τῆς ἐμῆς γυναικὸς ὄντε συγγενεῖ καὶ φυλέτα). He adds that an enemy by nature may be friend in mind and may have a useful advice to offer (371-2 εἰ δὲ τὴν φύσιν μὲν ἐχθροί, τὸν δὲ νοῦν εἰσιν φίλοι / καὶ διδάξοντές τι δεῦρ' ἤκουσιν ὑμᾶς χρήσιμον;) and goes on to pursue this train of thought further by employing a maxim. A maxim is a statement concerning common human actions and what should be chosen or avoided with reference to them,³⁸ and forms part of an enthymeme, as a premise of it or a conclusion to it.³⁹ In this case, Tereus offers three maxims, which underline his preceding statement that the Birds will benefit from

³⁷ Aristot. *Rh.* 1356a35-1356b1-6 τῶν δὲ διὰ τοῦ δεικνύναι ἢ φαίνεσθαι δεικνύναι [...] ἔστιν γὰρ τὸ μὲν παράδειγμα ἐπαγωγή, τὸ δ' ἐνθύμημα συλλογισμός, τὸ δὲ φαινόμενον ἐνθύμημα φαινόμενος συλλογισμός. καλῶ δ' ἐνθύμημα μὲν ῥητορικὸν συλλογισμόν, παράδειγμα δὲ ἐπαγωγήν.

³⁸ Aristot. *Rh.* 1394a21-5 ἔστι δὴ γνώμη ἀπόφανσις, οὐ μέντοι οὔτε περὶ τῶν καθ' ἕκαστον, [...] ἀλλὰ καθόλου, οὔτε περὶ πάντων [...] ἀλλὰ περὶ ὧν αἱ πράξεις εἰσὶ, καὶ <ᾧ> αἰρετὰ ἢ φευκτά ἐστὶ πρὸς τὸ πράττειν.

³⁹ Aristot. *Rh.* 1394a25-8 ἐπεὶ τὸ ἐνθύμημα ὁ περὶ τοιούτων συλλογισμός ἐστίν, σχεδὸν τὰ συμπεράσματα τῶν ἐνθυμημάτων καὶ αἱ ἀρχαὶ ἀφαιρεθέντος τοῦ συλλογισμοῦ γινώμαί εἰσιν.

listening to the two men, even though they consider them their enemies. Thus, Tereus argues from the point of expediency, as is suitable for a deliberative speech (Rh. 1358b20-30):

375-80

ἀλλ' ἀπ' ἐχθρῶν δὴ τὰ πολλὰ μανθάνουσιν οἱ σοφοί.
ἢ γὰρ εὐλάβεια σώζει πάντα. παρὰ μὲν οὖν φίλου
οὐ μάθοις ἄν τοῦθ', ὁ δ' ἐχθρὸς εὐθὺς ἐξηνάγκασεν.
αὐτίχ' αἱ πόλεις παρ' ἀνδρῶν γ' ἔμαθον ἐχθρῶν κοῦ φίλων
ἐκπονεῖν θ' ὑψηλὰ τεῖχη ναῦς τε κεκτῆσθαι μακράς
τὸ δὲ μάθημα τοῦτο σώζει παῖδας, οἶκον, χρήματα.

The first maxim states that wise people have a lot to learn from their enemies (for instance, (378-80) about constructing walls and ships, which keep a city safe); second (376), precaution keeps everything safe; and third (376-7), caution is taught more effectively by an enemy rather than by a friend, because it is forced on oneself and not received as instruction. However, the three premises do not support adequately Tereus' main argument, because they are very loosely and arbitrarily connected. In fact, they bring together two ideas which are totally different: as Sommerstein points out, "it is one thing to learn by experience the means of resisting an enemy, and quite another to trust an enemy who professes to be volunteering valuable information".⁴⁰

⁴⁰ See Sommerstein 1987: 221. See also Dunbar 1995: 279 "if the Chorus were not bird-brained they would notice that he has not proved that the birds may benefit from listening to anything that their enemy has to say".

Yet, the argumentation has an effect on the Birds: their anger is mitigated and they ask for more information about the men and the plan. Responding to their questions, Tereus makes more use of the Aristotelian πάθος. The two men do not simply come from Greece, but from the “land of wisdom” (409 σοφῆς ἀφ’ Ἑλλάδος); the reason why they came to the Birds is presented as a great desire for the Birds’ life (411-4 ἔρως/βίου διαίτης τέ σου/καὶ ξυνοικεῖν τέ σοι/καὶ ξυνεῖναι τὸ πᾶν, cf. also earlier 324 ἄνδρ’ ἐδεξάμην ἐραστὰ τῆσδε τῆς ξυνουσίας), and not as a query to Tereus about the ideal city, as it originally was.⁴¹ The plan is depicted as an opportunity not to be missed (416 ἄπιστα καὶ πέρα κλύειν, 421-2 λέγει μέγαν τιν’ ὄλβον οὔτε λεκτὸν οὔτε πιστόν) and any details communicated are carefully chosen to please the Birds, as they refer to their sovereignty (422-5 ὡς/σὰ γὰρ τὰ πάντα ταῦτα, καὶ τὸ τῆδε καὶ τὸ κεῖσε καί/τὸ δεῦρο, προσβιβᾷ λέγων). As for the conceiver of the plan, he is depicted in the most favourable colours (427 ἄφατον ὡς φρόνιμος, 429-30 πυκνότατον κίναδος,/σόφισμα, κύρμα, τρῖμμα, παιπάλημ’ ὅλον).

Having heard this information, the Birds decide to set aside their reservations and suddenly become enthusiastic and willing to hear the rest (431-3 λέγειν λέγειν κέλευέ μοι/κλυὼν γὰρ ὦν σύ μοι λέγεις/λόγων ἀνεπτέρωμαι). Tereus’ rhetorical devices were efficient, since he managed to change the Birds’ disposition

⁴¹ Cf. lines 120-2 ταῦτ’ οὖν ἰκέται νῶ πρὸς σέ δεῦρ’ ἀφίγμεθα,/εἴ τινα πόλιν φράσειας ἡμῖν εὔερον/ὥσπερ σισύραν ἐγκατακλινῆναι μαλθακὴν.

and made them obey his will. Following Tereus' lead, Peisetairos will prove to be an even more effective speaker: he employs more systematically the rhetorical categories applied by Tereus and exploits them to his own ends.

6. Peisetairos as a sophistic teacher

The familiarity of Peisetairos with the doctrines and the techniques of the sophists is evident even before he delivers his speech: in his attempt to persuade the Birds to listen to Peisetairos, Tereus depicts Peisetairos as a sophistic teacher-orator: he employs words like *καινός* (256-7 *καινός γνώμην/καινῶν ἔργων τ'ἐγχειρητής*), *λεπτός* (317 *ἄνδρε γὰρ λεπτῷ λογιστά*), and *πυκνός* and *κίναδος* (430 *πυκνότατον κίναδος*), which are associated elsewhere in Aristophanes with sophistic thinking. *Καινός*⁴² and *λεπτός* are often found in *Clouds* to describe the sophistic methods Socrates applies to his teaching.⁴³ Moreover, in *Acharnians* and *Frogs* *λεπτός* is attributed to Euripides' notions⁴⁴ and, as Denniston (1927) remarks, it is found in satirical passages in general, "sometimes coupled with *πυκνός*, almost

⁴² See Hubbard 1997: 28 "it is significant that the *Birds* uses the terms *σοφός* and *καινός* more than any other play of Aristophanes except *Clouds*".

⁴³ *καινός*: 478-9 *μηχανὰς/ἤδη 'πὶ τούτοις πρὸς σὲ καινὰς προσφέρω*, 895-6 *τί σοφὸν ποιῶν; γνώμας καινὰς ἐξευρίσκων*, 937 *σύ τε τὴν καινὴν παιδευσιν*, 943-4 *ῥηματίοισιν καινοῖς αὐτὸν/καὶ διανοίαις κατατοξεύσω*, 1032 *δεῖ σε λέγειν τι καινόν*, 1396 *ὦ καινῶν ἐπῶν κινητὰ καὶ μοχλευτά*, 1398 *ὥς ἡδὺ καινοῖς πράγμασιν καὶ δεξιοῖς ὁμιλεῖν*. *λεπτός*: 153 *ὦ Ζεῦ βασιλεῦ, τῆς λεπτότητος τῶν φρενῶν*, 360 *λεπτοτάτων λήρων ἱερεῦ*, 319-20 *ἡ ψυχὴ μου πεπότῃται/καὶ λεπτολογεῖν ἤδη ζητεῖ*, 1403 *γνώμαις δὲ λεπταῖς καὶ λόγοις ξύνειμι καὶ μερίμναις*.

⁴⁴ *Ach.* 445 *πυκνῇ γὰρ λεπτὰ μηχανᾷ φρενί*, *Ran.* 956 *λεπτῶν τε κανόνων εἰσβολὰς*.

invariably with reference to the philosophers or Euripides”.⁴⁵ Lastly, κίναδος in *Clouds* (448) is used, among other words, as a possible characterization for a sophistically trained orator.

Apart from this technical vocabulary which evokes sophistic connotations, Tereus also uses a series of abstract nouns in -μα to describe Peisetairos (430 σοφισμα, κύρμα, τρῖμμα, παιπάλημα). Again, abstracts in -μα are associated in *Clouds* with the world of sophists⁴⁶ (cf. *Nub.* 260 τρῖμμα, 447 περίτριμμα). In both *Clouds* and *Birds*, Aristophanes plays with these terms, turning them from commendatory, as they are meant to be for their speakers in the first place,⁴⁷ to pejorative. In *Clouds* Socrates promises to turn Strepsiades into a τρῖμμα and this is meant to be a κέρδος (259-60 εἴτα δὴ τί κερδανῶ; λέγειν γενήσῃ τρῖμμα, κρόταλον, παιπάλη). However, Strepsiades later on, when using the word περίτριμμα to describe the outcome of his education in the φροντιστήριον, places the word in a derogatory context (445-51), that is, among other terms which are meant to be abusive and “used against a man who is a tricky opponent in lawsuits”.⁴⁸ In the light of this evidence, we have a very good reason to suspect that τρῖμμα in *Clouds* is not to be taken positively, as a praise for the trained orator, but ironically, as derogatory for what is to follow. Likewise, though Tereus might use the aforementioned (430) abstract nouns as praise for

⁴⁵ Denniston 1927: 119.

⁴⁶ For the function of such nouns in Aristophanes see Willi 2007: 136-9.

⁴⁷ See Dunbar 1995: 298.

⁴⁸ See Dover 1968: 157.

Peisetairos, at the same time his statement is to be undermined in the course of the play by the development of Peisetairos into a tyrant.⁴⁹

Thus, Peisetairos is described in terms appropriate for a sophistic teacher,⁵⁰ a fact which is acknowledged by the Birds themselves, who ask him later to “teach” them (548 σὺ **δίδασκε** παρών) and indeed he does (550 καὶ δὴ τοίνυν πρῶτα **διδάσκω**...). Peisetairos will become the new teacher of Birds in the place of Tereus, their former teacher of Greek. This kind of authority that Tereus verbally places on Peisetairos is a preparation for the power he will claim.

7. Peisetairos’ abuse of rhetoric

In the course of his speech to the Birds, Peisetairos builds his profile as an ambitious orator-leader and demonstrates his superiority over Tereus. I have already examined the function of ethos, pathos and arguments from probability with regard to Tereus’ speech. Peisetairos employs these categories more systematically and exploits them to his own ends.

As far as πάθος is concerned, Peisetairos from the beginning of his speech aims at arousing certain feelings among the Birds. Initially he tries to predispose his

⁴⁹ It is not quite true then, as Dunbar (1995: 298) holds, that the abstract nouns in both *Clouds* and *Birds* are used as complimentary to their speaker.

⁵⁰ Hubbard 2007: 496-8 suggests that *Clouds* betray the importance of the sophistic education for a successful orator; this is again underlined in *Birds*, through the description of Peisetairos as a sophist before he delivers his speech.

audience in his favour by stating from the start that he will utter a μέγα καὶ λαρινὸν ἔπος τι which will shatter their souls (465-6). Then, in order to attract the Birds' attention to his plan, he firstly evokes sentiments of surprise and alarm by expressing his grief for their current condition (466 οὕτως ὑμῶν ὑπεραλγῶ) and goes on to excite their desire for power and kingship by referring to their former condition (467 οἵτινες ὄντες πρότερον βασιλῆς, 467-70 ὑμεῖς/πάντων ὀπόσ' ἔστιν, ἔμοῦ πρώτον, τουδί, καὶ τοῦ Διὸς αὐτοῦ,/ἀρχαιότεροι πρότεροί τε Κρόνου καὶ Τιτάνων ἐγένεσθε,/καὶ Γῆς). This element of emotional appeal reappears at the end of the speech, where it is most common in oratory in general.⁵¹ Recapitulating, Peisetairos pities the Birds who once were great and holy, whereas now they are treated as slaves and imbeciles (522-3). He finishes with a detailed description of the current sufferings of birds in the hands of men (524-38), which aims at arousing a feeling of anger and sorrow and a desire for revenge. Indeed, the response on the part of the Birds is immediate; they are grieved at their bad luck (539-42 πολὺ δὴ πολὺ δὴ χαλεπωτάτους λόγους/ἤνεγκας, ἄνθρωφ' ὥς ἐδάκρυσά γ' ἐμῶν/πατέρων κάκην) and cannot wait for the application of the plan (548-9 ἀλλ' ὅ τι χρὴ δρᾶν, σὺ δίδασκε παρών· ὥς ζῆν οὐκ ἄξιον ἡμῖν,/εἰ μὴ κοιμούμεθα παντὶ τρόπῳ τὴν ἡμετέραν βασιλείαν).

⁵¹ See Kennedy 1980: 93ff.

Closely linked to the emotional appeal to the audience is the element of the moral character of the speaker. As far as this area is concerned, Peisetairos' task is harder: the Birds had faith in Tereus and considered him trustworthy, since he was their leader; the momentary lapse they had when they thought Tereus betrayed them was not of great importance: the fact remains that he was one of their kin. By contrast, Peisetairos is an outsider and needs to build the Birds' confidence in himself from scratch. For that reason, Peisetairos gives much more emphasis than Tereus to the category of ἥθος. In fact, he makes every effort to exhibit some of the very qualities that Aristotle claims a speaker should possess.⁵²

To begin with, one of the qualities a speaker should exhibit, according to Aristotle, is φρόνησις, which enables men to make a wise decision regarding good and evil things (*Rh.* 1366b20-22). Accordingly, Peisetairos presents himself as a wise man to the Birds. When he cites the fable about the lark who antedated all the other gods, he reprimands the Birds for not knowing it and calls them ἀμαθής ... κού πολυπράγμων (471). Thus, implicitly, he shows himself to possess the opposite qualities; he is σοφός and πολυπράγμων.⁵³ Further proofs of this wisdom are the rest of the fables and practices he enumerates, which show his learnedness (481ff.).

⁵² See *Rh.* 1365b-1368a, where Aristotle draws a list of the values a speaker should demonstrate that they possess and the vices they should prove that they lack. He believes all these various qualities to constitute parts or aspects of the utmost quality of virtue itself (*Rh.* 1366a-b).

⁵³ It is noticeable that Peisetairos' words here contradict his initial statement (44) that they are in search of a τόπον ἀπράγμονα, as πολυπράγμων here is meant to be a complimentary quality that he

Apart from practical wisdom, Aristotle also lists among the noble things a speaker should possess those which men do not do for their own sake, but for the sake of others (*Rh.* 1366b36) and which will bring profit not to them but to others (*Rh.* 1367a3-4), since this proves that they are not inspired by selfish motives (*Rh.* 1366b38-9). This quality is akin to magnanimity, to which Aristotle also refers as an essential quality for a speaker (*Rh.* 1366b17-8). Accordingly, Peisetairos presents himself as an unselfish and magnanimous person, who cares only for the Birds' well-being and their potential as kings (cf. 466-7 οὕτως ὑμῶν ὑπεραλγῶ,/οἵτινες ὄντες πρότερον βασιλῆς...). What is more, since men are presented as birds' enemies, the favourable disposition and sympathy Peisetairos shows towards the Birds' ordeals at the hands of men (522-38) imply that he is critical towards men, his own species. Thus, not only is he incited by benevolent motives, but he also neglects his own interest, which should be on the side of men, since he is a man. The virtue of benefiting someone to the detriment of one's own interest is also listed by Aristotle as a desirable quality for a speaker who wants to convince for his moral integrity (*Rh.* 1366b37-8, 1367a4-5, 1367a18).

The most important components of virtue, however, according to Aristotle, are justice and courage, which are useful in peace and war respectively (*Rh.* 1366b5-7). One aspect of justice (and partly of courage) is retaliation, since "to take

possesses. On πολυπραγμοσύνη as a typical Athenian quality cf. Thucydides 1.70.8-9, 2.40.2, 2.63.2, 6.87.3.

vengeance on one's enemies is nobler than to come to terms with them; for to retaliate is just, and that which is just is noble; and further, a courageous man ought not to allow himself to be beaten" (*Rh.* 1367a19-22). In that sense, Peisetairos again presents himself as a just and courageous man, since his advice to the Birds to claim back the kingship from the gods could be considered as a retaliation against them. Moreover, the Birds' gaining control over men could also signify a vengeance against men as well, who have been exercising their power over birds.

Lastly, Peisetairos displays noble behaviour because he advises the Birds to act in accordance with their previous state of kingship. As Aristotle claims, every piece of advice which encourages actions highly esteemed among the audience is noble. As an example he cites actions which are worthy of a man's ancestors or of his own previous achievements, "for to obtain additional honour is noble and conduces to happiness" (*Rh.* 1367b12-4). The Birds' restoration to power would be precisely an action worthy of their ancestors, who used to be kings, and of their previous achievements, as they used to be rulers over men and gods. Thus, Peisetairos' suggestion, as long as it is presented as in line with the glorious past of the Birds, renders him a noble character.

Having analyzed the two categories of entechnic proofs which are outlined by Aristotle and also mirrored in Peisetairos' speech, we may proceed to the logical argumentation of Peisetairos and the third type of entechnic proof. Aristotle

distinguished two processes of logic: deduction and induction. The first one was followed by Tereus in a misleading way, as mentioned above, and is also applied by Peisetairos: his claim that the Birds should be kings because they preceded gods chronologically can be considered as an enthymeme. With the only exception of this example of deduction, Peisetairos follows mostly the logical process of induction, which is represented by examples (παραδείγματα), from which a probable conclusion is induced about the matter in question (*Rh.* 1356b5ff.). Examples can be either historical or fictitious, whereas fictitious examples are mostly comparisons or fables (*Rh.* 1393a24ff.). Peisetairos in the course of his speech intentionally blurs these categories of historical and fictitious examples in order to produce a misleading-and more convincing-result.

I shall begin with the enthymeme Peisetairos employs. The syllogism is as follows, although it is not presented as clearly by Peisetairos:⁵⁴ the kingship belongs to those who were the first to exist (major premise); birds (as he proves) were the first to exist, even before gods (minor premise); therefore, the Birds should be the kings instead of gods.⁵⁵ However, this conclusion is evidently wrong, since both the

⁵⁴ The enthymeme is presented in this way by Peisetairos: 467-70 ὑμεῖς / πάντων ὀπόσ' ἔστιν, ἐμοῦ πρῶτον, τουδί, καὶ τοῦ Διὸς αὐτοῦ, / ἀρχαιότεροι πρότεροί τε Κρόνου καὶ Τιτάνων ἐγένεσθε, / καὶ Γῆς.

⁵⁵ It becomes clear that the main argumentation of the speech is presented to be from justice: Peisetairos is trying to persuade the Birds that it is only fair that they should claim back the kingship, since they used to be the kings in the first place. This contradicts Aristotle's claim that in a deliberative speech, like the speech of Peisetairos, the arguments should be from expediency (*Rh.* 1358b20ff.), as well as Tereus' adumbration of Peisetairos' speech to the Birds (421-3 λέγει μέγαν τιν'

premises are not indisputable: the major premise does not hold an absolute truth (one might say, for example, that the kingship belongs to the stronger), whereas the claim of birds' temporal priority over gods does not hold, as we will see.

To support his minor premise, that birds predated gods, Peisetairos cites a fable about the lark who antedated all the other gods (471-5). He claims that this fable belongs to Aesop.⁵⁶ Here there are two points to be made: first, a fable is actually a myth, not a scientific or logical proof, and should be used as a counterpart argument following a more solid argumentation. Aristotle also draws attention to this, when he says that examples must be employed as a demonstrative proof if we have no enthymemes; but, if we have them, examples must be used as evidence and as a kind of epilogue to the enthymemes (*Rh.* 1394a9ff.). Thus, one can do better than begin their argumentation with an aesopic fable.

Second, the story of the lark burying her father in her head is not attested elsewhere for Aesop or anyone else.⁵⁷ Dunbar (1995: 326-7) suggests that the story resembles an aetiological fable in Aelian's *De natura animalium* (16.5.1-43), which referred to the Indian Hoopoe and was told by the Brachmans. According to this myth, the hoopoe was a prince, who was driven into exile with his parents; when they died half way, he split his head with a sword and buried both of them there.

ὄλβον...ὥς σὰ γὰρ τὰ πάντα ταῦτα). The fact that Peisetairos does not fulfil these expectations may indicate that he does not have truly in mind the Birds' interests.

⁵⁶ Cf. also Aristot. *Rh.* 1393a30, 1393b8-10 on Aesopic fables.

⁵⁷ See Dunbar 1995: 326.

The Sun, amazed at this deed, turned him into a bird, which carries a crest on its head, as a memorial of the burial. Aelian proposes that the story was transmitted to the West as a fable about the crested lark and cites Aristophanes as a reference.⁵⁸ It is hard to know if Aristophanes had a version of this story in mind; yet, if one excludes the possibility that the original fable existed but simply did not come down to us, there are four possibilities which all have interesting implications: first, Peisetairos had no idea about such a story; in that case, he just invented it and “sold” it with the name of Aesop to the Birds to create an impression of authority. Second, Peisetairos knew the western version of the Indian story (as transferred from the Indian Hoopoe to the crested lark) and again intentionally presented it to the Birds as if it were Aesop’s, since Aesop’s name would sound more convincing than an anonymous Indian story. Third, Peisetairos knew the original Indian story, but replaced the hoopoe with the crested lark. In that case, he might have wanted to suppress or undermine the hoopoe’s leading position in the Birds’ cosmogony, as this fable would reinforce the position of Tereus, the hoopoe, and would be threatening to Peisetairos’ chances for the leadership. Fourth and last, Peisetairos had only a vague idea about such a story, the details of which he did not recall, but nevertheless brought it forward to the audience, blurred as he had it in mind. Even

⁵⁸ 16.5. 24-8 τοιαῦτα ἄττα καὶ Ἀθηναῖοι ὑπὲρ τοῦ κορύδου τερατευόμενοι προσεῖχον μύθῳ τινὶ ᾧ περ οὖν ἀκολουθεῖσά μοι δοκεῖ καὶ Ἀριστοφάνης ὁ τῆς κωμωδίας ποιητῆς ἐν Ὀρνισὶ λέγων..., 39-40 ἔοικεν οὖν ἐξ Ἰνδῶν τὸ μυθολόγημα ἐπ’ ἄλλου μὲν ὄρνιθος, ἐπιρρεῦσαι δ’ οὖν καὶ τοῖς Ἑλλήσιν.

so, it can be inferred that Peisetairos did not think much of the Birds' learning, since he uses arguments which are simplistic.⁵⁹

Proceeding further with his argumentation and seeking to reinforce the statement of birds' superiority, Peisetairos offers a series of proofs that birds once ruled the universe: the kingship of the cock in Persia (483-5, 488-92), of the kite in Greece (499) and of the cuckoo in Egypt (504-6). The word he uses for these proofs is τεκμήρια (482). This word is a technical term in Plato and Aristotle: it denotes conclusive proof that is formally valid and has nothing to do with human conduct (Plato *Phaedrus* 266e3, Aristotle *Rh.* 1357b3ff.). It is also used with high frequency by Herodotus and Thucydides,⁶⁰ but in neither of them does it convey the meaning of empirical evidence, as in Aristotle. In Herodotus τεκμήριον usually implies something more than simple evidence; it is an argument or a decisive proof (2.13.1, 2.22.6, 2.43.7, 2.58.3, 2.104.21, 3.38.10, 7.238.4, 9.100.6). In Thucydides, it is used as proof or evidence both in narration (1.21.1, 1.132.1, 1.132.5, 2.15.4, 6.28.2) and in speeches (1.34.1, 1.73.5, 2.39.2, 3.66.1). Moreover, the distinction he makes in 1.21.1 between τεκμήριον and τὸ μυθώδες indicates that he considers τεκμήριον as a scientific proof.

⁵⁹ By adjusting the level of his speech according to whom he talks to, Peisetairos makes much use of Gorgias' term καιρός and Plato's ψυχαγωγία (*Phaedrus* 271a-b). Cf. Hubbard 2007: 503 "the speeches within his (i.e. Aristophanes') plays typically adapt their style and argumentative strategy to their specific audience with their sole intent of persuading, not establishing objective truth".

⁶⁰ See Dunbar 1995: 329.

In all the aforementioned authors there is a common element in the perception of τεκμήριον; either empirical or theoretical, it has the sense of a strong conclusive proof which does not allow for misinterpretations. By contrast, in Aristophanes Peisetairos uses it in a very different way. Peisetairos' τεκμήρια are all examples of the former sovereignty of three birds over certain areas, which he presents as historical facts and, in that sense, they could be classified under Aristotle's category of historical examples. Nevertheless, when Peisetairos goes into details in order to back up his assertion of these birds' sovereignty, the "historicity" of his examples is undermined, since his claims do not withstand sharp critical scrutiny.⁶¹ For instance, as far as the cock is concerned, Peisetairos appeals to its naming by Greeks as "the Persian bird" (485), its unique upright comb which he connects with the piece of fabric which stood up on the Persian king's headgear⁶² (486-7) and his serving as an alarm clock for various craftsmen and traders to go to work (488-92). However, the correlation between the cock's name as "the Persian bird" and its sovereignty over the Persians is arbitrary and false, since such a name could be attributed to the bird simply because it originally came to Greece from

⁶¹ See Romer 1997: 56 "[Peisetairos] uses imagined, present-day survivals of past practices to historicize the past [...] It is impossible, of course, to argue the historicity of any description of the beginnings of the universe, but it is nevertheless important for Peisetairos that his description be, as it were, historically credible and compelling to the birds".

⁶² I agree with Dunbar (1995: 332-3) that it is more probable that these lines are attributed to Peisetairos rather than Euelpides, since the point made "is an important and ingenious argument for the Cock's original kingship".

Persia.⁶³ The same goes for the connection between the Persian king's cap and the cock's comb; though funny and clever, it is entirely arbitrary.

The rest of Peisetairos' τεκμήρια about the kite, which taught men to roll at their feet before it⁶⁴ (500-1), and the cuckoo, which by its call declares the time for the harvest (504-6), are meant to be amusing, but are totally inept as proofs of birds' superiority over men. By manipulating the gravity the word τεκμήριον usually conveys in rhetorical or historical contexts, Peisetairos presents his τεκμήρια as incontestable facts and thus creates a pseudo-historical framework in order to sell his arguments to the Birds.⁶⁵ Moreover, if we accept Thomas' remark (2000: 191ff.) that Herodotus resorts to the language of proof when he intends to draw attention to his argument and assert its validity and not necessarily in contexts where his argument is unquestionable, we may assume that Peisetairos may be doing something similar here. He uses τεκμήριον for arguments which are not particularly strong, but need to be asserted. This lack of seriousness in Peisetairos' arguments is further accentuated by Euelpides' comic asides (492-7, 501-3, 507).

Later on, Peisetairos offers three more proofs to support his main thesis: birds adorning the sceptres of Greek kings of the heroic age (508-10), the

⁶³ Cf. Dunbar 1995: 330.

⁶⁴ Probably greeting with his arrival the beginning of the spring (cf. Dunbar 1995: 343).

⁶⁵ It is interesting to mention at this point Dunbar's remark that Aristophanes may have known two fables of Aesop having to do with cocks (1995: 334); if so, Peisetairos' arguments again rely on a fable while at the same time are presented as serious claims for birds' superiority.

representation of gods with birds on their heads (514-6) and the custom of swearing by birds (518-22); these could be also considered to fall into the category of historical examples, but their force is again questionable. Bird-topped sceptres or birds on cult-statues⁶⁶ do not reveal much about birds' power; on the contrary, such representations might speak for birds' dependence upon the kings and gods. Lastly, the argument that oaths by birds are older than oaths by gods actually reverses the order of events, since "many languages distort frequently uttered oaths by a deity into something with a similar sound but not divine".⁶⁷ Again, Euelpides' comment, although intended as a support of Peisetairos' argument, questions its validity. Euelpides cites the example of Lampon, a famous interpreter of oracles (521),⁶⁸ who used to swear by the goose whenever he gave a false interpretation, so as to evade the anger of the god by whom he would otherwise have sworn falsely. In that sense, Euelpides' comment suggests that people do not really consider birds as gods; otherwise, they would be more respectful to them instead of swearing false oaths in their names.

Thus, with regard to his logic argumentation, Peisetairos appears for the most part to systematically abuse the categories of historical and fictitious examples

⁶⁶ If we follow Dunbar's suggestion (1995: 352ff.) that Aristophanes refers to birds perching on statues in temples and sacred precincts and not to actual representation of birds on the statues, the argument becomes even funnier.

⁶⁷ Dunbar 1995: 357.

⁶⁸ See Dunbar 1995: 358.

and to apply a flawed logic. In this way, he creates a “subjective restructuring of the world”⁶⁹ in order to deceive the Birds and win them over to his side. The fact that Peisetairos abuses rhetorical practices by using them for deception and trickery, in order to fulfil his goal of becoming a leader, points to a kind of persuasion which equals violence, though not physical but verbal. In *Knights*, Paphlagon violated the linguistic code by giving out animal-like cries instead of speaking in a coherent, logical and intelligible way. The violence effected on the linguistic code by Peisetairos is qualitatively different: Peisetairos does apply a logical argumentation, which, although it proves to be simplistic and flawed, captures and enslaves his audience. He is no more just a man to them (540 ἄνθρωπε), but their saviour (545 σωτήρ), their dearest friend (627 φίλτατ’ ἐμοί) and teacher (548 ἀλλ’ ὅ τι χρή δρᾶν, σὺ δίδασκε παρών, cf. 200 ἐδίδαξα), to whom they entrust themselves (546-8 ἀναθείς γὰρ ἐγὼ σοι/τὰ νεόττια κάμαυτὸν οἰκετεύσω), and whose advice from now on they will always follow (628 οὐκ ἔστιν ὅπως ἂν ἐγὼ ποθ’ ἐκὼν τῆς σῆς γνώμης ἔτ’ ἀφείμην). This last phrase calls to mind what the Birds had earlier said about their obedience to Tereus: 385 ἀλλὰ μὴν οὐδ’ ἄλλο σοί πω πράγμ’ ἐνηντιώμεθα. Yet, their new statement is even more emphatic and provides a hint for the official transition of power from Tereus to Peisetairos.

⁶⁹ Whitman 1964: 174.

Thus, the men, instead of protecting themselves against the Birds through spits and armor made of pots and saucers, as they originally intended to do (356-65), find a more effective weapon: they substitute physical violence with verbal violence. This verbal violence foreshadows the numerous violations that Peisetairos will move on to commit on the sexual and ritual code.

8. Metamorphosis

In order to become the Birds' new leader, Peisetairos has to prove his superiority in more fields than a verbal contest. However, before any further competition, an important matter has to be settled: Peisetairos must assume an avian nature and become a bird-man like his rival, Tereus. His metamorphosis is an essential factor in the construction of his profile as a leader. As we have already seen, one of the reasons why Tereus was able to rule over the Birds was the fact that, though transformed into a bird, he still retained some of his human characteristics. In that way, he imposed on the Birds human practices, while he was still considered to be one of them. Likewise, Peisetairos from the very beginning seems to follow Tereus' example as he imposes human conventions on the Birds: the first thing that he asks them to do before he even goes on to talk about his plans is to stop flying everywhere with gaping beaks; such a behaviour, he says, is discreditable (ἄτιμον). Yet, flying and having open beaks is inherent in birds'

nature; it is for men that this behaviour is inappropriate, as Peisetairos goes on to argue, since the verbs πέτομαι and χάσκω have unflattering implications (161-70):⁷⁰

{Πεισ.} φεῦ φεῦ·
ἢ μέγ' ἐνορῶ βούλευμ' ἐν ὀρνίθων γένει,
καὶ δύναμιν ἢ γένοιτ' ἄν, εἰ πίθοισθέ μοι.
{Ἐπ.} τί σοι πιθώμεσθ';
{Πεισ.} ὅ τι πίθησθε; πρῶτα μὲν
μὴ περιπέτεσθε πανταχῇ κεχηνότες·
ὡς τοῦτ' ἄτιμον τοῦργον ἐστίν. αὐτίκα
ἐκεῖ παρ' ἡμῖν τοὺς πετομένους ἦν ἔρη,
“τίς ἐστιν οὗτος;” ὁ Τελέας ἐρεῖ ταδί·
“ἄνθρωπος ὄρνις ἀστάθμητος πετόμενος,
ἀτέκμαρτος, οὐδὲν οὐδέποτ' ἐν ταύτῳ μένων.”

Peisetairos' suggestion about the fortification of the Birds' city (183-4, 551-2) is still another proof of a human practice imposed on the Birds. Peisetairos, even though befriended by the Birds, is still first and foremost a man, and he will not be able to take up the leading position among the Birds, unless he assumes an avian nature. This concern is mirrored in Peisetairos' care to make sure that Tereus has a solution to the fact that they are not winged (648-50). Tereus' promise to give the men a magic root to grow wings (654-5) marks the turning point for the official transition of power from Tereus to Peisetairos. It should be noted that, once the metamorphosis of the two men takes place, Tereus disappears from stage. Yet, we are to be reminded of him in a way other than his physical presence: the reaction the men have towards their new form resembles their initial reaction when they

⁷⁰ See Dunbar 1995: 187. The perfect of χάσκω (κέχηνα) is very frequently used by Aristophanes to express the people's naivety and gullibility (*Eq.* 753-5, *Ach.* 133).

saw Tereus as a hoopoe. At that time they were taken aback by Tereus' form and made fun of it, as they found it ridiculous (93-101). Likewise, when the two men are transformed into winged-men, they are equally shocked and make fun of each other's appearance (801-6):

{Πεισ.} ταυτί τοιαυτί· μὰ Δί' ἐγὼ μὲν πρᾶγμα πω
γελοιότερον οὐκ εἶδον οὐδεπώποτε.
{Εὐ.} ἐπὶ τῷ γελᾷς;
{Πεισ.} ἐπὶ τοῖσι σοῖς ὠκυπτέροις.
οἷσθ' ὧ μάλιστ' ἔοικας ἐπτερωμένος;
εἰς εὐτέλειαν χηνὶ συγγεγραμμένῳ.
{Εὐ.} σὺ δὲ κοψίχῳ γε σκάφιον ἀποτετιλμένῳ.
{Πεισ.} ταυτί μὲν ἠκάσμεσθα κατὰ τὸν Αἰσχύλον·
τάδ' οὐχ ὑπ' ἄλλων, ἀλλὰ τοῖς αὐτῶν πτεροῖς.

To make the association with Tereus more evident, Peisetairos cites a tragic line from Aeschylus, just as Tereus had invoked Sophocles (100-1). Tereus' complaint that his metamorphosis has been imposed on him by Sophocles (100-1 τοιαῦτα μέντοι Σοφοκλέης λυμαίνεται/ἐν ταῖς τραγωδίαισιν ἐμὲ τὸν Τηρέα) brings to the fore the story of the tragic Tereus and reminds us of the place that his metamorphosis held in Sophocles' tragedy, namely, that it was imposed on him as a punishment for the crimes he had committed. By contrast, Peisetairos' metamorphosis is entirely his own conscious and free decision (806 τάδ' οὐχ ὑπ' ἄλλων, ἀλλὰ τοῖς αὐτῶν πτεροῖς). Thus, we are invited to associate Peisetairos not only with the comic Tereus, but also with the tragic one, on the grounds of their

metamorphoses. The association of the two heroes yields some impressive results as far as Peisetairos' profile as a leader is concerned.

Even though the importance of the Sophoclean play as a sub-text in *Birds* has been acknowledged⁷¹ and the theme of metamorphosis as a link between the tragic and the comic Tereus has been studied,⁷² the role of metamorphosis as a common ground between Peisetairos and the tragic Tereus and the implications it might have for each of the two heroes has been largely ignored. Although the details of the tragic story do not appear explicitly in the comic play, one cannot but call to mind the frame within which the metamorphosis took place, even more so as Tereus evidently identifies himself with his tragic prototype⁷³ (100-1). In order to make a more systematic comparison between the two heroes, I cite the synopsis of the tragic play, as published in 1974 by Parsons:⁷⁴

“Pandion, the ruler of the Athenians, having daughters, Procne and Philomela, united the elder, Procne, in marriage with Tereus, the king of the Thracians, who had by her a son, whom he named Itys. As time passed and Procne wished to see her sister, she asked Tereus to travel to Athens to bring [her back]. He, after reaching Athens and receiving the girl from

⁷¹ See Zannini Quirini 1987; Bowie 1993: 166-7; Romer 1997: 56-7.

⁷² See Dobrov 2001 and 1993, who focuses on Tereus' transformation from a tragic character into a comic character. According to Dobrov, metamorphosis is not simple routine burlesque of traditional material, but furnishes the complex thematic background of the whole play.

⁷³ Tereus also makes one reference to the tragic story (211-4).

⁷⁴ Some of the main sources of the story of Tereus and Procne are: Apollodorus *Bibl.* 3. 193ff., Pausanias *Perieg. Graeciae descriptio* 1.5.4, 1.41.8-9, 10.4.8-9, Pherekydes *FGrHist* 3 F 124, Hyginus, *Fab.* 45 and Ovid *Met.* 6.426-674. There are also casual references to the legend by poets before and after the 5th century (Homer, *Od.* 19. 518-23, Hesiod *Op.* 202-12, Sappho Fr. 88, Aeschylus *Ag.* 1146, *Supp.* 60-67) which suggest that it was popular by that time. However, the first tragedian to dramatize the legend and give a decisive form to it was Sophocles; the scholia in *Aves* 281 comment that also Philocles after Sophocles produced a tragedy about Tereus. See Kiso 1984.

Pandion and making half the return journey, fell in love with the girl. And he disregarded his trust and violated her. But, as a precaution in case she should tell her sister, he cut out the girl's tongue. On arriving in Thrace and Philomela being unable to speak her misfortune, she revealed it by means of a piece of weaving. When Procne realized the truth, driven mad by jealousy she took Itys and killed him and after cooking him served him up to Tereus. He ate the meal without realizing. The women took flight and became one of them a nightingale, one a swallow and Tereus a hoopoe".

As one can gather from the above description, in the tragic context Tereus commits a number of transgressions: he breaks the sacred laws of hospitality, he rapes his wife's sister and conceals his crime by cutting her tongue and, lastly, he commits cannibalism by eating the flesh of his own son. The metamorphosis (and it is worth noting here that fr. 581 Radt attests a double transformation for Tereus: he turns into both a hawk and a hoopoe⁷⁵) is inflicted on Tereus after a number of crimes that he commits, as a punishment for his failure to live up to the norms of human society.⁷⁶ It is significant that in Pherecydes' version of the nightingale story, where there is no cannibal feast, the husband does not become a bird. Hence, the theme of metamorphosis is strongly linked to the theme of transgression in the story.

Metamorphosis works very differently for Peisetairos. We have already noted that his transformation into a bird-man is of seminal importance for the way

⁷⁵ In A. *Supp.* 58-67 Tereus becomes a hawk and this is also Hyginus' version (Fab. 45), who inverted however the sisters' transformations: Procne becomes the swallow and Philomela the nightingale.

⁷⁶ See Forbes-Irving 1990: 106, who notes that in aetiological myths like that of Tereus' and Procne's metamorphosis takes place only after a number of polluting crimes have been committed. The hoopoe lives as far away from men as it possibly can and covers its nest with excrement to keep away any human beings.

he will negotiate his leading position in the new society of the Birds. Even more suggestively, in the comic play metamorphosis becomes a stimulating force which enables Peisetairos to act in an arbitrary way, assert his leading place by committing similar crimes to the ones the tragic Tereus committed and, finally, become the king in the place of the comic Tereus. It is noteworthy that Peisetairos' attempts to attain leadership begin with more "sophisticated" practices, such as the use and manipulation of rhetoric and sophistry, and end up with more violent and savage practices, such as violation of the laws of hospitality, threats of rape and desecration of sacrifice. In this way, Peisetairos initially competes with the comic Tereus on his level, that of the learned teacher of Birds, but gradually draws closer to the practices of his literary prototype, the tragic Tereus. Since out of the two options for the transformation (between a hawk and a hoopoe) which the Sophoclean tragedy offers, Aristophanes chooses the hoopoe for his Tereus, a timid and not at all belligerent and aggressive bird,⁷⁷ I wish to argue that Peisetairos assumes the personality of the hawk, a bellicose bird which pursues, attacks and eats smaller birds.⁷⁸ In this way, the respective transformation of the two rivals pre-determines their actions in the comic play, as it limits the one (Tereus) while empowers the other (Peisetairos).

⁷⁷ See Dunbar 1995: 140-1.

⁷⁸ See Sommerstein 2006: 192. Cf. the cannibalism Peisetairos commits towards the end of the play (p. 218-9).

It is worth considering metamorphosis in the comic context as a change of costume (Peisetairos puts on wings) which, in sharp contrast with the tragic metamorphosis, takes place within the dramatic time of the comic play and is voluntary. Peisetairos' control over his metamorphosis and his costume marks out his power and his victory over his opponent:⁷⁹ the tragic Tereus was by force transformed into a bird, while the comic Tereus admits that he has no control of his costume, since it was all an idea of Sophocles (100-1 τοιαῦτα μέντοι Σοφοκλέης λυμαίνεται/ἐν ταῖς τραγωδίαισιν ἐμὲ τὸν Τηρέα). Moreover, he lacks the most basic avian quality, the wings, which, he contends, have fallen off because it is winter (103-6). Peisetairos, however, does not face such a problem: his wings are steadily attached on his costume and he can fly about (1721-2 περιπέτεσθε, 1760-2 ὄρεξον, ὧ μάκαιρα, σὴν χεῖρα καὶ πτερῶν ἐμῶν/λαβοῦσα συγχόρευσον· αἴρων δὲ κουφῶ σ' ἐγώ). Thus, in the comic context metamorphosis becomes a powerful tool, which enables the comic hero to succeed in situations where the tragic hero (and its comic replica) are doomed to fail.

I shall now move on to examine the ways in which Peisetairos emerges as another transgressor, similar to the one the tragic Tereus used to be, and, at the same time, as a new leader in the place of the comic Tereus.

⁷⁹ For the idea that control over costume in Aristophanes is associated with power and heightened status see Compton-Engle 2003.

9. The disrespectful guest

One of the transgressions committed by Peisetairos, which links him to the tragic Tereus and at the same time brings him a step closer to his kingship, is that of the violation of Tereus' hospitality, which takes place right before his metamorphosis. Following the unanimous decision to put Peisetairos' plan into effect, Tereus invites the two men into his nest (640-2) and asks for their names (643); then, he promises to give them wings with the help of a magic root (654-5); and, lastly, he makes provisions for lunch and summons his wife, the nightingale, out of their nest (658-60). This scene can be read as forming part of a hospitality scene, the elements of which come from the typical "visit-type"⁸⁰ or "hospitality" scene⁸¹ derived from Homer. For this reading, I shall follow the depiction of the Homeric hospitality scene as laid down by Reece (1993: 6-7). According to Reece, even though hospitality scenes in Homer may differ in their particulars, the common elements that they share always fall into the same sequence.⁸² By examining this sequence, I will show how the typical elements are redistributed or distorted in the Aristophanic text. The effect of the new comic hospitality scene is two-fold: on the one hand, Tereus, who was once the one to violate his father's-in-law hospitality, is now himself shown disrespect and ridiculed as a host, and thus

⁸⁰ See Edwards 1975: 62.

⁸¹ See Reece 1993: 5-7.

⁸² See Reece 1993: 7-8.

loses the last remnants of his authority; on the other hand, Peisetairos, impersonating the role of the disrespectful guest, emerges as the new leading figure, who proves his superiority both over the comic and the tragic Tereus.

Since a hospitality scene is initiated by the arrival of a visitor at his destination,⁸³ the Aristophanic hospitality scene begins with the arrival of the two men at the Birds' society. Even from this early point the scene is comically distorted: a typical host would assume an active role by being the first to see the stranger, take him by the hand and bid him welcome.⁸⁴ Yet, the Aristophanic host is found to be sleeping (81-2 ἀλλ' ἀρτίως νῆ τὸν Δία εὔδει/καταφαγὼν μύρτα καὶ σέρφους τινάς) and, to make matters worse, his servant is unwilling to wake him up because he will be vexed (83-4 οἷδα μὲν σαφῶς/ὅτι ἀχθέσεται, σφῶν δ' αὐτὸν οὖνεκ' ἐπεγερῶ.) This outrageous behaviour can be paralleled by the suitors' attitude in the first book of the *Odyssey*; when Athena in the form of Mentes comes in, they do not even notice her and continue feasting as usual:

Od. 1. 106-12

εὔρε δ' ἄρα μνηστῆρας ἀγήνορας· οἱ μὲν ἔπειτα
πεσσοῖσι προπάραιθε θυράων θυμὸν ἔτερπον,
ἤμενοι ἐν ῥινοῖσι βοῶν, οὓς ἔκτανον αὐτοί.
κήρυκες δ' αὐτοῖσι καὶ ὀτρηροὶ θεράποντες
οἱ μὲν ἄρ' οἶνον ἔμισγον ἐνὶ κρητῆρσι καὶ ὕδωρ,
οἱ δ' αὖτε σπόγγοισι πολυτρήτοισι τραπέζας
νίζον καὶ πρότιθεν, τοὶ δὲ κρέα πολλὰ δατεῦντο.

⁸³ See Reece 1993: 13.

⁸⁴ Reece 1993: 17.

On the contrary, when Telemachus catches sight of Athena, he rushes to welcome her, as a proper host should do (119-20 βῆ δ' ἰθὺς προθύροιο, νεμεσσήθη δ' ἐνὶ θυμῷ/ξεῖνον δηθὰ θύρῃσιν ἐφεισάμεν). Likewise, in the fourth book of the *Odyssey*, Menelaus behaves as a proper host, when he reprimands his servant for neglecting the newly arrived guests and makes sure they are well taken care of:

Od. 4. 29-32

τὸν δὲ μέγ' ὀχθήσας προσέφη ξανθὸς Μενέλαος·
 “οὐ μὲν νήπιος ἦσθα, Βοηθοῖδῃ Ἑτεωνεῦ,
 τὸ πρίν· ἀτὰρ μὲν νῦν γε πάϊς ὥς νήπια βάζεις

35-6

ἀλλὰ λύ' ἵππους
 ξείνων, ἐς δ' αὐτοὺς προτέρω ἄγε θοινηθῆναι.

Compared to the above, Tereus' indifference and passivity as to what happens in his house is inappropriate for a host and may provide a hint for the degradation of his role as a host later.

The hospitality scene resumes when Tereus invites the two men into his nest. It is noteworthy that although he may use various expressions to ask his guests to come into the “house” (640 ἴτε, 641 εἰσέλθετε, 646 εἴσιτον, 647 ἴθι), he does not use an analogous expression (for example verbs like ἄγω, ἡγέομαι or ἔπομαι) to suggest that the two men are led in, as is usually the case in Homer.⁸⁵ The difference between the two verbal expressions becomes important when we stress the different implications each one has. That is, the verbal consent to *let* a guest into the

⁸⁵ See Reece 1993: 20-21.

house denotes also the host's consent to protect the visitor while in the house, whereas the gesture of *leading* the guest into the house signifies the submission of the visitor to the host's authority. As Reece (1993: 21) points out, there is a difference between Odysseus who, as a guest, is led by Eumaeus into his hut (Od. 14. 45 ἀλλ' **ἔπειο**, κλισίηνδ' ἵομεν, 48-9 ὥς εἰπὼν κλισίηνδ' **ἡγήσατο** δῖος ὑφορβός,/εἴσεν δ' **εἰσαγαγών**) and Telemachus, who, as a master, simply enters the hut of his own accord (16. 40-1 ὥς ἄρα φωνήσας οἱ **ἔδέξατο** χάλκεον ἔγχος /αὐτὰρ **ὃ γ' εἴσω ἔεν καὶ ὑπέρβη** λάϊνον οὐδόν). As it is, the different verbal expressions mark a "reciprocal contract"⁸⁶ between the host and his guest: the host, by escorting the stranger into the house, agrees to protect them whilst they are under their roof and the guest, being led in, is bound to respect the host. This contract is broken in the case of Tereus, who loses the host's authority over his visitor. It is Peisetairos who assumes Tereus' role and dictates to him his "part" by asking him to lead them in (647 εἰσηγοῦ σὺ λαβὼν ἡμᾶς).

Another hint of Tereus' failure to assert his position is found in his willingness to help the two people become winged by giving them a root (654-5). This act initiates the two men's metamorphosis, which will lead to Tereus' elimination, as already noticed; but, it can also be paralleled with the typical gift-

⁸⁶ See Reece 1993: 21.

offering by the host to the guest,⁸⁷ which takes place before the departure of the guest. However, the “gift” here is offered (or rather promised) too soon, even before the guests enter the “house” itself. What is more, the process of the “gift-offering” is not initiated by the host, as is the norm, but by Peisetairos (648-50 ἀτάρ, τὸ δεῖνα, δεῦρ’ ἐπανάκρουσαι πάλιν./φέρ’ ἴδω, φράσον νῶν, πῶς ἐγὼ τε χούτοσι/συνεσόμεθ’ ὑμῖν πετομένοις οὐ πετομένω;). Even when Tereus takes care to reassure his guests, Peisetairos expresses his uneasiness by questioning the goodwill of their host⁸⁸ (651-3 ὅρα νυν, ὥς ἐν Αἰσώπου λόγοις/ἔστιν λεγόμενον δὴ τι, τὴν ἀλώπεχ’, ὥς/φλαύρως ἐκοινώνησεν αἰετῷ ποτέ). Hence, Tereus’ excessive willingness to accommodate his guests is met with suspicion, if not hostility, and will prove to be to his detriment, as his guests will not respect him nor appreciate his hospitality.

According to the Homeric etiquette, the welcoming of the guest should be followed by a feast and then, after the meal, the guest would reveal his identity. Indeed, the two men are invited into a feast (658-59). However, contrary to the conventions which dictate that “a proper host requests his guest’s name and enquires into his business only after providing him a meal”,⁸⁹ the visitors have been already asked about their homeland, their business (107-112) and their names (643) before any meal is provided. What is more, the invitation does not come from the

⁸⁷ See Reece 1993: 35-6.

⁸⁸ For the fable see Dunbar 1995: 417-8.

⁸⁹ Reece 1993: 26.

host, Tereus, but from the chorus, who command Tereus to give the visitors a good lunch (658-9 ἀρίστιον). This disarrangement of the elements of a typical hospitality scene suggests two things: that Tereus is not the typical host (and thus he will not be respected as a proper host) and that the visitors are not treated as typical guests (and thus they will not behave as respectful guests).

After the revelation of the guest's identity and the necessary exchange of information, an after-dinner entertainment should follow. Song and dance are the most common forms of entertainment as well as the story-telling by a professional bard to the accompaniment of a lyre, the host or the guest.⁹⁰ In the *Birds*' hospitality scene, the song of the Nightingale can be considered as a similar form of entertainment. Yet, once more the hospitality scene is dismembered and its elements disarranged, as the after-dinner entertainment becomes a pre-lunch entertainment. Moreover, the initiative for the nightingale's performance does not come from the host: it is the chorus who command Tereus to summon the Nightingale, so that they can disport with her (658-60), and it is the men's persistence to see "the little bird" (661-4) that convinces him to finally call her on stage (665 ἀλλ' εἰ δοκεῖ σφῶν, ταῦτα χρὴ δρᾶν). Behind the insistence of the men on seeing the ἀηδών, the nightingale, one could detect a hidden vulgarity: ἀηδονίς and ἀηδόνιον according to Henderson (1991: 147) seem to have been well known as an

⁹⁰ See Reece 1993: 29.

allusion to female genitals. Thus, when the men are calling for the nightingale they are making an obscene pun on the bird-name of the hoopoe's wife. This prepares the ground for the vulgar jokes which are about to follow.

Procne indeed comes out to show herself to the guests, but when she does, her guests do not behave properly. They are immediately aroused by Procne and indulge in an obscene sexual commentary in front of her husband, whose role, in a sharp contrast to that of Tereus in Sophocles' play, is totally undermined and reversed: he has to sit and watch, defeated, while his wife is threatened with rape (667-74):

{Πεισ.} ὦ Ζεῦ πολυτίμηθ', ὡς καλὸν τοῦρνίθιον,
ὡς δ' ἀπαλόν, ὡς δὲ λευκόν.
{Εὐ.} ἄρά γ' οἶσθ' ὅτι
ἐγὼ διαμηρίζοιμ' ἄν αὐτὴν ἡδέως;
{Πεισ.} ὅσον δ' ἔχει τὸν χρυσόν, ὥσπερ παρθένος.
{Εὐ.} ἐγὼ μὲν αὐτὴν κἄν φιλήσαί μοι δοκῶ.
{Πεισ.} ἀλλ', ὦ κακόδαιμον, ρύγχος ὀβελίσκοιν ἔχει.
{Εὐ.} ἀλλ' ὥσπερ ὦδον νῆ Δί' ἀπολέψαντα χρὴ
ἀπὸ τῆς κεφαλῆς τὸ λέμμα κἄθ' οὔτω φιλεῖν.

The vocabulary the two men use is carefully chosen, so that it applies both to a bird and a woman, but, as previously noted (p. 163), it is the female body underneath the bird costume which attracts their attention. They note that Procne has a soft, white skin (668 ὡς δ' ἀπαλόν, ὡς δὲ λευκόν) and that she wears a lot of gold, like a παρθένος would do (670). The comments soon communicate violent impulses, as Euelpides expresses the wish to spread Procne's legs (διαμηρίζοιμ' ἄν),

which refers to dismemberment and/or violent sexual intercourse,⁹¹ and to strip the shell of Procne's head in order to kiss her (673-4). The men, thus, choose to disregard Procne's avian costume and insist on focusing on her attractive female body. The behaviour of Peisetairos as a disrespectful guest leads to the elimination of his opponent, the comic Tereus, who disappears from stage having failed to stand up for his position. What is more, the violation of hospitality (including Procne's harassment) provides a link between Peisetairos and the tragic Tereus. However, unlike Tereus, no punishment is to be inflicted on Peisetairos; quite the opposite. He is treated, along with Euelpides, as a respectable guest, and is granted the opportunity to start acting as the new leader by being turned into a bird-man. However, instead of pronouncing a blessing on his host, as is normal after having enjoyed his hospitality,⁹² Peisetairos goes on to commit even more acts of ungratefulness and transgression, which serve as a means to communicate his power, but at the same time remind us all the more of the tragic Tereus.

10. The power of *eros*

The scene of Procne's sexual harassment is important to the construction of Peisetairos' profile as a leader. After all the devices he has employed, he now paves the way for his political dominance by undertaking aggressive sexual activity.

⁹¹ See further below p. 215-7 on the verb διαμηρίζω and its implications.

⁹² See Reece 1993: 29

Procne was his first attempt; more will follow. The idea that power can be claimed and exhibited through a manifestation of sexual potency is not uncommon.⁹³ The politics of *eros* and the implications of sexuality in a social and political context in classical Athens have been largely explored by many scholars, who argue that the sexuality of classical Athenians, far from being independent and detached from politics, was very strongly related to Athenian social life.⁹⁴ An important clue for the relation between sex and political power comes from the Greek magical tradition: there is a series of recipes for amulets in the Greek magical papyri which are clearly designed to affect the way other people perceive and interact with the wearer. The wearers demand benefits such as beauty, sexiness and outward attractiveness towards others. As shown by the invocations inscribed on these amulets, they were

⁹³ *Knights* offers the opposite spectrum: in the debased politics of the play the successful politician must be a pathic and a *pornos* with Demos playing the part of the *eromenos* (see Wohl 2002: 73-123). However, after the reestablishment of Demos' sovereignty, Demos resumes his sexual activity as the potent *erastes*.

⁹⁴ Many studies explore the intersection between *eros* and politics in classical literature: Wohl 2002 investigates the erotics of Athenian democracy, starting from the Thucydidean metaphor "citizen as lover of the city", which she believes brings together a number of different ideological elements (masculinity, freedom, equality, elitism, personal autonomy, sexual dominance, national superiority, civic belonging). She moves on to discuss the Aristophanic Cleon as the "lover or *pornos* of the demos", the highly sexualized figure of Alcibiades (see also Wohl 1999) and the figure of the tyrant as the city's sole *erastes*. On the erotic imagery of Pericles' funeral oration in Thucydides see also Monoson 1994 and 2000. On the bizarre erotic impulses of the tyrant see the description of the ἐπιθυμίας of the tyrant in Plato's *Republic* (571c-d), as those which are usually felt in sleep, but are manifested in the tyrant in real life, along with Catenacci 1996: 142-70 and Ludwig 2002: 121-69. On the metaphor of Themistokles' *eros* for practical action or success in Plutarch's *Themistocles* see Duff 2009. On *eros* and Greek athletics see Scanlon 2002 (especially p. 246-9 on the cult of *eros* in Greek cities and its strong link to the civic well-being). On the sexualisation of political hierarchy and the cultural control of female desire see Rabinowitz 1992, who discusses cases of women in tragedy, and Parker 1992, who shows that intellectual women were often sexually slandered in order to be socially controlled (for ancient sources see Hdt. 6; Ath. 13.596e; Diog. Laert. 6.96-8).

not used only as strictly private erotic spells, so as to seduce an unyielding beloved and attract his/her attentions, but also by public speakers and politicians who wanted to beam with outright sexiness. Part of the influence politicians exerted on their audiences and their rivals was based on their charm and attractiveness, so generalized prayers for success frequently include what may seem to us a rather superfluous pride in looking good and being seen as sexually appealing. To get the edge on rivals or gain the sympathy of the audience most often meant charming and outfoxing them; hence the amulets designed to enhance the attractiveness of the wearer and bring about victory and success.⁹⁵

Moreover, *eros* implicates lovers in power relations, since active and passive sexual roles were considered isomorphic with superordinate and subordinate social status.⁹⁶ As Wohl (2002) argues:

Politics and sexuality were mutually defining in democratic Athens. Because only men were citizens, citizenship was a sexual as well as a political category. To be an Athenian always also entailed to “be a man,” with all the injunctions and prohibitions that implied. Likewise, if sexual relations in Athens were organized by issues of mastery and self-mastery (as many have argued), then every sex act was implicitly a political act:

⁹⁵ See Winkler 1997; Faraone 1990. Cf. also Artemidorus’ (1.79) interpretation of sexual dreams as being not about sex, but about success or failure in politics and vicissitudes of the dreamer’s domestic economy (see Halperin 1990a: 37).

⁹⁶ For the assymetric view of ancient sexuality see Dover 1978 (esp. 100-9); Foucault 1985; Keuls 1985; Winkler 1990: 39-40, 45-70; Halperin 1990a: 29-38, 1990b and 1997; Cantarella 1992: 17-53; Davidson 1997: 169-82 and 2007 disputes the “power-penetration theory” of Greek sexuality, whereby the sexual penetrator is understood as the dominator and the penetrated as the subordinate, on the basis that it ignores the primary Greek concern with self-control or lack of it in sexual relations. However, although moderation is valued at all ranks within the socio-sexual hierarchy, the women or boy-mad men were much less criticized than nymphomaniac women or penetrated men, as Davidson himself admits (161). See Scanlon 2002: 203-5.

some sexual practices were appropriate for citizens and some were not. Moreover, eros bound individuals together into a political community: eliciting love was a primary goal of anyone who would influence democratic politics [...] The norm of adult male sexuality in Athens (as several recent studies have shown) was active, aggressive, dominant, and phallic; passivity was associated with foreigners, women, slaves, and children — noncitizens.⁹⁷

Insofar as ancient Greek *eros* was hierarchical, with the lover occupying a socially higher position than the beloved, there is an inherently agonistic aspect to it. Aristophanes operates with this hierarchy: he most often equates the penetrated male with the female⁹⁸ and identifies men's (hyper)sexual activity with social triumph and victory:⁹⁹ in *Acharnians*, Dikaiopolis appears with a courtesan on each arm, as a prize for his triumph; in *Knights* Demos is allowed to celebrate his political reestablishment with the female libations and a young boy; in *Wasps*, the rejuvenated Philocleon steals a flute-girl from a dinner party; in *Peace* Trygaeus receives Opora as his bride, while in *Lysistrata* the return of men to power is marked by the pornographic scene with the nude Reconciliation and the reunion with their wives.

In this respect, the *Birds* is the most elaborate example of Aristophanes' equation of (masculine) sexuality with power: the hero not only wins a divine bride,

⁹⁷ Wohl 2002: 1-8.

⁹⁸ For instance, see *Lysistrata* 1091-92, where an Athenian negotiator says that if the treaty isn't concluded soon, so that they can resume sexual activity with their wives, they will have to fuck Kleisthenes. For more references on the abuse of pathics see Henderson 1991: 209-22, who notes that this category is the most risible kind of homosexual.

⁹⁹ See Halliwell 2002: 124-5.

Basileia in the end, but, as I will show, also makes his way to the top by adopting a violent sexual discourse and communicating a sexually aggressive behaviour. Moreover, the important position of *eros* in the new city of Birds is pointed out by the Birds themselves in the *parabasis*.¹⁰⁰ After being persuaded to follow Peisetairos as their leader, the Birds, on their turn, attempt to persuade the audience to accept them as their divine rulers. In doing so, they unfold their version of the cosmogony (693ff.), in which Ἔρως holds a central position: after Ἐρεβος and Νύξ, Ἔρως is the next generating force in Birds' cosmogony. Ἔρως mates with Chaos to produce the Birds (698-9), but also causes the universal mixing afterwards and thus enables the creation of the whole κόσμος (700).¹⁰¹ Thus, the Birds explicitly say that they are children of Ἔρως (703-4 ὥς δ' ἔσμεν Ἐρωτος/πολλοῖς δῆλον) and go on to advertise their power which is due to their origin: birds facilitate sexual relationships; many

¹⁰⁰ The importance of *eros* in the Birds' *parabasis* not only as a "metaphysical and sexual and material" power, but also as a "profoundly political" one was noted by Arrowsmith (1973), who sought to establish an equation between Cloudcuckooland and imperial Athens, on the basis of their unsatisfied desire and insatiable greed (cf. Henderson 1997: 145 and 1993: 315ff. who views Cloudcuckooland as "a superior version of Athens which implicitly criticizes real Athens"). Arrowsmith (140) proceeds to claim that "behind Pisthetairos lies not merely the erotic politics of Alcibiades, but the triumphant technical intelligence that had secularized and rationalized Athenian life and eventually created the superb and sinister mechanism of the Athenian empire". I follow a rather different, essentially non-historical perspective. See also Holmes 2011 who argues that the comic Tereus shows erotic qualities, which Peisetairos exploits, and, thus, becomes the bridge between erotic human beings and unerotic, apolitical birds. He does not consider at all, however, the importance of Peisetairos' erotic qualities.

¹⁰¹ The idea that Ἔρως is a primal power which generates a creative mixing is not original in *Birds*. In Hesiod, Ἔρος "represents the universal principle of generation, the force that causes generation and the proliferation that activates the cosmic process" (Strauss-Clay 2003: 16). Likewise, in Empedocles, Φιλότης causes a creative mixing of all things (cf. Dunbar 1998: 302 and Strauss-Clay 2003: 19, n. 20).

male lovers were able to mate with (διεμήρισαν)¹⁰² their younger loved ones (καλούς παίδας), who succumbed to their desires, only after they had been offered a bird as a gift (705-7).¹⁰³ Moreover, the Birds' wings facilitate adultery, since they increase the chances to be found alone with a married woman without being noticed by anyone (793-6).

Thus, in *Birds* eros represents a political fantasy, in which illicit or discreditable modes of sexual activity, such as pederasty, prostitution¹⁰⁴ and adultery, become not only accepted or desired, but also the hallmark of power. Likewise, the Birds' prospective leader, Peisetairos, adopts a sexually aggressive behaviour in order to assert his leading position. Even before the scene with Procne, there are hints that Peisetairos will leave no room for doubt as far as his sexual intentions are concerned. After unfolding his plan about the city in the air and establishing its construction, his very first thoughts, as far as the war against the Olympians is concerned, relate to issues of sexual vetos (550-60):

¹⁰² The use of the verb is important: I comment on it further below (p. 215-7).

¹⁰³ Cf. Euelpides' idea of an idea place at the beginning of the play: a place where he could make advances on little boys with the permission of the father (137-42).

¹⁰⁴ On pederasty see Hubbard 1998, who holds that the institution of pederasty was generally condemned: "pederasty was an ethical crux for the Greeks...its practitioners were often apologetic, its opponents censorious or derisive. It was never, at least in classical Athens, unproblematic". Moreover, a boy who would yield to a man in return for a sum or any other offering was considered to commit a discreditable act. See Dover 1978: 106-9. See also Wohl 2002: 88 and esp. note 40 on the stigma against an over-eager eromenos; Davidson 2002: 11-21 based on Pausanias' speech in Plato's *Symposium* and Aeschines' speech *Against Timarchus* finds problematic only the commercial nature of a pederastic relationship and not the sexual act itself: prostitution was regarded as illegitimate eros.

{Πεισ.} καὶ δὴ τοίνυν πρῶτα διδάσκω μίαν ὀρνίθων πόλιν εἶναι,
 κᾶπειτα τὸν ἄερα πάντα κύκλῳ καὶ πᾶν τουτὶ τὸ μεταξὺ
 περιτειχίζειν μεγάλαις πλίνθοις ὅπταῖς ὥσπερ Βαβυλῶνα.
 {Χο.} ὦ Κεβριόνη καὶ Πορφυρίων, ὡς σμερδαλέον τὸ πόλισμα.
 {Πεισ.} κᾶπειδ' ἀν τοῦτ' ἐπανεστήκη, τὴν ἀρχὴν τὸν Δί' ἀπαιτεῖν·
 κᾶν μὲν μὴ φῆ μὴδ' ἐθελήσῃ μὴδ' εὐθὺς γνωσιμαχήσῃ,
 ἱερὸν πόλεμον πρῶτ' αὐτῶ, καὶ τοῖσι θεοῖσιν ἀπειπεῖν
 διὰ τῆς χώρας τῆς ὑμετέρας ἐστυκόσι μὴ διαφοιτᾶν,
 ὥσπερ πρότερον μοιχεύοντες τὰς Ἀλκμήνας κατέβαινον
 καὶ τὰς Ἀλόπας καὶ τὰς Σεμέλας ἦνπερ δ' ἐπίωσ', ἐπιβάλλειν
 σφραγίδ' αὐτοῖς ἐπὶ τὴν ψωλὴν, ἵνα μὴ βινῶσ' ἔτ' ἐκείνας.

Peisetairos, right from the beginning, is in a rush to proclaim a sexual prohibition against gods.¹⁰⁵ He advises the Birds to construct walls, so that they deter gods from coming down to earth and raping mortal women as they used to, and suggests as an extra precaution, to “put on a stamp” (ἐπιβάλλειν σφραγίδα) on the gods’ genitals to control their sexual appetites. The phrase is noteworthy¹⁰⁶ and recurs in a later passage (1121-5), on which I will comment later on. At this point it should be noted that, when Peisetairos first mentioned the matter of fortification

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Henderson 1991: 84-5.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. *Thesm.* 414-6 εἶτα διὰ τοῦτον ταῖς γυναικωνίτισιν/σφραγίδας ἐπιβάλλουσιν ἤδη καὶ μοχλοὺς /τηροῦντες ἡμᾶς where the phrase denotes the action of applying seals on the doors of women’s quarters to control unauthorized entry or exit (see Sommerstein 1994: 183 and Austin and Olson 2004: 184). Yet, one could detect an obscene overtone as well, since the women are locked in so that they do not commit an adultery: it is not just their doors that are sealed. Cf. also lines 424-8 πρὸ τοῦ μὲν οὖν ἦν ἀλλ' ὑποῖξαι τὴν θύραν/ποιησαμέναισι δακτύλιον τριωβόλου,/νῦν δ' οὗτος αὐτοὺς οἰκότριψ Εὐριπίδης/ἐδίδαξε θριπῆδεσ' ἔχειν σφραγίδια/ἐξαψαμένους and Henderson’s note (1991: 138): “not only θύρα but also δακτύλιον means cunt: opening the pantry doors by using a three-obol ring becomes “opening our ‘gates’ by rendering our ‘ringlets’ for three obols, the latter reference probably being to the three-obol fee commonly demanded by cheap prostitutes”. Yet, I think that the text becomes more meaningful and funny if we take δακτύλιον and σφραγίδια to denote the male genitals (cf. also Henderson 1991: 124 on the seal, σφραγίς, being a double entendre for phallus). In that sense, women would be complaining about the fact that the only phallus they can enjoy any more is that of their husbands (σφραγίδιον, in a diminutive so as to produce an even more comic result), whereas before they could buy for themselves other phalli as well (δακτύλιον).

earlier on, he presented its construction as vital only for preventing the Olympians from feeding on sacrificial offerings:

183-6

ἦν δ' οἰκίσθητε τοῦτο καὶ φάρξηθ' ἅπαξ,
ἐκ τοῦ πόλου τούτου κεκλήσεται πόλις,
ὥστ' ἄρξετ' ἀνθρώπων μὲν ὥσπερ παρνόπων,
τοὺς δ' αὖ θεοὺς ἀπολεῖτε λιμῶ Μηλίων

190-3

οὕτως, ὅταν θύσωσιν ἄνθρωποι θεοῖς,
ἦν μὴ φόρον φέρωσιν ὑμῖν οἱ θεοί,
{διὰ τῆς πόλεως τῆς ἀλλοτρίας καὶ τοῦ χάους}
τῶν μηρίων τὴν κνῖσαν οὐ διαφρήσετε.

Indeed, the prohibition of sacrifices to gods is an important issue, since it is the highest tribute a god could receive; and yet, in the first passage I quoted, which contains the second reference of Peisetairos to the walls, the agenda about the sacrifices comes after the sexual prohibition¹⁰⁷ (561-3 τοῖς δ' ἀνθρώποις ὄρνιν ἕτερον πέμψαι κήρυκα κελεύω,/ὥς ὀρνίθων βασιλευόντων θύειν ὄρνισι τὸ λοιπόν,/κάπειτα θεοῖς ὕστερον αὖθις). One could surmise that Peisetairos takes extra care to deprive gods from their sexual privileges as long as this amounts to limiting their power as well. Indeed, Peisetairos develops a strong sexual appetite for women who are not his, simply in order to forge his sexual identity as the potent ἐραστής.

¹⁰⁷ For the inconsistency as far as the barring of sacrifices is concerned see Dunbar 1995: 378.

After communicating his strong feelings about regulating the former gods' sexual prerogatives, Peisetairos, in his need to establish his sexual superiority over his opponent, makes a pass at his wife, as already described. Then, he goes one step further: he asserts his sexual potency over the Olympians. A chance for this arises in the scene with Iris, when she, escaping the bird-guards' notice, forces her way into the Birds' city (1203-16):

{Πεισ.} ὄνομα δέ σοι τί; Πάραλος ἢ Σαλαμινία;
 {Ἴρ.} Ἴρις ταχεῖα.
 {Πεισ.} <πότερα> πλοῖον ἢ **κύων**;
 {Ἴρ.} τί δὲ τοῦτο;
 {Πεισ.} ταυτηνί τις οὐ ξυλλήψεται
 ἀναπτάμενος **τρίορχος**;
 {Ἴρ.} ἐμὲ ξυλλήψεται;
 τί ποτ' ἐστὶ τουτὶ τὸ κακόν;
 {Πεισ.} οἰμώξει μακρά.
 {Ἴρ.} ἄτοπόν γε τουτὶ πρᾶγμα.
 {Πεισ.} κατὰ ποίας πύλας
 εἰσῆλθες εἰς τὸ τεῖχος, ὧ μιαρωτάτη;
 {Ἴρ.} οὐκ οἶδα μὰ Δί' ἔγωγε κατὰ ποίας πύλας.
 {Πεισ.} ἤκουσας αὐτῆς, οἶον εἰρωνεύεται;
 πρὸς τοὺς κολοιάρχους προσῆλθες;
 {Ἴρ.} πῶς λέγεις;
 {Πεισ.} **σφραγῖδ'** ἔχεις παρὰ τῶν πελαργῶν;
 {Ἴρ.} τί τὸ κακόν;
 {Πεισ.} οὐκ ἔλαβες;
 {Ἴρ.} ὑγιαίνεις μέν;
 {Πεισ.} οὐδὲ **σύμβολον**
ἐπέβαλεν ὀρνίθαρχος οὐδεῖς σοι παρών;
 {Ἴρ.} μὰ Δί' οὐκ ἔμοιγ' ἐπέβαλεν οὐδεῖς, ὧ μέλε.

Peisetairos' questioning of Iris includes hidden sexual assaults, which are stressed by the bold letters above.¹⁰⁸ The phrasing of some of the assaults reminds us of the passage on the gods' sexual prohibition. There, Peisetairos had suggested ἐπιβάλλειν σφραγῖδ' αὐτοῖς ἐπὶ τὴν ψωλήν (559-60), so that they refrain from debauching mortal women. Likewise, in this case, he asks Iris if she has obtained a σφραγῖδα from the storks and if any bird-officer put on a stamp on her (ἐπέβαλεν σύμβολον). At first glance, Peisetairos may be simply asking Iris whether she has any authentication for entering the Birds' world, since σφραγίς literally means that which one stamps upon something or merely authorization.¹⁰⁹ Yet, the testimony of the earlier passages suggests that σφραγίς and ἐπιβάλλειν have obscene overtones.¹¹⁰ Σφραγίς here is probably an allusion to male genitals, thus Iris is asked whether she has been "taken care" of by the guards.¹¹¹ By verbally evoking the previous passage with the sexual prohibition against the gods, Peisetairos wants to send a clear message to them: the days when the Olympians had their way over

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Henderson 1991: 85, 133, 138, 170 and Dunbar 1995: 618-20 on the double entendre of the words.

¹⁰⁹ See LSJ s.v. σφραγίς and Henderson 1991: 124.

¹¹⁰ See also Dunbar 1995: 618-20, n. 1213-4 and 1214-5 (who is right in identifying the obscene double entendre, but disregards the case of *Thesmophoriazusae* when stating that the obscene overtone is not attested anywhere else) and ancient scholia *ad loc.* On the double entendre of ἐπιβάλλειν/ἐπιβολή see Vesp. 768 and Henderson 1991: 170.

¹¹¹ It is worth noting here that the same phrase occurs in Plutarch, *Life of Alexander* (2.4-5 ὁ δὲ Φίλιππος ὑστέρω χρόνῳ μετὰ τὸν γάμον εἶδεν ὄναρ αὐτὸν ἐπιβάλλοντα σφραγῖδα τῇ γαστρὶ τῆς γυναικός [...]. Ἀρίστανδρος ὁ Τελμησεὺς κύειν ἔφη τὴν ἄνθρωπον· οὐθὲν γὰρ ἀποσφραγίζεσθαι τῶν κενῶν). Keeping in mind Aristophanes' use of the phrase, it seems as if Aristandros interpreted Philip's dream exactly in this way: Philip put a stamp on his wife's womb (i.e. had sex with her); it is a reasonable guess that she might be pregnant.

mortal women are long gone; now, it is in his power to mistreat their envoy and harass her sexually. Thus, he goes on to threaten her with rape (1253-6):

σὺ δ' εἴ με λυπήσεις τι, τῆς διακόνου
πρώτης ἀνατείνας τὼ σκέλει διαμηριῶ
τὴν Ἴριν αὐτήν, ὥστε θαυμάζειν ὅπως
οὔτω γέρων ὦν στύομαι τριέμβολον.

Again, the phrasing of the threat (διαμηριῶ) recalls the threat directed against Procne before (669-70 ἐγὼ διαμηρίζοιμ' ἄν αὐτήν ἡδέως), as well as the Birds' phrasing of pederastic sexual relationships (706 διεμήρισαν): all are cases of illicit *eros*, since the objects of attention are someone else's wife (Procne) and a young boy, and there are strong implications of rape in the first instance and of prostitution in the second. With Iris the implications of the illicit *eros* are even stronger, since it is a goddess that Peisetairos boldly threatens with rape. Moreover, in the case of Procne, although Peisetairos shared his friend's enthusiasm for the prospect of sexual intercourse with Procne, he was more reserved, probably because of the technical difficulties that Procne's costume would present (672). By contrast, in the case of Iris his reservations have disappeared: he explicitly expresses his confidence about his sexual prowess (οὔτω γέρων ὦν στύομαι τριέμβολον) and boldly implies that Iris will take great pleasure in the intercourse (θαυμάζειν). As it is, one can trace an escalation in Peisetairos' sexual aggressiveness, not only with regard to the object of his attention (i.e. the shift from his rival's wife to a goddess), but also with regard to the discourse he uses to express his sexual intentions.

The evidence of the way that Peisetairos' sexual aggressiveness paves the way for his political ascendance becomes more striking at the end of the play with his marriage to Basileia. We first find out about Basileia in the play when Prometheus informs Peisetairos that his claim to kingship cannot be fulfilled unless he takes Basileia from Zeus as his bride (1534-6). Although we do not get a clear picture of who Basileia is, the text leaves enough space to suggest that she might be more than a simple stewardess for Zeus (1537-43):

{Πεισ.} τίς ἐστιν ἡ Βασίλεια;
 {Πρ.} καλλίστη κόρη,
 ἥπερ ταμιεύει τὸν κεραυνὸν τοῦ Διὸς
 καὶ τ᾽ ἄλλ' ἀπαξάπαντα, τὴν εὐβουλίαν,
 τὴν εὐνομίαν, τὴν σωφροσύνην, τὰ νεώρια,
 τὴν λοιδορίαν, τὸν κωλακρέτην, τὰ τριώβολα.
 {Πεισ.} ἅπαντά γ' ἄρ' αὐτῷ ταμιεύει;
 {Πρ.} φήμ' ἐγώ.
 ἦν γ' ἦν σὺ παρ' ἐκείνου παραλάβῃς, πάντ' ἔχεις.

Peisetairos' stress on the fact that Basileia indeed takes care of *everything* that has to do with Zeus suggests something obscene.¹¹² This impression is reinforced later by Peisetairos' statement to the embassy of the gods regarding Basileia (1633-5):

τὴν μὲν γὰρ Ἑραν παραδίδωμι τῷ Δί,
 τὴν δὲ Βασίλειαν τὴν κόρην γυναῖκ' ἐμοὶ
 ἐκδοτέον ἐστίν.

¹¹² See Bowie 1993: 163.

Although Peisetairos makes clear that Basileia is not really Hera,¹¹³ the context of the reference to Basileia suggests that the position of the two women is comparable. If so, Peisetairos by marrying Basileia is actually stealing the mistress from the King of Gods. Again, the way Peisetairos' phrases his wishes is remarkable and must be noted: he generously leaves Hera for Zeus (παραδίδωμι), but demands (ἐκδοτέον ἐστίν) that Basileia is given to himself. His arrogance is felt by Poseidon who notes that Peisetairos is not really looking for reconciliation (1635-6 οὐ διαλλαγῶν ἐρᾶς/ἀπίωμεν οἴκαδ' αὔθις).

Thus, one can trace an escalation in Peisetairos' attempts to demonstrate his sexual power, as he takes more and more care to establish his leadership. He begins by proclaiming a sexual prohibition concerning the gods and mortal women; then, he makes a pass at his rival's wife and threatens the gods' envoy with an exhibition of his manliness. The culmination of all these attempts comes with his marriage to one of Zeus' mistresses. He now has the girl and the power.

11. Successful (comic) versus punished (tragic) King

It has been noted that Peisetairos' violation of hospitality and his aggressive sexual activity very much resemble the tragic Tereus' crimes. Apart from these similarities, however, one can trace also some other references to the tragic

¹¹³ Dunbar 1995: 728. She also suggests that Basileia may be Zeus' daughter, which I find unlikely in the light of the obscene sexual overtones.

myth, which make the resemblance between the former tragic king and the comic king-to-be even more evident.

To begin with, the use of the verb διαμηρίζω, in the passages which contain the threats against Procne and Iris, is noteworthy. The presence of διαμήριον in an inscription on a 6th century Attic vase (ἀπόδος τό διαμήριον = grant me that between-the-thighs which you promised) suggests that the word already existed and that Aristophanes did not coin it. Dover notes that the verb can take an object of either sex, male or female, with a slight difference in meaning.¹¹⁴ When the object is a “she”, the verb means “spread the legs” and thus the reference is to vaginal copulation from the front. On the other hand, when it comes to homosexual copulation, the verb signifies a “through the thighs” sexual position, which Dover calls intercrural.¹¹⁵ Thus, in the two aforementioned instances the verb denotes heterosexual copulation: in the scene with Procne, Euelpides ponders on the possibility that he might διαμηρίζειν her, because he is aroused by her appearance (668-9 ἄρα γ’ οἶσθ’ ὅτι / ἐγὼ διαμηρίζοιμ’ ἂν αὐτὴν ἡδέως); similarly, Peisetairos threatens Iris with διαμηρισμόν if she does not follow his orders and go away (1254 ἀνατείνας τὸ σκέλει διαμηριῶ). The phrase ἀνατείνας τὸ σκέλει (raise up the legs) which Peisetairos uses reminds us of the literal meaning of the verb διαμηρίζω: it comes from διὰ, which as a prefix has the sense of “through” or “apart”, and μηρίον

¹¹⁴ Dover 1978: 98,

¹¹⁵ Dover 1978: 98. On διαμήριον see also Davidson 2007: 478-80.

or μῆριον, the piece cut from the thigh.¹¹⁶ Thus, the literal meaning of the verb διαμηρίζω suggests an act of dismemberment (“distribute the thigh-bones”). This brings to mind the story of the tragic Tereus, whose son, Itys, was dismembered by the two sisters.¹¹⁷ Can it be mere coincidence that Aristophanes uses this verb to denote the sexual act only in *Birds*? And can it be accidental that in the two cases where he uses it for the sexual act between a man and a woman, the sexual desire comes only from the man’s part and communicates a sense of violence? It would not be an exaggeration to claim that the verb is deliberately selected to convey the double meaning of rape and dismemberment and remind us of the tragic myth, in which dismemberment was the consequence of rape.

The echoes of dismemberment persist in the scene with Procne. When Peisetairos draws Euelpides’ attention to Procne’s hard beak, which would prevent him from kissing her, Euelpides is not discouraged at all and perseveres: 673-4 ἀλλ’ ὥσπερ ὦδον νῆ Δί’ ἀπολέψαντα χρή/ἀπὸ τῆς κεφαλῆς τὸ λέμμα κᾶθ’ οὕτω φιλεῖν. The statement is strange and does not lend itself to any obvious explanation. The image of taking the beak off Procne’s head (if we accept that there was a beak indeed)¹¹⁸ might be amusing for the audience, since underneath there would only be

¹¹⁶ Hesychius s.v. μῆρια and Etymologicum Magnum s.v. μῆρια and διαμηρίσαι have the interesting suggestion that μῆριον comes from the verb μείρω or μερίζω, divide, distribute, but, according to Beekes (2010) they all come from μέρος.

¹¹⁷ Note also the reference to Itys in lines 211-2.

¹¹⁸ On the matter of what constitutes Procne’s mask see Romer 1983.

a male actor, but in the reality of the play it is unsettling: it suggests amputation and dismemberment, since the beak forms an actual part of the nightingale's body. Moreover, if we accept the suggestion in the scholia, that Euelpides meant to say eat, but said kiss instead (δέον δὲ εἰπεῖν φαγεῖν, εἶπε φιλεῖν) it is also possible that the scene anticipates the one at the end of the play, when Peisetairos is roasting for dinner birds which have revolted (1579-85):

{Πεισ.} τὴν τυρόκνηστὴν τις δότω· φέρε σίλφιον·
 τυρὸν φερέτω τις· πυρπόλει τοὺς ἄνθρακας.
 {Ποσ.} τὸν ἄνδρα χαίρειν οἱ θεοὶ κελεύομεν
 τρεῖς ὄντες ἡμεῖς.
 {Πεισ.} ἄλλ' ἐπικνῶ τὸ σίλφιον.
 {Ἡρ.} τὰ δὲ κρέα τοῦ ταῦτ' ἐστίν;
 {Πεισ.} ὄρνιθές τινες
 ἐπανιστάμενοι τοῖς δημοτικοῖσιν ὀρνέοις
 ἔδοξαν ἀδικεῖν.

The scene is a description of a sacrifice and the cooking that follows; it is foreshadowed in line 1546, where Peisetairos, speaking as a human, says to Prometheus that they are most indebted to him for the gift of “charcoal-grilling” (μόνον θεῶν γὰρ διὰ σ' ἀπανθρακίζομεν). We learn that the gods are starving, as a result of the cessation of human sacrifices and the building of the walls (1515-24), but Peisetairos appears to have kept up with the practice of sacrifice. It is, however, his fellow birds that he has sacrificed and is roasting; taking into consideration that Peisetairos has turned into a bird, eating birds equals to committing cannibalism,

one of the greatest perversions of the sacrificial ritual.¹¹⁹ Macdowell (1995: 224) has played down the importance of the roasted birds as a meal suggesting that “in ancient Athens a normal kind of meat for a first-rate private dinner was small birds” and that it is a joke which passes immediately. However, I do not believe that this is the case. It is important that Aristophanes chose here this kind of meat for a dinner prepared for birds. The visual image of the birds which are seasoned and cooked on stage would certainly have a stronger effect over the audience, especially since they continue turning as the play proceeds. They are, in fact, the marriage feast (cf. 1688-9 εἰς καιρὸν ἄρα κατεκόπησαν οὔτοι/εἰς τοὺς γάμους). Peisetairos’ cooking of the revolutionaries, as well as his uncontrollable sexual appetite, point to the activities of tyrants, who are characterized by unbridled consumption, cannibalism and unmasterable sexual lust.¹²⁰ Indeed, at the end of the play Peisetairos is hailed as a tyrant (1708).

Thus, there are a lot of similarities between Peisetairos and the tragic Tereus: he commits similar crimes, as he violates the laws of hospitality, threatens with rape (or dismemberment) his host’s wife and the messenger of gods, gets married to the former mistress of the king of the gods and by the end of the play is

¹¹⁹ See Detienne 1979: 56-7; Vernant 1981a: 13 and chapter two on *Knights*.

¹²⁰ Appetite for food: Pl. *Rep.* 571b4-d2 and 619b7-c2; Sexual appetite: Hdt. 3.80.5; Eur. *Suppl.* 452-54; Xen. *Hieron* 1.26; Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 18.1-2, 1311a28-b23; Isoc. 2.29-31, 3.36-44. Aristotle (*Pol.* 1253a31-7) cites as the prototype for monarchic rule a being prone to cannibalism and sexual incest. See Wohl 2002: 216-69.

ready to become a cannibal. Moreover, his position as a tyrant at the end of the play is once more comparable to that of Tereus, who used to be the king of Thrace. Yet, the similarities stop at this point: Tereus ended up transformed into a bird because of his incestuous acts. Peisetairos, on the other hand, being transformed into a bird and regardless of his crimes, managed to become a king. Thus, the tragic scheme “transgression - metamorphosis” is reversed in Aristophanes and becomes “metamorphosis - transgression”. As almost happened with Procne and Iris before, and as actually happened with Itys, the tragic myth is dismembered: its themes are removed from its body and redistributed in the comic text. Through this reversal of the tragic story’s themes Peisetairos emerges not only as a rival of the comic Tereus, as we have already seen, but also as a foil to and a more successful version of the tragic Tereus. The comic hero becomes a leader after he has outdone the tragic hero, who is either punished or vanishes – in the tragedy and in the comic play respectively. Thus, the reversal of the common metamorphosis pattern is essentially a literary comment on the different qualities and abilities of the tragic and the comic hero: in the comic context metamorphosis becomes a liberating power, which enables the comic hero to succeed in situations where the tragic hero is doomed to fail.¹²¹

¹²¹ For the “competition” between tragedy and comedy cf. the words of the Birds (785-9), who name tragedy as potentially boring for the spectators:

οὐδέν ἐστ’ ἄμεινον οὐδ’ ἥδιον ἢ φῶσαι πετερά.

12. Conclusions

We now have a full picture of how the principle of leadership evolves in the city of the Birds. At the beginning of the play the Birds' society, far from being anomian, appears to be organized and structured in a way that much resembles a human society. The Birds are controlled and ruled by a partly human leader, Tereus, who takes advantage of his double nature as both a bird and a man in order to exercise his power over the Birds. When Peisetairos arrives, he challenges Tereus' position: at first he outshines Tereus in sophistry and rhetoric, but soon he makes use of less sophisticated methods, as rhetoric gives way to sexual aggressiveness and sexually abusive discourse. His metamorphosis into a bird-man enables him to commit a number of transgressions and facilitates his ascendance to the power and kingship. Through the process of his metamorphosis and the various transgressions that he commits, Peisetairos' position gradually becomes comparable to that of the tragic Tereus from the homonymous Sophoclean tragedy, the king who was transformed into a hoopoe as a punishment for his violent crimes. Peisetairos follows the reverse procedure of his tragic prototype: from a man, he turns into a bird-man, commits a number of misdeeds and, finally, ends up as a leader and king.

αὐτίχ' ὕμῶν τῶν θεατῶν εἴ τις ἦν ὑπόπτερος,
εἴτα πεινῶν τοῖς χοροῖσι τῶν τραγῳδῶν ἦχθετο,
ἐκπτόμενος ἄν οὗτος ἡρίστησεν ἐλθὼν οἴκαδε,
καὶ τ' ἄν ἐμπλησθεὶς ἐφ' ὕμῃς αὖθις αὖ κατέπτατο.

His power extends not only over birds and people, but also to the upper and lower worlds, as he possesses both the thunders of Zeus and the chthonian thunders (1745-6, 1749-51); he is a tyrant and an almighty god (1708 τύραννον, 1765 δαιμόνων ὑπέρτατε). As Flashar (2000: 318) has noted “Peisetairos slaughters the utopia on the pretext of democracy the moment when he is about to become the only ruler”. The new bird-world, far from being a utopia, is defined by acts of violence and monstrosity,¹²² such as those of its ruler; but in the comic context such transgressions are not only tolerated, but also sought after. Peisetairos prevails upon his comic/tragic opponent and creates the new powerful city of Birds because he succeeds in attaining liberation from any restraint: in this respect, he behaves as a typical comic hero.

¹²² See Zanini-Quirini 1987, who sees *Birds* as representing a subgenre within Old Comedy, whose function was to reinforce the social and political structures of the polis by ridiculing their opposites, here embodied in Cloudcuckooland, the antithesis of civilization. I agree that there are many indications of violence and monstrosity, but I think that the argument that Aristophanes wished to strengthen the established religion of the polis by presenting the anti-polis of Cloudcuckooland as a foil to it is a bit strained.

CHAPTER IV

CROSS-DRESSING AND LOVE-MAGIC: THE POLITICS OF SUBVERSION IN *ECCLESIAZUSAE*

1. Introduction

The play I treat last brings us back to the beginning of this study of leadership: *Ecclesiazusae*, like *Lysistrata*, is another female play, whose theme is very similar to that of *Lysistrata*. A woman gathers secretly her female friends and, together, they seize power in the city; but there the similarities end. Praxagora is a very different leader from Lysistrata, with regard to both the means she uses to attain leadership and the outcome of her actions as a leader. Unlike *Lysistrata*, the women in *Ecclesiazusae* assume power by means of disguise and trickery, and they remain the leaders throughout the play. Their permanent seizure of power has as a result the creation of a new world which is mostly defined by the imposition of the model of the *oikos* upon the city; but it is a specific model of *oikos* that the women promote. Whereas both *Lysistrata* and *Ecclesiazusae* and their respective leaders are preoccupied by issues concerning the *oikos*, the new world of *Ecclesiazusae*, as formed by Praxagora's laws, is the complete opposite of Lysistrata's leadership and the world brought about at the end of *Lysistrata*. While the women in *Lysistrata* by taking matters into their hands uphold the institution of marriage and restore the process of reproduction in a world controlled once more by men, the women in *Ecclesiazusae* abolish the institution of

marriage and create a chaos and a wild sexual disorder, which smacks of prostitution and an inability to reproduce. In *Lysistrata*, we saw how a well-governed and restrained sexuality may prove to be beneficial for the city; in *Ecclesiazusae*, we see the effects of the opposite situation, namely the destructive outcome of an ungoverned and unrestrained sexuality.

My discussion of the play treats the ways through which women manage to ascend to power, as well as the outcome of Praxagora's leadership and the situation in the new world. I shall discuss the practice of cross-dressing as a device which empowers women and, by contrast, disempowers and ridicules men and, finally, reduces them to a state of impotency, infertility and almost death. Moreover, I shall argue that the women gradually assume a kind of supernatural power, as there are hints that they practice love-magic rituals: in the second half of the play, the abolition of marriage and the new sexual laws lead to a most terrifying exuberance of female desire, which finds its outlet through the discourse of love-magic and the subsequent suppression of men. The new world that emerges carries the implications of a most dangerous gender inversion, death, infertility and savagery.

2. Cross-dressing

Ecclesiazusae is the only example in Aristophanes of both men's and women's cross-dressing. Bowie notes that this is one of the signs of dissolution in the play, which marks

the usurpation of power by women. He observes that the exchange of clothes brings about also an exchange of physical powers, as they were traditionally ascribed to each sex, since “until the women's triumph the men in the play tend to be old and weary in contrast to the more dynamic women”.¹ I wish to elaborate further on the possibilities of this reading; I shall argue that while the women's cross-dressing does not diminish their femininity, but rather heightens and emphasizes it, for the men the case is rather different; transvestism attenuates their masculinity and, even when men take off the female clothes, their masculine qualities are never reasserted: they remain idle, passive - and sterile. Moreover, I shall argue that the women's and men's cross-dressing in the play is suggestive of another context where this practice was employed: in various parts of Greece before or after the wedding ceremony the groom wore a female dress or the bride was dressed in male attire. In *Ecclesiazusae*, women and men appear to follow this tradition. Yet, the secrecy and trickery with which women cross-dress, as well as the forced male-to-female transvestism, are suggestive of the fact that the institution of marriage will be disrupted. This is confirmed by the abolition of marriage, which comes as a result of Praxagora's new laws. The final outcome of Praxagora's leadership with regard to marriage and reproduction is evident in the scene between the old women and the young man, where, as I will show, reproduction is substituted by sterility, life by death and marriage turns out to be a funeral.

¹ Bowie 1993: 258.

I shall begin by showing how the practice of cross-dressing is important in the women's attempt to rise to power and outdo men and then I will move on to explain the different implications of cross-dressing for women and men. When we read the play as a piece of literature and do not watch it as a dramatic performance, as it was originally meant to be, some important details are lost to us: a good example is the importance of costume and (ex)change of costume(s). In the comic theatre the comic characters are mostly represented by their costumes and their accessories, like the body stocking, the padding, and the mask. As a result, any change of costume on stage has a more striking effect than any text can convey because it has a great impact on the representation of the comic characters themselves and their status, as perceived by the audience. In this way, power relationships can be transacted via costume, since clothing and attire may be used by the comic hero as a means to manifest his power over a rival or, conversely, they may indicate the comic hero's defeat and degradation.² For instance, in *Wealth* Carion triumphs over the sycophant by ordering him to strip off his ἱμάτιον and giving him in turn a ragged τριβώνιον (926-50). In *Ecclesiazusae*, the association between costume and power is more evident, because we are dealing with a female voluntary disguise and a male forced one.³ In this case the gender conflict is manifested as a competition of costume manipulation: women are in control of their disguise and manipulate it successfully, whereas for men the lack of control over their costume is equated with defeat. Moreover, since the disguise in

² For the costume control as a type of comic competition in Aristophanes see Compton-Engle 2003.

³ Cf. the contrast between Peisetairos' voluntary disguise and Tereus' involuntary in *Birds*.

question is actually an exchange of clothes between the two sexes, the successful manipulation of the male attire by the women results in a heightened femininity, while the men's inability to retain their male costume and their forced cross-dressing correspond with loss of virility and emasculation.⁴ Women, though cross-dressed, retain their femininity and are not virilised, whereas men gradually become effeminate and are emasculated.

Thus, the cross-dressing expresses the correlation between power and gender in the play and provides the first sign of the women's prevalence over men. On the one hand, the women's control of their male disguise emphasizes their femininity and power and, on the other hand, transvestite men appear reserved, powerless and emasculated. Women are the first to cross-dress: they do so at the beginning of the play, when they gather to organize the take-over of the assembly, and later on they appear cross-dressed on stage, after they have succeeded in their undertaking. Moreover, some information about the women's appearance in the Assembly is conveyed by Chremes to Blepyros. What we learn is that the women are very well prepared for their transformation into men: they have all the necessary equipment, men's cloaks, Laconian shoes, walking sticks and false beards (69-75). Moreover, they have tried to attain a more masculine appearance by exposing themselves

⁴ Compton-Engle (2003) states in passing that "*Ecclesiazusae* confirms the correlation between control of costume, heightened masculinity, and success on the one hand, and lack of control, emasculation, and failure on the other hand". However, although I do agree that there is an equation between control of costume and success, I do not believe that one should see a boost of masculinity in the successful women; on the contrary, as I argue, the women's femininity is not affected by their male attire and is emphasized throughout the play.

to the sun, so as to get a tan, by getting rid of their razors in order to be hairy (60-7), and by adopting a man's behaviour in general: they attempt to speak like a man (148-50), walk like a man (483-5) and lean on their walking sticks as they speak, in a manly way (150). Although the women's attempt to disguise themselves as men is successful, as they manage to sneak into the assembly, we are constantly reminded of their femininity.⁵ At the same time, the women provide hints about the gradual feminization of the men in the play, even before Blepyros appears cross-dressed on stage.

With the exception of Praxagora, the women in their rehearsal appear to make blunders both of discourse and behaviour, thus betraying typical female traits. One woman has brought her carding along to keep herself occupied during the assembly (85-94); for the purification sacrifice, instead of a young pig, the women carry around a ferret, which is an animal more familiar to women⁶ and with typical comic female characteristics,⁷ since it is thievish and gluttonous. Moreover, the woman who comes forward as the first speaker seems to misunderstand the meaning of the wreath and asks for a drink as soon as she puts it on (132-5), thus showing her ignorance about the typical procedures in the assembly⁸ and, at the same time, behaving according to the stereotypical portrayal of women as

⁵ Saïd 1979: 38-42; 1987: 234-6.

⁶ Saïd 1987: 236. Cf. the weasel woman in Simonides (50-55 West), who steals from neighbours. Bowie 1993: 257 argues that it is a domestic animal, and thus suitable as a symbol of the replacement of the *polis* by the *oikos*; Sommerstein 1998: 150 suggests that the undignified and evil-smelling animal is evoked purely for its comic absurdity.

⁷ For the incessant female appetite in comedy see above chapter 2, p. 116. Cf. the cat-woman in Semonides 50-6.

⁸ Since this act also refers to drinking behaviour in the symposium, the woman may also confuse two typical male activities.

bibulous.⁹ Likewise, the second woman gives away her identity by swearing by the two goddesses (155, and similarly 189 νῆ τὴν Ἀφροδίτην) and by addressing the audience as “ladies” (165). Indeed, the women seem to be in constant danger of revealing their identity, since they have to remind themselves not to call one another “φίλας” (296-9) and they find it hard to forego their habit of raising their legs, when it is their hands they have to raise in order to vote (263-7). In response to the women’s question of how she will deal with insults and even physical attempts to drag her away in the assembly, Praxagora takes the word they use for “drag away” (256 ὑποκρούωσιν) and converts it to a sexual meaning¹⁰ with her reply: she will respond accordingly, since the women are very experienced as far as “knocking” goes (257-8). In this way Praxagora, instead of becoming more virile herself in her attempt to seize power, fully intends to adopt a purely feminine attitude.

The male accessories with which the women are equipped do not seem to be helpful tools either: we are constantly reminded that they belong to their husbands and are only borrowed for the occasion (26, 37-40, 275-9, 340-3, 510-3) and the women treat them as stage props (which they actually are): they put them on only when asked by Praxagora and are in a hurry to take them off (121-3, 269-78). In lines 504-13 especially the women express their feelings of uneasiness and discomfort about the fake beards quite strongly: they refer

⁹ For women as lovers of wine in Aristophanes cf. 227, 1118-24; *Lys.* 194-239, 466; *Thesm.* 347-8, 393, 628-32, 733-57.

¹⁰ It means both interrupt and penetrate sexually (see Sommerstein 1998: 162).

to them in a pejorative way (σάκον)¹¹ and hurry to get rid of them as quickly as possible (502-3 ἀλλ' ἐπείγου/ἄπασα καὶ μίσει σάκον πρὸς ταῖν γνάθοιν ἔχουσα). In line 503 the reading of the manuscripts is unsatisfactory (καύται γὰρ ἤκουσιν πάλαι τὸ σχῆμα τοῦτ' ἔχουσαι) and was emended by Palmer (1884) to καύται γὰρ ἀλγοῦσιν πάλαι τὸ σχῆμα τοῦτ' ἔχουσαι (adopted by Wilson) and by Agar (1919) to καύται γὰρ ἄκουσαι πάλαι τὸ σχῆμα τοῦτ' ἔχουσιν (adopted by Sommerstein).¹² Both emendations of the text show that the women find the false beards uncomfortable, since their cheeks are either hurting (ἀλγοῦσιν) or unwilling (ἄκουσαι) to bear them.

With regard to the clothes they wear, the women appear to have kept their female inner garments, the χιτῶνια (268), even though they create a problem in their disguise, as they need to be shortened so as not to show below the hem of the male ἱμάτια. The fact that the women are shown to change clothes, put on the fake beards and then take them off again on stage disrupts the illusion that the women attempt to create and underlines their femininity.¹³ the women constantly point out to the audience that the male attire is nothing but a costume intended for use only during their brief farce and that they find it very hard to assume a male role even temporarily. Even more suggestively, the women themselves comment on their ludicrous appearance (καταγέλαστον), as if it they did not find it convincing (124-7):

¹¹ See Sommerstein 1998: 182.

¹² See Sommerstein 1998: 182.

¹³ See Saïd 1979: 38-41.

{Γυ. Β.} δεῦρ', ὧ γλυκυτάτη Πραξαγόρα, σκέψαι, τάλαν,
 ὥς καὶ καταγέλαστον τὸ πρᾶγμα φαίνεται.
 {Πρ.} πῶς καταγέλαστον;
 {Γυ. Β.} ὥσπερ εἴ τις σηπίαίς
 πώγωνα περιδήσειεν ἑσταθευμέναις.

According to the woman who addresses Praxagora, the beards look incongruous against a soft and pale complexion and give the women an overall ridiculous appearance.

Thus, women do not appear at all virilised. Instead, they reveal the prevalence of the feminine nature over the masculine and gradually feminize the city.¹⁴ All the women's references to men seem to question their masculinity: Agyrrhios used to be a woman (102-3) and Epigonos looks like a woman (167-8). The first female speaker asks for a drink once she wears the garland (131-3), thus confusing the assembly with a symposium, and shows disbelief that men do not drink, if indeed they have wine for the libations in the assembly (140-1 ἢ τίνος χάριν/τοσαῦτ' ἄν ἡῤυχοντ', εἴπερ οἶνος μὴ παρῆν;). In this way, the woman seems to project the habits of her own sex - the love for wine - on men. Last but not least, the most successful male speakers are believed to have a woman's role, since they assume a passive sexual role (112-4). In fact, this point of likeness between the accomplished male speakers and women makes Praxagora confident that they will do well in the delivery of their speeches in the assembly: women will successfully replace womanish men.

¹⁴ Cf. Saïd 1979: 36. Feminine power is an anomaly which can only be perceived in two ways: either it brings about the virilisation of women or it is the power which becomes "feminine" "si les femmes adaptent le pouvoir à leur nature et font prévaloir le domestique sur le politique". In *Ecclesiazusae* we are faced with the second option.

The feminization of men becomes more evident later on when Blepyros comes on stage. After all the degrading references to womanish men by the women, this is the first time in the play that we actually see a man on stage. For this reason the entrance of Blepyros, who is dressed in his wife's clothes, becomes even more hilarious and suggestive of the feminisation of the men in the play. Blepyros calls the garment he wears first ἡμιδιπλοῖδιον (318), which appears to replace the male διπλοῖς,¹⁵ and then κροκωτίδιον (332) and χιτώνιον (374): all are female inner garments. His regular shoes are replaced by female slippers or boots (319 Περσικάς, 346 τῷ κοθόρνῳ). His costume attracts the attention of his neighbour (327-9), who wants to know why Blepyros is dressed in a yellowish garment. The κροκωτός is important as a feminine garment: it was regarded as one of the most attractive female dresses¹⁶ and was also associated with the move to womanhood at Brauron.¹⁷ Even though the garment arouses desire among men and thus is a powerful weapon in the women's hands, its effect when worn by men in drama is completely different: not only do they appear as effeminized and ridiculous,¹⁸ but they are also disempowered and often destroyed. In *Ecclesiazusae* Blepyros' cross-dressing emphasizes the men's lack of power and authority in the play and finally takes on connotations of infertility and death. Thus, Blepyros' cross-dressing must be inscribed within the wider context of men who don female garments in drama and appear to be

¹⁵ See Sommerstein 1998: 169.

¹⁶ Cf. *Nu.* 51; *Lys.* 44-51, 219-20; *Ec.* 878-83. See Stone 1984: 174-5; Sommerstein 1998: 170.

¹⁷ *Lys.* 645. See also chapter 1, p. 41-3.

¹⁸ See Stone 1984: 175.

weakened, emasculated and destroyed as a result of their female dressing. Some tragic examples are found in *Agamemnon*, *Trachiniae* and *Bacchae*; a comic parallel is that of the Inlaw in *Thesmophoriazusae*. I will discuss these cases more extensively later on.

Let us begin by examining more closely Blepyros' cross-dressing: the reason itself why Blepyros appears cross-dressed, as he explains himself in his monologue and later on in his conversation with his neighbour, is important. Blepyros informs us that he wanted to relieve himself but could not find his clothes in the house, nor could he ask his wife about them because she was away. Thus, he is forced to don his wife's clothes because he has no other clothes to put on: the alternative would be to go out of the house almost naked. In a comparable situation in *Thesmophoriazusae* (939-42), the Inlaw contemplates with horror the public shame he will have to endure if bound on the plank in female attire and begs the magistrate to let him be exposed naked instead. Yet, in *Ecclesiazusae* Blepyros prefers female attire to no attire at all. The fact that Aristophanes could have staged Blepyros going out in a state of undress, which would be both funny and legitimate as a choice, given Blepyros' haste, but instead chooses the dramatic option of a transvestite Blepyros, shows that the cross-dressing of Blepyros plays a more important role than mere comic buffoonery. Blepyros' disguise is not a free choice, but is dictated by the cross-dressing of the women, and, what is more, takes place at about the same time. Thus, Blepyros, as an involuntary transvestite who has no control of his female costume, is emblematic of the feminization

and disempowerment of men in the play.¹⁹ Even more importantly, the forced cross-dressing prevents Blepyros' attendance at the Assembly. Even if he was not held back by his urgent need to relieve himself, he still would not be able to attend the assembly in female clothes. We may assume that all the men whose wives stole their clothes were facing the same problem.²⁰ Indeed, when Chremes describes the assembly-meeting to Blepyros, he states that the "white-faced" crowd outnumbered the people from the countryside (431-4). Thus, the main reason why Praxagora's counsel prevailed was the fact that men were fewer in number (434 ἀλλ' ἦσαν ἥττους). In this light, the men's forced cross-dressing becomes the reason why men are prevented from exercising their citizen rights; they become disempowered and manipulated by the women, who get the upper hand. The normal situation is reversed: while men are forced to sit in the house, dressed in female clothes, just as their wives would do, women go to the assembly and vote themselves into power.

Blepyros gets back his clothes when his wife returns to the house and undresses, but, even with his normal clothes on, the discussion about his cross-dressing resumes.²¹ Blepyros complains to his wife that she stripped him of his clothes, put her mantle (536

¹⁹ Cf. Leitaio 2012: 147 "in a play so focused on the opposition between male and female, one would expect the entrance of the first male character to be important in setting the tone for how men will be portrayed".

²⁰ Cf. the neighbour who complains about the fact that he cannot set off for the assembly because he is not able to find his cloak (352-3). As Sommerstein (1998: 169) notes, the neighbour cannot be cross-dressed because, if he were, there would be a comment on his attire. Since he is also missing his cloak, the only one he possesses (353), we may assume he is not fully dressed. We do not have enough information so as to infer whether he appears on stage or not; if he did his state of undress is compared and contrasted by the audience to Blepyros' cross-dressing and emphasizes the even more ludicrousness of Blepyros' appearance. Another possibility is that the neighbour appears at a window, as Sommerstein (1998: 169) suggests.

²¹ Cf. Rothwell 1990: 99, n.87 "perhaps it is a mark of Blepyros' inner weakness that, in contrast to Praxagora, we are never explicitly told that the finally puts his own clothes".

τοῦγκυκλον) over him and left. Blepyros adds a new detail to his story: before he said that he had grabbed his wife's dress when he couldn't find his own; now he says that she threw her mantle on him (535-8). This detail emphasizes again Blepyros' weakness and disempowerment:²² before it was he who put on the female clothes, even unwillingly; the new information makes Praxagora the active agent and Blepyros the passive victim, while reminding the audience of the transvestism they have just witnessed. Moreover, Blepyros perceives his situation as a near-death experience, since he complains that his wife treated him as a corpse laid out for burial, but in an incomplete state of preparation: without the traditional garland and oil-bottle:²³

536-38

ἀλλ' ἔμ' ἀποδύσας, ἐπιβαλοῦσα τοῦγκυκλον,
 ὥχου καταλιποῦς' ὥσπερ εἰ προκείμενον,
 μόνον οὐ στεφανώσας' οὐδ' ἐπιθεῖσα λήκυθον

The scene, as has been noted,²⁴ brings to mind the dressing and the *ekthesis* of the Proboulos in *Lysistrata*; but, apart from the example of the Proboulos, one may look for other parallels of men in drama, whose transvestism or donning of a female garment implies or brings about lethal consequences. In *Thesmophoriazusae*, the cross-dressed Inlaw,

²² See Compton-Engle 2005: 168-9. As we will see, Blepyros does not only lose control over his clothes, but also over his body.

²³ For the *prothesis* of the corpse see Garland 1985: 23-4.

²⁴ See Rossellini 1979: 17-8; Saïd 1987: 233-5; Bowie 1993: 259; Sommerstein 1998: 185; Compton-Engle 2005: 169.

who like Blepyros has donned the saffron dress, faces the punishment of the plank, which is in fact a form of public execution,²⁵ and blames it all on the female garment:

945-6

ἰατταταιάζ. ὦ κροκῶθ', οἷ εἴργασαι.
κούκ' ἔστ' ἔτ' ἐλπίς οὐδεμία σωτηρίας.

Similarly, the tragedians manipulate the feminine connotations of various female garments in order to convey the emasculation, humiliation and, finally, the demise of male characters.²⁶ An example is Euripides' *Bacchae*, whose affinities with comedy have long been noted.²⁷ In the play, Pentheus is manipulated by Dionysus into wearing female garments (821 βυσσίνους πέπλους, cf. 828 τίνα στολήν; ἥ θῆλυν; ἀλλ' αἰδώς μ' ἔχει, 833 πέπλοι ποδήρεις) is feminized and finally meets his death. In two other tragic plays, Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* and Sophocles *Trachiniae* the emphasis on female garments, which are worn by the male heroes or thrown over them, with or without their accord, point on the one hand, to their feminization and helplessness, and on the other hand to their disaster.²⁸ The red carpet Agamemnon unwillingly treads on (909 πέτασμα, 921 εἵμασι, 960 εἰμάτων) has been

²⁵ For the punishment of the wooden plank as a death sentence see Gernet 1981: 252-4; Austin and Olson 2004: 294-5. Note also that the Inlaw asks for a last wish before he dies (938).

²⁶ See Lee 2004 and 2006.

²⁷ Dodds 1960: 192; Seidensticker 1978; Foley 1980: 120-1; Compton-Engle 2003: 521.

²⁸ For the sinister aspects of πέπλος in *Oresteia* see Jenkins 1985: 115-120 and for the power of female πέπλος in *Agamemnon*, *Trachiniae* and *Medea* see Lee 2004. Loraux 1990 argues that the Heracles' wearing of female clothes serves to dramatize the exchange between masculine and feminine that takes place within the hero; the *peplos* of Heracles is a means of experiencing femininity in his body, "a revelation of weakness hidden in strength". See also Lee 2006: 322 "the tragedians manipulate the feminine connotations of the *peplos* to convey the emasculation of male characters".

often perceived as clothing,²⁹ very similar to the woman's cloak he is ensnared later on³⁰ which causes him to suffer an unheroic death; during the rest of the plays in the trilogy the leitmotiv of the πέπλος is gradually transformed "to indicate the change in power from the feminine *oikos* to the masculine *polis*".³¹ Likewise, in *Trachiniae* the gender (and power) reversal is once more at work: Deianeira transforms her husband's death into a feminine one through the gift of the contaminated πέπλος.³²

In *Ecclesiazusae* the change of clothes also marks the exchange of power between the two sexes, but the men do not actually perish, at least not in the way they do in tragedy.

²⁹ See Denniston and Page 1957: 148 "they are not (what they have sometimes been called) carpets, but fabrics which are, or resemble, clothing"; Vermeule 1966: 21 "it is not of course a red carpet, it is clothing"; Dover 1977: 58 "non sono tappeti"; Taplin 1977: 314 "it may be no accident, for example, that the exact nature and function of the cloth are unclear"; Whallon 1980: 64ff. argues that the cloths resemble *pharea* or *peploi*, "loosely fitting garments that may serve other purposes as well". Lee 2004 and McNeil 2005 argue for the nuptial nuances of the "carpet". See also Goldhill 1992: 37-41, esp. 38 who refers to the cloth's association with gender power-play between husband and wife, *polis* and *oikos*. For a bibliography about the ambiguous nature of the fabric (carpet or cloth) see Morrell 1996-7: 155-6, who cites arguments from both sides.

³⁰ The robe in which Clytemnestra entangles Agamemnon is seen after the murder and again in *Choephoroi*: it is a net (Ag. 1382 ἄπειρον ἀμφίβληστρον, Ch. 999-1000 δίκτυον μὲν οὖν/ἄρκυν τ' ἂν εἴποις), a spider's ὕφασμα (Ag. 1492 ἀράχνης ἐν ὑφάσματι), but also a φᾶρος (Ch. 1011) and πέπλοι (Ag. 1126 ἐν πέπλοις, 1580 ὕφαντοῖς ἐν πέπλοις Ἑρινύων, Ch. 1000 ποδιστήρας πέπλους), a πλοῦτον εἵματος κακόν (Ag. 1383). Taplin 1977: 314 notes that "there is little doubt that the indefiniteness of the nature of the purple cloth allows it to be recalled directly by the later cloth trap [...] It is even possible that one and the same stage-property was used for both cloths". See also Lee 2004: 266 "while the imagery of the πέπλος is conflated with that of the net, the snare, and the web, it is significant that, in a play full of references to various garments and textiles, no other word [...] is used to describe the murderous robe".

³¹ See Lee 2004: 267.

³² See Segal 1981: 63; Loraux 1987: 10-11; Rehm 1994: 78 "in his suffering Heracles behaves in ways he finds horrifyingly similar to those of a woman"; Faraone 1994: 123 (Deianeira uses the πέπλος "to overturn the "natural" order of the world and the traditional dominance of the male"); Calame 2005: 183-4 "in perfect opposition to the agony of a hero suffocating in pains similar to those of childbirth, Deianeira dies like a warrior who feels dishonoured". Jebb 2004: 94 cites Eustathius' comment on line 602, who considers πέπλος as part of a man's dress. However, the Homeric πέπλος belongs to women only. Cf. the scholia ad loc. οὐκ εὖ δὲ τὸν ἀνδρεῖον χιτῶνα πέπλον φησί.

Owing to the conventions of the comic genre, the repercussions of the men's cross-dressing are different, but equally severe. In the comic world, where sexuality is often the driving force and sexual prowess the most powerful male weapon, sexual death and impotency equals natural death. Thus, Blepyros may not actually die, although the overtones of death are manifest when he describes himself as a corpse when lying in bed with his wife's mantle over him, but he is evidently pictured as impotent and sterile. Moreover, the implications of both male death and impotency return later on, in the scene with the young man and the hags (1030-6, 1079, 1086, 1090-2, 1098-111). I will come back to this in due course.

Blepyros' impotence and sterility is stressed several times in the text: Blepyros' first thought when he discovers that his wife is not at home is that she is with a lover (325-6 οὐ γάρ ποθ' ὑγιὲς οὐδὲν ἐξελήλυθεν/δράσους'), seeking elsewhere the pleasure that he, being much older, cannot give her (323-4 οἴμοι κακοδαίμων, ὅτι γέρων ὦν ἡγόμην/γυναῖχ' ὅσας εἴμ' ἄξιος πληγὰς λαβεῖν). Blepyros' impotence is also evident both in his fears that old men like himself may not be able to satisfy the women's sexual demands (and may therefore miss breakfast (465-72)), and in his insecurity about his sexual performance: he might have nothing left for the pretty women who are to be held in common according to the new laws, after he has satisfied the less favoured (619-20).³³ His wife also hints twice at Blepyros' near-impotence: when he wonders that a woman cannot have sex without perfume, she

³³ See Rothwell 1990: 56-7. He also believes that Blepyros is rejuvenated in the end, with which I disagree.

meaningfully points out to him that *she* certainly cannot (525), as he should probably know already. Moreover, when Blepyros is anxious about his sexual prowess, Praxagora assures him sarcastically that his performance will not be an issue, since the young and pretty women will not fight over him (621) and that, at any rate, his penis is already in a state of exhaustion (622).³⁴

The most striking evidence of the impotence and infertility of the male world is to be found in the long scene of Blepyros' defecation, which is juxtaposed and complemented by the scene of the women in the assembly, which is not represented on stage. Bowie (1993: 258-9) calls attention to the fact that the male world in the play is very often defined through malodorous smells and references of an excremental nature, which he considers as marking the disturbance of normality.³⁵ This is true, but I feel that more emphasis has to be placed on Blepyros' excremental scene. I shall discuss this scene under the more general theme of Blepyros' cross-dressing, because the female clothes that Blepyros wears throughout the scene become important for its implications; in the end, the scene of the cross-dressed Blepyros who attempts to relieve himself in vain conveys at once the feminisation, the infertility and the death overtones which, as already mentioned, are strongly associated with the male world.

³⁴ See Sommerstein 1998: 192-3 and Sommerstein 2009b: 247-8.

³⁵ See *Eccl.* 78, 433, 464, 595, 640, 807-8, 1059-62.

2.1 Passivity, sterility and death in the constipation scene

It is important that the only representation – and a long, graphic one – we have of a constipation scene occurs in *Ecclesiazusae* – and there are two more references to a certain Antisthenes, who appears to suffer from the same problem (367, 806). Usually it is the reverse situation that becomes the object of ridicule, namely diarrhoea, the urgency to relieve oneself (Av. 790, Nu. 1386), soiling oneself or one's clothes (Av. 350, 581, *Vesp.* 1127) etc.³⁶ When the vivid colour of Blepyros' garment attracts the attention of his neighbour, he naturally thinks that Blepyros' clothes are yellow because someone – and that would of course be Kinesias³⁷ – has soiled them with faeces. In this way, Blepyros is ridiculed and degraded, since excrement is worthless and defiling.³⁸ Moreover, excrement, like urine and farts, has a malodorous smell which points to rotting flesh and death.³⁹ An example of this association between excrement and death is the word καλαμίνθη, which is found in the teasing comment of the Neighbour against Blepyros (648 σὺ δέ γ' ὄζοις ἄν καλαμίνθης). Καλαμίνθη is a pun on μίνθος, which means dung, and denotes a variety of wild mint which is evil-smelling and associated with Hades and impotence.⁴⁰ Thus, the connotations of death persist, even though, ironically, Blepyros himself is unable to defecate. In fact, he goes on for more than fifty lines to give a detailed description of his suffering (311-72). The

³⁶ For more examples see Henderson 1991: 187-92.

³⁷ Cf. Ar.fr. 156.13, *Ran.* 366 and Lys. fr. 53.

³⁸ Cf. *Eccl.* 640. See also Edwards 1991: 166.

³⁹ See Henderson 1991: 54.

⁴⁰ See Bowie 1993: 259-60.

constipation of Blepyros becomes suggestive when, after many unsuccessful attempts to relieve himself, he prays to lady Eileithuia for release (351-71):

{Γε.} ἀλλὰ σὺ μὲν ἰμονιάν τιν' ἀποπατεῖς, ἐμοὶ δ'
ώρα βαδίζειν ἐστὶν εἰς ἐκκλησίαν,
ἥνπερ λάβω θοῖμάτιον, ὅπερ ἦν μοι μόνον.
{Βλ.} κᾶγωγ', ἐπειδὴν ἀποπατήσω· νῦν δέ μοι
ἀχράς τις ἐγκλήσας' ἔχει τὰ σιτία.
{Γε.} μῶν ἦν Θρασύβουλος εἶπε τοῖς Λακωνικοῖς;
{Βλ.} νῆ τὸν Διόνυσον, ἐνέχεται γοῦν μοι σφόδρα.
ἀτὰρ τί δράσω; καὶ γὰρ οὐδὲ τοῦτό με
μόνον τὸ λυποῦν ἐστίν, ἀλλ' ὅταν φάγω,
ὅποι βαδιεῖταί μοι τὸ λοιπὸν ἢ κόπρος.
νῦν μὲν γὰρ οὗτος βεβαλάνωκε τὴν θύραν,
ὅστις ποτ' ἔσθ', ἄνθρωπος ἀχραδούσιος.
τίς ἂν οὖν ἱατρόν μοι μετέλθοι, καὶ τίνα;
τίς τῶν κατὰ πρωκτὸν δεινός ἐστι τὴν τέχνην;
ἄρ' οἶδ' Ἀμύνων; ἀλλ' ἴσως ἀρνήσεται.
Ἄντισθένη τις καλεσάτω πάση τέχνῃ.
οὗτος γὰρ ἀνὴρ ἔνεκά γε στεναγμάτων
οἶδεν τί πρωκτὸς βούλεται χεζητιῶν.
ὦ πότνι' Ἰλείθια, μὴ με περιίδης
διαρραγέντα μηδὲ βεβαλανωμένον,
ἵνα μὴ γένωμαι σκωραμὶς κωμωδική.

The scene is hilarious: Blepyros puts himself in the position of a pregnant woman and prays to the goddess of childbirth for assistance, while he is dressed in female clothes, but is squatting for reasons other than delivery: he wants to “bring forth” not an infant, but a pear (354-5, 361-2). The attempts at this rather unorthodox delivery remain unsuccessful. Blepyros compares himself to a σκωραμὶς κωμωδική (371), a comic chamberpot, which receives excrement but cannot discharge it: he is sterile.⁴¹ He stands up at the sight of

⁴¹ Sommerstein 1998: 173 notes that “it is likely, though not certain, that Blepyros’ prayer proves effective [...] while Blepyros after much labour has given birth to a quantity of excrement, the Assembly under his wife’s

Chremes without “having shitted a cable”, as his neighbour remarked to him before, probably because of the length of his squatting (351). At the same (dramatic) time, Praxagora and her companions prevail in the assembly, but Praxagora, when asked, claims that she visited a friend to assist her in childbirth; the friend gave birth to a boy (549). Even as a lie, the story is suggestive, since it stresses the contrast between the sterility of men and the productiveness of women.⁴²

Thus Blepyros, as he presents himself on stage dressed in his wife’s clothes, does not only appear as an effeminate man; most importantly, he is a sterile effeminate man. One may note that this “sterility” of his is more evident once he has put on the saffron gown and not before; chatting with the neighbour, he says that he had to get urgently out of the house to relieve himself and that if he did not hurry, he would soil his blanket (345-7). Yet, once he puts on the feminine garment and gets out, his urgent need to defecate turns into constipation or, as we saw, inability to reproduce. He is not a proper man, but, even as a woman, he lacks the most important female function: he is sterile.

guidance has been giving birth to a new Athens”. However, I do not believe that Blepyros finds relief: Chremes’ question and Blepyros’ answer (372-3 οὗτος, τί ποιεῖς; οὔτι που χέζεις; ἐγώ; /οὐ δῆτ’ ἔτι γε μὰ τὸν Δί’, ἀλλ’ ἀνίσταμαι) refer to his unsuccessful attempts, as previously the word χέζοντα (322 οὐ γάρ με νῦν χέζοντά γ’ οὐδεὶς ὄψεται). Even if Blepyros was relieved, the product of his labour would be most suggestive. In this way, the contrast between the two parallel situations of Praxagora and Blepyros is to be traced in the fertile female nature and the sterile male one. In this I also disagree with Leitao 2012: 146-81 who believes that Blepyros finally gives birth to a turd and claims that there is a “heroic quality” to Blepyros’ pregnancy.

⁴² See Henderson 1991: 102; Bowie 1993: 259. I do not agree with Leitao (2012: 159) that “we are invited to see Praxagora as the “doctor” who can cure the pregnant/constipated Blepyros, the *demos* personified”. The “birth” of the women’s plan in the assembly is to be contrasted with Blepyros’ sterility.

The connection between constipation and sterility becomes even more evident in the light of excrement's use in agriculture: since excrement, even human excrement, is used as a fertilizer in agriculture,⁴³ the lack of it, constipation, points to sterility. As Edwards (1991: 168) notes, in comedy excrement is also viewed positively “as an emblem of country life, invoking images of fertility, ease, satiety, plenty, the festival, and laughter”. Excrement was collected by κοπρολόγοι in the city and was sold to farmers in the countryside.⁴⁴ An example which shows the connection between dung and fertility is found in *Lysistrata*, which is essentially preoccupied with the cessation of reproduction as a result of the war in the city. Towards the end of the play, where normality and the process of reproduction is restored, an Athenian and a Spartan use the agricultural activities of ploughing (γεωργεῖν) and dung-shovelling (κοπραγωγεῖν) as metaphors for sexual activities (1173-4). Both metaphors for sexual intercourse presuppose the agricultural use of dung to replenish the fertility of the soil and communicate the restoration to procreation and normality.⁴⁵ Thus, in *Ecclesiazusae* the inability of Blepyros to produce excrement can be taken to signify his infertility.

Another possible connotation of dung and excrement validates even more strongly the representation of the men in the play as effeminate. With regard to the same passage (*Lys.* 1173-4), Henderson (1987: 205 and 1991: 193) notes that the Spartan's dung-shovelling

⁴³ Cf. Homer, *Od.* 17. 296-9; see also X. *Oec.* 16.12 for the use of the word *kopros* as grass fertiliser.

⁴⁴ For the activities of the κοπρολόγοι as private entrepreneurs see Vatin 1976: 556-61 and Owens 1983: 48-9. For various examples of the agricultural use of dung as fertilizer see Edwards 1991: 166.

⁴⁵ See Henderson 1987: 205 and Edwards 1991: 168.

refers to anal intercourse, in contrast to γεωργεῖν, which denotes vaginal intercourse. There are several references to dung in the context of anal sexual intercourse in Aristophanes, but a very limited number refers to heterosexual intercourse (*Pl.* 304, 1024); most of them denote passive homosexuality⁴⁶ (*Eq.* 295, 899, *V.* 1184, *Pax* 9, 724). At *Eq.* 899 Cleon is called ἀνὴρ Κόπρειος which Henderson sees as a hint of pederasty; likewise Blepyros says that the Κόπρειος man knocked on his door (314) and later on that ἄνθρωπος ἀχραδούσιος has bolted his door (362). These statements make sense in the context of constipation, but they may also work in a different context, that of passive homosexuality.⁴⁷ The word Blepyros uses for the fastening of his “door” is βεβαλάνωκε and, interestingly enough, βάλανος is not just the bolt but also the penis.⁴⁸ Moreover, θύρα is often used in Aristophanes as a double entendre for the female genitals (*Th.* 424, *Lys.* 309 and later on in *Eccl.* 977, 990). In this sense, Blepyros, who has been so far described as not quite a man but also not quite a woman, dressed in female clothes, but ostensibly impotent and fertile, is also pictured as a man who is eager to be subjected to intercourse through his own θύρα.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ See Henderson 1991: 192-4.

⁴⁷ Henderson 1991: 102 notes that “the only attempts at joke-technique are several pederastic personifications of his excrement by Blepyros”. For the images of “homosexual sodomy” in this passage see also Leitaο 2012: 160-2, who comments that “the most obvious effect of these personifications is further to deflate the figure of Blepyros, who, within the zero-sum economy of Athens’s sociosexual hierarchy, is now on the wrong end of anal penetration”.

⁴⁸ Cf. *Lys.* 413 and the use of the word in technical writers (*Arist. HA* 493a27, *Gal.* 10.381, *Poll.* 2.171). See also Henderson 1991: 41, 119 and 141.

⁴⁹ See McClure 1999: 246 “by identifying him with pathic behaviour, Blepyros’ constipation embodies his compromised social and sexual status”.

Since in Aristophanes sexual passivity in men is often derided as a sign of effeminacy,⁵⁰ Blepyros is once more presented as an effeminate man; this also provides the link with the description of the effeminate men before (*Eccl.* 102-4, 112-3). This will be the third possible course of interpretation of the scene: the cross-dressed Blepyros who squats in order to relieve himself is likened, on the one hand, to a woman who cannot give birth and, on the other hand, to an effeminate man who waits for his lover to penetrate him. All of the images would appear equally degrading to the audience of the time (or any time).

The above analysis renders hardly surprising Blepyros' reaction to the resolutions of the Assembly. When Chremes breaks the news to Blepyros that power is to be handed over to women, he does not seem alarmed or concerned, but rather content and relieved. He asks twice in disbelief whether the decision has actually been taken (457 καὶ δέδοκται; 458-9 ἅπαντ' ἄρ' αὐταῖς ἐστὶ προστεταγμένα/ἃ τοῖσιν ἀστοῖς ἔμελεν;); when he is assured, almost as if not daring to believe it, he asks again whether his attendance of court will be taken up by his wife (460 οὐδ' εἰς δικαστήριον ἄρ' εἶμι, ἀλλ' ἡ γυνή;) and ends up saying in relief: 461 οὐδὲ στένειν τὸν ὀρθρον ἔτι πρᾶγμα ἄρά μοι; Chremes again reassures him that everything will be his wife's business from now on; *he* will be able to stay home groan-free, engaged with his bodily activities (463-4 μὰ Δί', ἀλλὰ ταῖς γυναιξὶ ταῦτ' ἤδη μέλει/σὺ δ'

⁵⁰ Henderson 1991: 208-9 "At best, homosexuality (in the form of the occasional enjoyment of a boy) is presented as a harmless vice; at worst (in the case of grown men who are fond of other men or who are actually effeminate), it is made to represent and exemplify corruption, decadence, shamelessness, wickedness, or "perversion". Never is it presented in a sympathetic light, never are we encouraged to look beyond its purely physical and sensual aspects to the more idealized view that we find in the writings of Greek philosophers". See also Leitaio 2012: 161.

ἀστενακτεῖ περδόμενος οἴκοι μενεῖς). The words στένειν, πρᾶγμα, ἀστενακτεῖ show the way men perceived their obligations as citizens and reveal their attitude towards the city: they are happy to get rid of all their citizen rights and stay at home, taking the place of their wives. Blepyros' only concern is that women will force them to have sexual intercourse with them and that, if men are unable to satisfy their sexual appetites, the women will withhold food from them (465-9). With regard to his concern about food, Blepyros displays the typical female trait of gluttony; in comedy, it is usually women who crave for food or are at pains to satisfy their incessant appetite. Moreover, as has been suggested several times in the play, Blepyros is once more presented as impotent and sterile and, hence, totally uninterested in the prospect of sexual intercourse.

2.2 Marriage into funeral

I have demonstrated how cross-dressing works for women and men: for women it is a powerful tool through which they suppress and ridicule men and manage to ascend to power unscathed with their femininity intact. On the other hand, female clothes have negative effects on men, as becomes more obvious in the defecation scene of Blepyros. In a similar way to cross-dressed men in tragedy, the transvestite Blepyros ends up powerless and ridiculed, as well as impotent and sterile. At this point, I wish to add another suggestion regarding the mutual cross-dressing of men and women, which reveals a thematic link between the aforementioned tragic plays (*Agamemnon* and *Trachiniae*) and

Ecclesiazusae. In these tragic plays, the change of clothes becomes a way of marking the disruption of marriage and the inversion of the proper social order in the house and the city. In *Agamemnon*, Clytemnestra uses feminine textiles to challenge the authority of her husband and bring upon him a shameful death.⁵¹ She makes him walk on the garment she lays before him and traps and kills him in a murderous robe. The garment strewn on the ground before Agamemnon and the robe in which he is entangled are strongly linked, and some scholars have suggested that a bridal garment is implied,⁵² since πέπλος, which is used to describe the murderous robe (Ag. 1126 ἐν πέπλοισιν, 1580 ὕφαντοῖς ἐν πέπλοις Ἐρινύων, Ch. 1000 ποδιστῆρας πέπλους) is the traditional garment worn by brides during the wedding ceremony. Yet, rather than bring together husband and wife, the πέπλος destroys their union.⁵³ The fusion of marriage and funeral in *Oresteia* is conveyed once more through the imagery of clothing when the κάλυμμα used by Cassandra for bridal veils (Ag. 1178-9 καὶ μὴν ὁ χρησμὸς οὐκέτ' ἐκ καλυμμάτων/ἔσται δεδορκὼς νεογάμου νύμφης δίκην) is also applied by Electra to the net that trapped Agamemnon and the coverings laid over his corpse (Ch. 494 αἰσχρῶς τε βουλευτοῖσιν ἐν καλύμμασιν). Clytemnestra's vengeance, facilitated by the use of garments, leads her to shame her marriage bed (1162) and bring death to her own house.⁵⁴

⁵¹ See Morrell 1996-7: 141, 153-4; Loraux 1987: 10-11 and Lee 2004: 265-7.

⁵² See Lee 2004: 266-7; McNeil 2005: 2.

⁵³ See Lee 2004: 267.

⁵⁴ For the double language of marriage and funeral in *Agamemnon* see Rehm 1994: 43-58. On the perversion of wedding ritual and imagery in the *Oresteia* see Mitchell-Boyask 2006.

Trachiniae also focuses on the dynamics and implications of marriage; the destruction of the house and hearth is strongly associated with the female πέπλος.⁵⁵ Although it is the poison of Nessus that proves fatal for Heracles, much more emphasis is placed on the garment rather than the poison. In her orders to Lichas Deianeira places much emphasis on the πέπλος, as she refers to it three times (602 ταναῦφῃ πέπλον, 612 χιτῶνι τῷδε, 613 θυτῆρα καινῶ καινὸν ἐν πεπλώματι, cf. 674 τὸν ἐνδυτῆρα πέπλον). Deianeira employs the πέπλος as a means to save her marriage with Heracles, but soon the garment proves to be θανάσιμον (758 τὸ σὸν φέρων δώρημα, θανάσιμον πέπλον), the cause of the harm done on Heracles (772-4 ἐνταῦθα δὴ ᾿βόησε τὸν δυσδαίμονα/Λίχαν, τὸν οὐδὲν αἴτιον τοῦ σοῦ κακοῦ,/ποίαις ἐνέγκοι τόνδε μηχαναῖς πέπλον); it thus effectively puts an end to the marriage. The merging of marriage and funeral and its association with the πέπλος becomes evident in the messenger-speech which describes the death of Deianeira. When Deianeira realizes the imminent death of Heracles, she rushes to the marriage chamber and makes Heracles' bed (913-6), an activity which evokes a wife's preparation for the sexual act with her husband.⁵⁶ She then bids farewell to the bed and the bridal chamber (917-22) and, loosening the golden pin that holds her πέπλος, uncovers her side and stabs herself with a sword (923-6). The sexual overtones are unmistakable:⁵⁷ Deianeira's suicide takes on aspects of her wedding night, which are particularly stressed through the phrase

⁵⁵ See Segal 1981: 63-74; Ormand 1999: 36; Lee 2004: 269. See also Seaford's discussion (1994: 390-1) about the coalescence of fatal gift with fatal ritual (marital and sacrificial).

⁵⁶ See Easterling 1982: 190.

⁵⁷ See Winnington-Ingram 1980: 81, n. 28; Rehm 1994: 77.

λύει τὸν αὐτῆς πέπλον (924). While Heracles dons the πέπλος and dies, Deianeira strips herself off it and kills herself. The marriage chamber becomes the site of a violent death and, once more, marriage and death are intimately connected.⁵⁸

Ecclesiazusae is essentially preoccupied with the consequences of the abolition of marriage and the subversion of the male order in a way similar to the tragic plays; just as in the tragic context, in the comic play clothes are also used as a tool for the women to ascend to power, disrupt the current social and political order and, finally, subvert the institution of marriage. In the *agon*, where Praxagora unfolds her plan, she announces that women will be common property for all men (as long as the old and ugly ones are served first) and that children will also be held in common (613-8, 636-7); she thus effectively abolishes the institution of marriage. However, one may argue that the exchange of clothes at the beginning of the play created different expectations in the audience: cross-dressing and gender-reversal was a feature of some wedding ceremonies, where it was customary for both bride and groom to assume temporarily the clothes and identity of the opposite sex:⁵⁹ in Argos, brides put on a false beard when they got married (Plu. *de Mul. Virt.* 4.245), whereas in Sparta they had their hair shaved and wore male clothes and shoes (Plu. *Lyc.* 15.5). The double inversion becomes more evident if we take into account that, according

⁵⁸ Cf. also *Medea* where Medea uses a bridal robe to destroy Jason's bride (1159 πέπλους ποικίλους) and put an end to his marriage. However, no cross-dressing figures in this play, so I do not include it in my discussion.

⁵⁹ For cross-dressing in Greek marriage see: Delcourt 1961: 2, 5; Vidal-Naquet 1986: 114; Bullough and Bullough 1993: 26; Cyrino 1998: 211. See also Zeitlin 1996: 345 "such reversals are usually explained according to a ritual logic that each gender must for the last time act the part of the other before assuming the unequivocal masculine and feminine identities that cultural rules require".

to Herodotus (1.82.7), adults in Argos had to be entirely bald, while in Sparta they had to let their hair grow long. In Cos, on the other hand, the husband put on a female dress to receive his new bride (Plu. *Quaestiones Graecae* 58). The idea behind this gender reversal may be the marking of “the individual’s complete separation from a previously indistinct gender identity and his/her successful passage to the fixed masculine and feminine roles of husband or wife”.⁶⁰ The rite had a positive and beneficent value, since each sex received something of the powers of the other.⁶¹ Especially for the groom, cross-dressing showed that he had reached the age of virility and marriage, since, after a temporary period of wearing female dress, the young male is invited to enter into the domain of masculinity.⁶² Since these customs were widespread, the audience who viewed the transvestism in the comic play may have been reminded of the wedding practices; yet, what follows is a total reversal of the logic of the wedding custom: not only is the men’s masculinity not strengthened, they also appear to be effeminized and ridiculed. Transvestism in the comic context does not simply represent a rite of passage, a successful transition to the fixed roles of husband and wife: its effeminizing effects on men are permanent, while the roles of husbands and wives exist no more. Thus, any expectations for the reinforcement and consolidation of the institution of marriage that the cross-dressing may have created, are not fulfilled. Marriage is abolished and women are allowed to wander in the streets and

⁶⁰ Cyrino 1998: 211. See also Seaford 1994: 273 for transvestism as an initiatory ritual.

⁶¹ See Delcourt 1961: 16.

⁶² See Vidal-Naquet 1986: 116.

look for any man they want to mate with. Even worse: in symmetry with the tragic plays, where the emphasis on female garments does not lead to the re-establishment of the *oikos* and the renewal of marriage vows, but to death and disaster, in *Ecclesiazusae* the wedding ritual appears to be conflated with the funereal. The implications of death have been already discussed before, with the occasion of Blepyros' comment on his corpse-like state (535-8); they are picked up later on, in the scene between the young man and the hags.

3. Sex can kill: sterility and death in the hags' scene

In the first part of the play, men, represented by Blepyros, were depicted as effeminate, impotent and sterile, almost living corpses. As I will show, in the second part young men fare equally badly at the hands of the old women: they gradually lose their vitality and sexual prowess and become impotent and sterile, the weak prey of deadly creatures.

It is important to note that when Praxagora first speaks about the new sexual laws (613-629, 689-709) she does not say anything about old women and old men; she only mentions that the ugly ones must be served before the handsome, without any reference to age:

615-18

{Βλ.} πῶς οὖν οὐ πάντες ἴασιν

ἐπὶ τὴν ὥραιότητα αὐτῶν καὶ ζητήσουσιν ἐρεῖδεν;

{Πρ.} αἱ φαυλότεραι καὶ σιμότεραι παρὰ τὰς σεμνάς καθεδοῦνται·

κᾶτ' ἢν ταύτης ἐπιθυμήσῃ, τὴν αἰσχροὺς πρῶθ' ὑποκρούσει.

624-9

{Βλ.} τὸ δὲ τῶν ἀνδρῶν τί ποιήσῃ;

φεύξονται γὰρ τοὺς **αἰσχίους**, ἐπὶ τοὺς δὲ **καλοὺς** βαδιοῦνται.

{Πρ.} ἀλλὰ φυλάξουσ' οἱ **φαυλότεροι** τοὺς **καλλίους** ἀπιόντας

ἀπὸ τοῦ δειπνοῦ καὶ τηρήσουσ' ἐπὶ τοῖσιν δημοσίοισιν·

κούκ ἐξέσται παρὰ τοῖσι **καλοῖς** <καὶ τοῖς **μεγάλοις**> καταδαρθεῖν

ταῖσι γυναιξίν, πρὶν τοῖς **αἰσχροῖς** καὶ τοῖς **μικροῖς** χαρίσωνται

The adjectives in bold in the texts above and those in the following passage (696 *ώραία*, 699 *καλλίστη*, *λευκοτάτη*, 702 *εὐπρεπέσιν*, 703 *φαυλότεροι*, 705 *σιμοῖς*, *αἰσχροῖς*) describe men and women in terms of aesthetics. One could argue that people of old age are naturally less handsome than young ones, but this is nowhere stated explicitly in the text.⁶³ Moreover, Praxagora speaks about childbirth (614-5 καὶ ταύτας γὰρ κοινὰς ποιῶ τοῖς ἀνδράσι συγκατακεῖσθαι/καὶ παιδοποιεῖν τῷ βουλομένῳ) and about the relation between children and adults in the new community (635-7). However, when the new sex laws are put into practice, the first to appear on stage to look for male “customers” is a hag (878-83). As the scene evolves, we realize that the women who represent the sexually privileged group and compete over the young man are not only ugly, as Praxagora had indicated, but, most importantly, old as well. It is important that old (and ugly) women are staged instead of just ugly, because, at their age, they represent a sexuality which cannot be associated anymore

⁶³ Only twice it is perhaps implied: in lines 702-4 the young ones are classified with the good-looking and contrasted to the less handsome (*εὐπρεπέσιν δ' ἀκολουθοῦντες/καὶ μειρακίοις οἱ φαυλότεροι/τοιᾶδ' ἐροῦσιν*), while in line 720 the neighbour sees Praxagora's decision to abolish the profession of prostitution as an excuse for the women to keep all the young men for themselves (*ἵνα τῶν νέων ἔχωσιν αὐταὶ τὰς ἀκμὰς*).

with child-bearing.⁶⁴ This is the first indication that the theme of sterility will resume in the second part of the play.⁶⁵

It soon becomes obvious that the sexual activity under the new regime bears no relation to procreation and child-production; it is all about crude sex, which is not even pleasant. As Wheat (1992: 167) notes, the words that the characters in the play use for sex are, on the one hand, crude and brutal and, on the other hand, connote pain and death. The young man describes what he wants to do to the young woman as a “trading of blows between the young man's thrusting member and the girl's πυγή”⁶⁶ (963-5 φίλον, ἀλλ’ ἐν τῷ σῶ/βούλομαι κόλπῳ†/πληκτίζεσθαι μετὰ τῆς σῆς πυγῆς). Moreover, the young man says that erotic passion is ravaging him (957 διακναίσας ἔχει): the word διακναίω means lacerate and can also be used for the gouging out of eyes.⁶⁷ Thus, sex under the new regime is “an excruciating living death, a reversal of the exuberant procreative function that we expect in comedy”.⁶⁸

References to death are first traced, naturally, in the jokes and insults against the old women. Although the first woman considers her maturity to be an advantage over her young competitor (895), in reality she is old and “rotten” (884, 926 σαπρά, 934 ὤλεθρε), almost dead already (904-5 σὺ δ’, ὦ γραῦ, παραλέλεξαι κἀντέτριψαι/τῷ Θανάτῳ μέλημα,

⁶⁴ See Auger 1979: 92-3.

⁶⁵ See Bowie 1993: 265.

⁶⁶ Henderson 1974: 346.

⁶⁷ Cf. E. Cyc. 485-6 Κύκλωπος ἔσω βλεφάρων ὥσας/λαμπρὰν ὄψιν διακναίσει and LSJ.

⁶⁸ Wheat 1992: 167.

926 οὐκ οἶδ' ἐπ' ἐκφορὰν γε); her lover cannot be anyone else but Geres (932) or the best painter of the funerary jars, Death himself (993-7).⁶⁹ However, the death undertones gradually shift from the old woman (and her old and ugly competitors that soon appear on stage) to the young man. At first the young man appears very confident about his sexual prowess: he is burning with passion and desire since he has been yearning for the young woman for a long time (938, 948, 960-75). However, when he finds out that he has to deal with the old woman first (and the rest of the old women later) his confidence vanishes together with his potency: sterility and death gradually prevail. The first sign is given in the young man's encounter with the first hag: the old woman claims that the man knocked on her door (977 καὶ τὴν θύραν γ' ἤραττες) to which the young man replies "I would rather die" (977 ἀποθάνοιμ' ἄρα). The door-knocking conversation resumes later on (989-90) and takes on clear sexual innuendos:⁷⁰

{Επ.} οὐκ οἶδ' ὅ τι λέγεις τηνδεδί μοι κρουστέον.
 {Γρ. Α.} ὅταν γε κρούσης τὴν ἐμὴν πρῶτον θύραν.

The young man says he has to knock on the girl's "door"⁷¹ even though he has already done that, to which the old woman replies "only if you knock on my door first". Thus, the young

⁶⁹ For the interpretation of this passage see Ussher 1973: 214 and Sommerstein 1998: 224. If we identify the painter of the jars for funerals with Death, then the young man's exhortation to the old woman to go inside her house, lest her "lover" sees her outside the door acquires a double meaning: if Death sees the hag standing out of the house, he will probably be more tempted to take her with him! Moreover, the young man implies that the old woman should not expect anyone but Death to knock on her door (cf. 989-90).

⁷⁰ See Henderson 1991: 137-8, 171; Sommerstein 1998: 223; Brown 2008: 368-9. Cf. the door-knocking motif in *Lysistrata*, which also strongly invites sexual undertones of attempted penetration. See Revermann 2006: 185.

⁷¹ τηνδεδὶ can refer to the door or the girl itself, while κρούω is often used for sexual intercourse (see Henderson 1991: 171).

man's reply to the hag's sexual advances (977), far from being just an emphatic negation, foreshadows the later scene: ironically, death is what the young man expects to come out as a result from his sexual intercourse at the end of the hags' scene.

There is an escalation: the young man first experiences physical threats, which soon lead to implications of impotency, sterility and, finally, death. When he appears unwilling to serve the first hag sexually, she recites the new decree which permits her to "drag the man by the peg" (1020 ἔλκειν ἀνατεῖ λαβομένης τοῦ παττάλου); the young man exclaims: οἴμοι, Προκρούστης τήμερον γενήσομαι (1021). The mental image brings to mind the end of *Lysistrata*, where the women were supposed to lead the men in front of Lysistrata dragging them by their penises (1019). As Sommerstein notes (1998: 225), the gesture would be perceived by Greek males as "an insult of measureless depth", and shows the control of women over men. Moreover, taking into account the young man's response, it may be argued that the man is concerned about his bodily integrity: Procrustes used to kill his victims by cutting or stretching out their limbs so that they fit in his bed and was himself killed by Theseus in the same way.⁷² Accordingly, the young man is perhaps afraid that he will suffer like Procrustes, but with reference to his penis (note the pun with προκρούω, i.e. have sex),⁷³ not his limbs: he might be thinking of castration or over-stretching of his phallus due to the excessive sexual activity he will be subjected to. A similar fear for the

⁷² See Sommerstein 1998: 225. This is the earliest passage where Procrustes is mentioned. See also Plu. *Thes.* 11.1; Bacch. 18.27-30; D.S. 4.59.5; Apoll. *Ep.* 1.4.

⁷³ See Ussher 1973: 217 and Sommerstein 1998: 225.

integrity of his body is expressed later on, when the two hags drag him violently in opposite directions (1076 διασπάσεσθέ μ', ὧ κακῶς ἀπολούμεναι).

Before the other two hags appear on stage, the first hag presents herself as an agent of death: she insists that the young man should follow her to her place out of “Diomedian compulsion” (1029). The scholia explain that the reference is to Diomedes, the Thracian son of Ares; his daughters were prostitutes who forced passers-by to have sexual intercourse with them until the men were exhausted, whereupon Diomedes killed them.⁷⁴ Hence, sexual intercourse with the hag assumes connotations of death.

The appearance of the other two hags adds to the death overtones of the text. If the first hag is the girl of Geres or of Death, the other two are even worse, each of them being more repulsive than the other (1053 τοῦτο γὰρ ἐκείνου τὸ κακὸν ἐξωλέστερον, 1070 τοῦτ' αὖ πολὺ τούτου τὸ κακὸν ἐξωλέστερον): the second is an Empusa (1056) and the third looks as if she does not belong to the world of the living but that of the dead (1073 ἀνεστηκυῖα παρὰ τῶν πλειόνων).⁷⁵ The implications of death are straightforward in the case of the third hag and latent in the second: Empusa was a female monster or bogy who could take many shapes.⁷⁶ In one of her numerous disguises, she could be identified with Hecate (Alciph. iii.26.3).⁷⁷ Even more suggestively, Empusa was often associated with another

⁷⁴ See Sommerstein 1998: 227. These daughters are identified in the scholia with the man-eating mares of the Heracleian feat, perhaps in an attempt at rationalization of the myth.

⁷⁵ See Sommerstein 1998: 229.

⁷⁶ For the implications of the assimilation of the hag to Empusa see Terriza 1996.

⁷⁷ See Ussher 1973: 221.

mythical monster, Lamia, who was initially conceptualized as a child-devouring demon who sought out pregnant women and devoured their babies before or after they were born.⁷⁸ Lamias at some point become man-eating creatures, which mate with young attractive males before devouring them.⁷⁹ All aspects of the creature with which the hag is assimilated have important implications for the new world of Praxagora: death has not been banished from the new world and threatens the vitality and fertility of the young.⁸⁰ In the light of the representation of the three hags as agents of death, one may argue that Epigenes calls the two hags, who drag him to different directions, χαλεπαὶ πορθμῆς (1086) because he has in mind Charon, the ferryman of Hades.⁸¹

The young man seems for a moment to rediscover his lost potency, when he mistakenly believes that the young girl has come to free him from the hag (1045-8, note the obscene pun on the παχεῖαν χάριν). Yet, when it becomes clear that his supposed “saviour” is an even uglier hag, he becomes a “softie” (1058 μαλακίων), which may refer not only to his fear of the hag’s ugly face,⁸² but also to the loss of his sexual prowess.⁸³ This is further

⁷⁸ D.S. 20.41, [Ps.-Luc.] *Philops.* 3; D. Chr. *Orationes* 55; Str. 1.2.8; Hor. *AP* 340. Since further below women are also assimilated to witches it must be noted that Medea, the archetypical witch, has been sometimes conceptualized as a demon of infertility and linked to Lamia. See Johnston 1997: 63.

⁷⁹ All evidence comes from the second century A.D., but the tradition may have existed earlier. See Philostr. *VA* 4.25, Apuleius *Metamorphoses* 1.17. See Ogden 2008: 160ff.

⁸⁰ For the implications of Empusa in *Ecclesiazusae* see Terriza 1996.

⁸¹ According to the ancient scholia, which both Ussher 1973: 224 and Sommerstein 1998: 230 follow, ferrymen used to fight over passers-by, as to who would embark on their boat.

⁸² See Sommerstein 1998: 229.

⁸³ As a term μαλακός (soft) is suitable to describe the lack of erection. Herodotus associates μαλακία with femininity (7.153.4; cf. Arist. *Nic. Eth.* 1150b15). See Wohl 2002: 171-88 who reads the references to μαλακία in

emphasized later on, when he professes to be unable to perform sexually (1090-1 βινεῖν δεῖ με διαλελημμένον/πῶς οὖν δικωπεῖν ἀμφοτέρως δυνήσομαι;) and the hag reassures him with the promise of a “potful of bulbs”, which was supposed to be a strong aphrodisiac.⁸⁴

No good can come from having sex with old women: one should expect impotency, sterility and, finally, death. The most decisive evidence that sex in the new world is a lethal experience comes from three passages in the hags’ scene. Most importantly, in some of these passages recur prime symbols of death from the first part of the play: excrement and λήκυθοι. In lines 1059-62, the young man attempts to escape from the second hag on the pretext of his urgent need to relieve himself; he asks to defecate in decent privacy, otherwise he will lose control of his bowels out of terror. The hag, probably seeing through the ruse, rejects his request and ensures him that he can defecate inside the house (1062 θάρρει, βάδιζ’ ἔνδον χεσεῖ). The failed attempt of the young man to defecate invokes the ineffective attempts of Blepyros to relieve himself before: the emphasis on (much wished but unsuccessful) defecation reveals the weakness and helplessness of men.

The prime symbol of death in the play, λήκυθος,⁸⁵ recurs in two scenes which are inextricably linked to one another. In the first one, the young man urges the (first) old woman to make preparations for her funeral, because he professes that she is so decrepit

Thucydides (see 1.122.4, 2.18.3, 3.37.2, 5.72.1, esp. 6.13.1) as unmanliness, the opposite of the Athenian ideal of imperial aggression and manly hardness.

⁸⁴ Faraone 1999: 19-20.

⁸⁵ For λήκυθος as a symbol of death see 538, 996, 1032, 1111. From 460s to 410s λήκυθοι became the most popular offering to the dead and developed a funerary iconography. See Garland 1985: 107-8.

that she will not survive the intense sexual experience. The old woman misinterprets the description of the ritual and thinks he talks of marriage (1030-6):

{Επ.} ὑποστόρεσαί νυν πρῶτα τῆς ὀριγάνου
καὶ κλήμαθ' ὑπόθου συγκλάσασα τέτταρα,
καὶ ταινίωσαι, καὶ παράθου τὰς ληκύθους,
ὔδατός τε κατάθου τοὔστρακον πρὸ τῆς θύρας.
{Γρ. α.} ἦ μὴν ἔτ' ὠνήσει σὺ καὶ στεφάνην ἐμοί.
{Επ.} νῆ τὸν Δί', ἥνπερ ἦ γέ που τῶν κηρίνων
οἶμαι γὰρ ἔνδον διαπεσεῖσθαί σ' αὐτίκα

As Sommerstein (1998: 227) notes, some of the items that Epigenes mentions are appropriate for both the context of πρόθεσις in a funeral and the ἔκδοσις and the ἐξαγωγή of the wedding ceremony: ribbons (ταινίαι), flasks (λήκυθοι), pots of water (ῥστρακον ὔδατος) and diadems (στεφάνη) had a different function in either ritual.⁸⁶ Yet, Epigenes hurries to specify that the στεφάνη will be of wax, hence making clear that it is the funeral of the hag that he has in mind (1036).⁸⁷ However, later on, when the other two hags have made their appearance and also claimed his attentions, the young man appears to believe that it is he who will soon be in need of a funerary ritual (1105-11). The implications of death have shifted from the old women to the young man himself: he asks to be buried “at the mouth of the strait” where he will perish, that is the old woman’s house (1106-7), and he envisages the hag as the monumental urn placed over his grave (1111 πρόφασιν ἀντὶ

⁸⁶ See Oakley and Sinos 1993: 12, 16; Garland 1985: 36-7, 107-8, 170-1; Rehm 1994: 12-4, 22-9 and Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 332-3.

⁸⁷ See Sommerstein 1998: 186. For the common theme of conflation of marriage and funeral in tragedy see Rehm 1994.

ληκύθου).⁸⁸ In this way, we are invited to consider that the death implications, which were previously strongly linked with Blepyros' cross-dressing and constipation scene, are now associated with the young men's sexual experiences: the new world, brings impotence, sterility and, finally, death upon the young men. Moreover, the conflation of marriage and death rituals in the hags' scene looks back to the first part of the play and the mutual cross-dressing of men and women. If the cross-dressing of both men and women pointed to certain marital customs, which were mainly understood as preparation for the ceremony of marriage and its final consummation, the marital theme is reiterated in the second part of the play, in the expectations of the first hag to be led as a bride by the young man. However, death and sterility prevail once more over life, fertility and reproduction. As with the weak and effeminate Blepyros in the first part of the play, the hags' scene turns out to carry sinister implications for the potency, the sterility and the well-being of the young men as well. At best, the city will become a land of Oedipuses (1041-2), since men will mix with women as chance dictates, and thus all familial bonds will cease to exist; at worst, any union is doomed to be unproductive. As Saïd (1979: 60), Auger (1979: 92) and Zeitlin (1999: 75) argue, the new laws of Praxagora do not only bring unhappiness upon individuals: they signify the death of the whole city, whose vital forces are destroyed by sterile unions. Any positive aspects of the new world are reserved for the old and the ugly.

⁸⁸ See Sommerstein 1998: 232 "referring this time to the large marble *lēkuthoi* which were sometimes placed over graves".

4. Practices of love-magic: implications in the first half

So far I have examined how the practice of cross-dressing in the first half of the play lays the ground for Praxagora's new world of death and sterility, as presented in the second half of the play. I will now examine the nature of the new world from a different perspective: that of (love) magic. To explain what I mean by "magic", I will borrow Faraone's (1999:16) definition: "a set of practical devices and rituals used by the Greeks in their day-to-day lives to control or otherwise influence supernaturally the forces of nature, animals, or other human beings". This definition illuminates the association I wish to make between female leadership and magic: since magic practices aim at gaining control over people and situations, a leader may employ certain magical devices in order to claim and assert his or her power.⁸⁹ My discussion of magic practices in *Ecclesiazusae* will focus on the ἄγωγή spells (rituals designed to lead a desired person to one's house and bed) and love curses.⁹⁰ Although hints of these magic practices are to be found mainly in the second half of the play, even in the first half certain female activities and actions create the impression that the women may be familiar with magical practices. According to Aristophanes' habit of restating themes from the beginning in the second part of the comedies, the implications of magic return more persistently in the second half of the play: the abolition of marriage

⁸⁹ See above p. 203-4.

⁹⁰ Faraone (1999) does not include the separation spells in his study of love-magic, because they fall more easily into the category of inhibitory magic. I, however, treat "love-magic" as a broader term which includes not only the ritual techniques to instil or maintain various forms of desire and affection, but also devices to restrain erotic attraction and inhibit sexual contact.

leads to an exuberance of female desire, which is expressed through the language of love-magic. Thus, I shall argue that the implications of magic practice in *Ecclesiazusae* represent the subversive potential of women's activities to overturn the normal social order; the anomaly of the new world is once more confirmed.

There are sufficient reasons for inferring that the women in the play are associated with magic practices. I will give a brief account of them before attempting any further analysis: in the first half of the play, the emphasis on Praxagora's ability as a speaker and her extended apostrophe to the lamp, the women's use and manipulation of their husbands' clothes and the importance of the female task of clothes-production and procurement. While not in themselves elements of magical practice, the use of persuasion and clothes resonate with examples of female characters in the Greek literary tradition who use magic to gain control over men. In the second half of the play, the antagonistic songs that the two women, old and young, exchange can be paralleled with magical incantations which make women sexually desirable for men. In the same scene, the old woman uses the language of separation curse-tablets in order to fight off her younger rival and win the affections of the young man, her victim. Moreover, in the "love duet", the young woman seems to address the young man in the form of magical incantations used in *agōgai* and *katadesmoi* ("make him come to my bed"), while the magic vocabulary persists in the fight of the three old women over the young man.

The idea behind the belief in the power of clothes is essentially the same in both magical and religious practices:⁹¹ clothes attribute to the wearer a certain identity. Thus, any change of clothes is symbolic of a change of identity;⁹² a person who chooses or is forced to change his/her clothes assumes at the same time a new identity, the one that his/her new clothes determine. Accordingly, the removal of clothes implies loss of identity and vulnerability.⁹³ This idea lies behind magical procedures, in which the act of using someone's clothes to control them, harm them or bring about a desired effect on their disposition and behaviour is very common. For this central place of clothing in magical practices there are many literary and non-literary examples. As early as Homer, clothes figure prominently in women exerting control over men. Both Calypso, who detains Odysseus for several years, and Circe, who transforms his men into pigs (*Od.* 10.235-36; 276; 290-92) are represented as singing and weaving in their houses. The weaving of Penelope can be also seen as a magical action which keeps the suitors under control. The κέστος of Aphrodite is used as a magical tool by Hera to seduce Zeus (*Il.* 14.214-21), while the κρήδεμνον which Ino/Leucothea gives to Odysseus averts his death (*Od.* 5.343-47; cf. 373).⁹⁴

⁹¹ Apart from marriage, which has already been mentioned, change of dress was often required before many religious occasions, for instance the performance of a prayer, a sacrifice, sacred rites and rites of passage.

⁹² See Seaford 1994: 273 "transvestism is a well-known feature of initiatory ritual in Greece and elsewhere, tending to deprive the initiand of his previous identity so that he may assume a new one".

⁹³ See Buxton 1990: 69-70 for the importance of (un)dressing in the myth of the werewolf and the Arcadian ritual, as described by Pliny the Elder (*NH* 8.81). Stripping marks the transition from human to animal, whereas re-dressing is necessary for the restoration to humanity; without the human clothes, the werewolf is deprived of the means of transition back to humanity. See also Griffith 1988 for the importance of disrobing in *Oresteia*.

⁹⁴ See Faraone 1990 and 1999: 5-6; McClure 1996-7: 126-7.

It has already been mentioned how in *Agamemnon* and *Trachiniae*, and - I shall now add - in *Medea* the association of textiles with feminine powers of binding and entrapment is very prominent. This feminine power is essentially connected with magic: insofar as female garments feature as instruments of seduction, they are often invested with magical power and the women who produce or use them for their own ends are depicted as witches. In *Trachiniae* and *Medea* the theme of magical cloth is described more explicitly: Deianeira causes unwillingly the death of Heracles with the robe which she has rubbed with love potions and spells (584-85),⁹⁵ whereas Medea kills her rival Glauke with a poisoned robe and a diadem. In *Agamemnon* the cloth which Clytemnestra spreads for Agamemnon to step on and meet his death has been viewed as a magical tool and has led scholars to suppose that Clytemnestra assumes a supernatural power.⁹⁶ In general, clothes appear to be very important for the effectiveness of a magic spell (ἄγωγαί and φίλτροκατάδεσμοί).⁹⁷ In *Hippolytus*, for instance, the nurse suggests to Phaedra a spell for captivating Hippolytus, which requires bits from his cloak (509-15):⁹⁸

ἔστιν κατ' οἴκους φίλτρα μοι θελκτήρια

⁹⁵ See Faraone 1994.

⁹⁶ Kuhns 1962: 36 refers to Clytemnestra as a “priestess of black magic”; Taplin 1977: 314, n. 2, also speaks of her “more than masculine, almost supernatural, power” but does not accept the use of magic; Moreau 1976-77 claims that Clytemnestra resembles Medusa and disempowers Agamemnon with her look; McClure 1996-7 and 1999 claims that Clytemnestra uses magical language in her welcome to Agamemnon. Cf. Segal 1981: 55 “language here has physical reality, a density of texture and concreteness that intertwines word and object, speech and scenic action in a new imagistic unity, something between incantation, magic, rite, and poetry”.

⁹⁷ Cf. Theoc. 2.23-25; 53 and Luc. *DMeretr.* 4.4. Indeed, these magical operations seem to reflect actual practice, since some of the folded curse tablets were found to contain hair and threads from the clothing, the so-called οὐσία. See Gager 1992: 16-7; Faraone 1997: 14 and 1999: 8.

⁹⁸ See Faraone 1999: 7-8.

ἔρωτος, ἦλθε δ' ἄρτι μοι γνώμης ἔσω,
ἅ σ' οὔτ' ἐπ' αἰσχροῖς οὔτ' ἐπὶ βλάβῃ φρενῶν
παύσει νόσου τῆσδ', ἦν σὺ μὴ γένῃ κακῇ.
δεῖ δ' ἐξ ἐκείνου δὴ τι τοῦ ποθουμένου
σημεῖον, ἢ πλόκον τιν' ἢ πέπλων ἄπο,
λαβεῖν, συνάψαι τ' ἐκ δυοῖν μίαν χάριν.

In this light, the prominent position of clothing in *Ecclesiazusae* may resonate with the aforementioned examples of female characters in the Greek literary tradition, who use magic to gain control over men. I have already discussed the implications of the female and male cross-dressing; I wish to add that the control that women exert over men in the play can be attributed to the control they exert over their clothing, as happens in magical practices. The absence of proper clothing is a recurrent motif for men: Euaion's speech in the assembly concerns the problem of cloaklessness among poor men, while the speaker himself is almost naked (408-21). In strong contrast, women are in control of their clothes – and those of others. It is stressed twice in the text that it is the women's responsibility to weave for men and the city: a woman at lines 88-92 says that she has brought some wool-work to do in the Assembly, thus betraying her identity, and further below Praxagora, while unveiling her plans, promises that clothing theft and nakedness will disappear (565) and that the women will weave clothes for the men (654). Most importantly, the fact that the women steal and wear the men's clothes, leaving them with the option of putting on female clothes or having no clothes at all, contributes to the representation of men as powerless and effeminate. In this context, the control the women exert over clothing, both male and female, may point to a form of magical fascination and supernatural power. This would

explain the quasi magical power of the clothes: in the case of men, the female clothes, which are given to them by their wives, turn them to powerless and effeminate creatures; in the case of women, the male clothes, which they steal and choose to wear, make them bold and powerful. As Bowie (1993: 258) notes, “it is as if the sexes have exchanged not only clothes but also the physical powers traditionally ascribed to them”. In this case, the clothes would have the effect of a sympathetic or homeopathic magic, as happens with the use of voodoo dolls and the *similia similibus* formula.⁹⁹

Apart from the control of clothes, another indication of the use of magical devices is the way Praxagora expresses herself at the beginning of the play: her soliloquy is a parody of the prayer-forms used in hymns and of tragic apostrophe.¹⁰⁰ However, in classical antiquity, the distinctions between prayers and magical formulae were fluid and often the term εὐχή could be applied also to a magical incantation.¹⁰¹ The impression of the incantatory speech is further enhanced by Praxagora’s apostrophe to the lamp as the Sun-god. The ἄγωγή spells seem to be intimately connected with the worship of very different groups of supernatural entities, among which Selene and Helios, and these gods could be

⁹⁹ For instance, effigies of wax and clay with tied members and closed mouth aimed at immobilization of the victim and poor performance as a speaker respectively (cf. schol. at Ar. *Vesp.* 946-48 and Lib. *Orat.* 1. 245-49). A fourth-century Attic curse refers to the fact that the text of the tablet is inscribed in retrograde: “Just as these words are cold and backwards (written right to left), so too may the words of Krates be cold and backwards”. The lead medium can be used in the same way: “Just as this lead is useless (), so too may the words and deeds of those listed here be useless” (DTA 106b). Another popular tactic is the allusion that the binding tablet has been placed in a tomb, for instance, DT 68 “Just as this corpse lies useless, so too may everything be useless for NN”. See Faraone 1997: 6-10; Eidinow 2007: 140-1, 150.

¹⁰⁰ See Ussher 1973: 70.

¹⁰¹ See Gager 1992: 12; McClure 1996-7: 135-6.

summoned for help in magical prayers.¹⁰² Moreover, according to the scholia, the opening line of *Ecclesiazusae* was suspected of being modified from a tragedy by Agathon or Dicaeogenes (ὑποπτεύεται δὲ ὁ ἱάμβος ἢ τοῦ Ἀγάθωνος ἢ τοῦ Δικαιογένους). Since we know that the latter wrote a *Medea*, an apostrophe of Medea to her grandfather, the Sun-god, would be a most appropriate opening for the play.¹⁰³ If indeed the opening of the *Ecclesiazusae* parodies the opening of Dicaeogenes' *Medea*, then Praxagora is associated with Medea, the archetypical barbarian witch.¹⁰⁴

Praxagora's address of the lamp is another relevant feature, since lamps play an important role in magical rituals. Magical papyri survive in which lamps are personified and addressed by the practitioner to assist him in a variety of ways: PGM 7.376–84 is a charm where the lamp is called upon to make a woman lie awake, PGM 7.407–10 is a spell addressed to the lamp to help the practitioner appear in someone's dreams at night, and PGM 7.250–4, PGM 22b 27–31, and PGM 22b 32–5 are requests for dream oracles which contain formulas to be spoken to the lamp. In PGM 7.255–9 the lamp is summoned along with Osiris, Osirchentechtha, and the archangel Michael to assist the practitioner.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, the ἀγωγή spells were performed at night under the light of a lamp (or fire). As Winkler (1997: 224) notes “when the setting for an ἀγωγή is specified, the time is night, the place is

¹⁰² Faraone 1999: 133, 139.

¹⁰³ See Sommerstein 1998: 137.

¹⁰⁴ See also O' Higgins 2003: 139, who views Praxagora's speech as incantatory.

¹⁰⁵ See also PGM 62.1–24 and PGM 102.1–17 (frag. E, D, C), both of which mention the role of the lamp in the magical process.

ordinarily a high room or rooftop from which the agent may speak to and observe the moon or the planet Venus, and the equipment includes a lamp or fire and sundry materials [...]

The agent stands facing the night sky, looking at the moon (or the planet Venus), addressing a long prayer to her and watching for the goddess's reactions".¹⁰⁶ In *Ecclesiazusae* the dramatic time is night (giving way to morning) and Praxagora, instead of praying to Selene, summons the Sun. In magical tradition women most often called the Moon Goddess, whereas it was men who summoned the Sun God.¹⁰⁷ The difference – if not explained adequately by the assimilation of Praxagora's invocation to that of Medea's – can be attributed to the fact that Praxagora assumes a masculine behaviour for some part of the play. The prayer ends with Praxagora's appeal to the lamp/Sun-God to "send forth the flaming signal". The image is reminiscent of the way in which Clytemnestra in *Agamemnon* "steps outside the *oikos* in order to arrange the mighty chain of beacons which alert her to the impending return of her husband".¹⁰⁸ The assimilation of Praxagora to Clytemnestra is very suggestive, since Clytemnestra in *Agamemnon* is presented as achieving her goals through the use of supernatural power.¹⁰⁹

Another element which may point to the application of magic is Praxagora's exhortation to carry around a weasel for the purification sacrifice before the fake assembly

¹⁰⁶ See Winkler 1997: 224-5 for examples of ἀγῶγαι involving lamps.

¹⁰⁷ Faraone 1999: 139 "Aphrodite was not the only Greek divinity who oversaw love spells. For instance, there seems to have been another, albeit very poorly documented, tradition of asking Selene (the moon goddess) or Helios (the sun god) to help in similar ways". Cf. scholia to Theocritus 2.10b-c.

¹⁰⁸ Bowie 1993: 255. See also Slater 1997: 99.

¹⁰⁹ See McClure 1996-7: 130 (and n. 33 for more bibliography).

starts. Normally the animal chosen for such a purpose was the pig. Since Praxagora does not make elsewhere any mistakes about the official procedure, we must infer that the choice of the animal is deliberate.¹¹⁰ The weasel was a sign of bad luck according to popular superstition¹¹¹ and in Artemidorus (3. 28) to dream of a weasel may portend death. The weasel is related to Empusa in Aristophanes' *Frogs* (301-3),¹¹² where Xanthias' quotation of the Euripidean mispronounced verse (304 ἐκ κυμάτων γὰρ αὐθις αὖ γαλῆν ὀρώ) is preceded by his enunciation of two other formulas of ritual origin, the apotropaic ἴθ' ἥπερ ἔρχει (301), addressed to the pseudo-Empusa, and the thanksgiving invocation θάρρει· πάντ' ἀγαθὰ πεπράγαμεν (302). After the weasel joke Xanthias reassures Dionysus that the Empusa has disappeared, but Dionysus asks for an apotropaic swearing (306). The mention of the weasel in this context in Aristophanes shows that it was connected to Empusa and was something to ward off and not to summon. Most importantly, the weasel had a very intimate connection with witchcraft, phantoms of the night, and chthonic deities like Hecate. In a legend of the birth of Heracles the weasel appears as an attendant of Hecate and potent in magic spells.¹¹³ The general outline of the story is that Hera attempted to delay Alcmena's delivery by magical means and was assisted by the Moirai and Eileithyia (Ant. Lib.), Lucina

¹¹⁰ See above p. 228, n.6.

¹¹¹ Cf. Ar. *Ec.* 791-3, Theoph. *Char.* 16., and the proverb γαλῆν ἔχεις (Diogen. 3. 84) that was used of people suffering ill luck. See Borthwick 1968: 200-2. For an extensive bibliography on γαλῆ see Diggle 2004: 354-5.

¹¹² See Borthwick 1968.

¹¹³ See Ant. Lib. 29 (quoting Nicander, *Heteroiumena* fr. 60); Paus. 9.11.3; Ovid *Met.* 9. 306 ff.; Ael. *N.A.* 12. 5 and 15. 11.

(Ov.) or the Pharmacides (Paus.); but an attendant of Alcmena¹¹⁴ managed to outwit them and was subsequently metamorphosed into a weasel as a punishment. Antoninus Liberalis (29) mentions that Hecate makes the weasel her attendant out of pity (ταύτην Ἑκάτη πρὸς τὴν μεταβολὴν τῆς ὄψεως ὥκτειρε καὶ ἀπέδειξεν ἱερὰν αὐτῆς διάκονον). In the version of Aelian the weasel intervenes to facilitate the birth of Heracles (12.5), but loses its human form because of the μῆνις of Hecate (15.11). Before turning into an animal the weasel was a lustful witch (15.11 καὶ ὅτι τοῦτο ἐκαλεῖτο, καὶ ὅτι ἦν γόης καὶ φαρμακίς, καὶ ὅτι δεινῶς ἀκόλαστος ἦν καὶ ἀφροδίτην παράνομον ἐνόσει), while as an animal it has the power to prevent either conception or birth (φασὶ δὲ καὶ ὄρχεις γαλῆς γυναικὶ κατ' ἐπιβουλήν ἢ ἐκούσῃ περιαφθέντας ἐπίσχειν τοῦ ἔτι μητέρα γίνεσθαι, καὶ ἀναστέλλειν μίξεως). In general, it is a θηρίον ἐπιβουλότατον. In this light, the choice of the weasel as an animal for a purification sacrifice is highly inappropriate, since it evokes malign forces and points to the use of subversive magic causing sterility and cessation of reproduction. We have already seen how the male world is associated with impotence and sterility. The weasel may be the first sign that there are implications of sterility for the female world as well; these implications are picked up later on in the magic curse of the hag against the young girl.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ Called Galinthias (Ant. Lib.), Galanthis (Ov.) or Historis (Paus.).

¹¹⁵ See below p. 275ff.

The last indication of magical power in the first half of the play, which prepares the ground for the magic elements to follow, is Praxagora's ability of rhetorical seduction.¹¹⁶ The link between the power of persuasion and magic was widely known in antiquity; especially poetry and song were believed to have strong magical powers:¹¹⁷ one has only to remember the binding song of the Sirens in the *Odyssey*. Gorgias in *Helen* firmly assimilates the power of words to magic and witchcraft, since he uses the following words to describe the power of speech: ἔθελξε, γοητείας καὶ μαγείας (10), ἐφαρμάκευσαν, ἐξεγοήτευσαν (14). Rhetoric finds its model in poetry which, according to Gorgias, is of a magical nature.¹¹⁸ Praxagora in her speeches appears to retain the archetypical feminine power of seductiveness:¹¹⁹ she appeals to men in the assembly as a handsome youthful speaker (427-8 εὐπρεπὴς νεανίας) and later on, in the course of her speech in front of her husband and the neighbour, she attempts to win them over through the enticement of *eros*: she promises the universal availability of sex (613-4). Thus, although Praxagora is not a witch, her alluring

¹¹⁶ For the link between the persuasive power attributed to women and magic, especially in erotic contexts see McClure 1999: 66-69.

¹¹⁷ See Romilly 1975: 12-3; Vermeule 1979: 198-9, 201-2. Examples of poetic adaptations of magical language are found in the Homeric Hymn to Demeter, Sappho 1 (Voigt) and the Furies' binding song in *Eumenides*. See Cameron 1939; Richardson 1974; Faraone 1985; McClure 1996-7: 125-6.

¹¹⁸ See Ogden 2002: 17. Cf. fr. 11.10 D-K. For a similar idea, see Pl. *Sph.* 234e-f, *Plt.* 303c, *Euthd.* 289e-f, and *R.* 358b. For the relation between persuasion, poetry and magic see Romilly 1975: 11-26.

¹¹⁹ See Rothwell 1990: 82 "women have long been seducers (Hera, Circe, Helen); [...] seduction has frequently been connected to political persuasion; Aristophanes here takes the next logical step and modifies the old *topos* by transforming women into seductive political persuaders [...] Praxagora embodies the two sides of *peitho*: she can be both a persuader, giving a political speech, and a seductress, using erotic attraction to gain her ends".

figure and her ability to seduce through speech,¹²⁰ prepare the ground for the female magic practitioners which appear in the second half of the play.

4.1 Practices of love-magic: second half

The most decisive magic features are to be found in the second half of the play. The appearance of the three hags is most suggestive. I have already mentioned the assimilation of the second old woman to Empusa and Lamia. I shall now argue in more detail how the first hag and the young girl share common features with such female monsters who seduced men in order to finally destroy them. On the other hand, there is another aspect of the women which is strongly related to the broad category of magic: I will argue that the women are also greatly assimilated to aspiring female magic practitioners who employed magic practices (ἄγωγή spells) in order to seduce men or prevent other women from laying hold of the male object of their attentions (separation curses).

The scene of the hags with its lethal undertones calls to mind the nightmarish female monsters or deities who destroy men in Greek literary tradition (Furies, Sphinxes, Erinyes, Sirens).¹²¹ A particular feature of some of these creatures was their alluring and seducing voice. The binding song sung by the Furies in the *Eumenides* (A. Eu. 303-6, 327-

¹²⁰ Note that Praxagora uses the stylistic feature of repetition (221-8 ὥσπερ καὶ πρὸ τοῦ), which is suggestive of magical formulations.

¹²¹ See Rothwell 1990: 71.

33=341-6) maddens, deranges and withers their male victim.¹²² In *Odyssey* (12.1-200) and in the *Argonautica* of Apollonius of Rhodes (4.485-921) the Sirens lured passing ships to destruction with their irresistible voices and enchanting songs on the rocky coast of their island home and represented one of the many obstacles that Odysseus and Jason respectively had to overcome in their voyages.¹²³ The Sphinxes, in many ways like the Sirens, are said to carry off the person captured by their song (Eur. *El.* 471-72). Lamias also may have used their enchanting voice in order to attract males¹²⁴ (Plu. *Mor.* 515 F). Likewise, the hag and the young woman sing their songs to the passers-by in order to lure them into their houses. They even announce their intentions before they start singing:

880-9

{Γραῦς Α}: μινυρομένη τι πρὸς ἑμαυτὴν μέλος,
παίζουσα. πῶς ἂν περιλάβοιμ' αὐτῶν τινὰ
παριόντα; Μοῦσαι, δεῦρ' ἵτ' ἐπὶ τοῦμὸν στόμα,
μελύδριον εὐροῦσαί τι τῶν Ἰωνικῶν.
{Κόρη}: νῦν μέν με παρακύψασα προὔφθης, ὦ σαπρά.
ῥου δ' ἐρήμας, οὐ παρούσης ἐνθάδε
ἐμοῦ, τρυγῆσειν καὶ προσάξεσθαί τινα
ἄδουσ'· ἐγὼ δ', ἣν τοῦτο δρᾷς, ἀντάσσομαι.
κεῖ γὰρ δι' ὅχλου τοῦτ' ἐστὶ τοῖς θεωμένοις,
ὅμως ἔχει τερπνόν τι καὶ κωμωδικόν.

In her song, the hag promises to her much expected lover that he will have a very good time due to her long sexual experience and that she will be faithful to him forever:

893-9

¹²² See McClure 1996-7.

¹²³ The magic song of the Sirens is a recurring theme throughout the *Odyssey* (39-40, 41, 44, 52, 158-9, 183, 185, 187, 192, 198). See Gresseth 1970: 205. Cf. Circe who sings and invites Odysseus' men in her house in *Od.* 10.226-9.

¹²⁴ See Terriza 1996: 272-3.

εἴ τις ἀγαθὸν βούλεται παθεῖν τι, παρ' ἐμοὶ χρή καθεύδειν.
οὐ γὰρ ἐν νέαις τὸ σοφὸν ἔνεστιν, ἀλλ' ἐν ταῖς πεπεύροις.
οὐδέ τ' ἄν στέργειν τις ἐθέλοι μᾶλλον ἢ γ' ὦ
τὸν φίλον ὥπερ ξυνείην,
ἀλλ' ἐφ' ἕτερον ἂν πέτοιτο—

This is similar to what the Lamia (φάσμα) in Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius* (4.25) says to her victim, Menippus:¹²⁵

«ἐς ὃ ἐσπέρας» ἔφη «ἀφικομένῳ σοι ὥδῃ τε ὑπάρξει ἐμοῦ ἁδούσης καὶ οἶνος,
οἶον οὕτω ἔπιες, καὶ οὐδέ ἀντραστὴς ἐνοχλήσει σε, βιώσομαι δὲ καλὴ ξὺν
καλῷ».

The song - to which the girl refers twice (ἁδουσ', ἀντάσομαι), as does Lamia (ὥδῃ, ἁδούσης) - the promise of a good, memorable time,¹²⁶ the reassurance of faith to the potential victim and the erotic rhetoric of a continuous, life-long love are folk tale features,¹²⁷ which are all to be found in Aristophanes. The love which is “now and forever” is also found in the practice of the ἀγωγή, where the agent aims at an eternal bondage with the victim.¹²⁸ All these confirm the existence of magical elements in the scene. It is very interesting that both the hags and the young woman display the features of female monsters: in this way, it becomes evident that female sexual desire and incessant appetite in the new world of Praxagora is portrayed in a negative light, coming from either old or young women. Any women who express their sexual impulses in this open, straightforward

¹²⁵ See Terriza 1996: 274.

¹²⁶ Antonomasia: ἀγαθόν instead of κακόν.

¹²⁷ See Terriza 1996: 273-4.

¹²⁸ See Apuleius *Met.* 2.5 *amoris profundi pedicis aeternis alligat*; PGM VII.913-14; XVI.24-25; DT 267 *usque ad diem mortis suae*. See Winkler 1997: 232-3.

way cannot but resemble, in the eyes of the ancient audience, female rapacious and deadly monsters.

There is another aspect of the scene which I wish to bring in and pertains to magic: the hags and the young girl display features of magical practitioners; the hag addresses the young woman in the form of the so-called “separation” curses, whereas later on the young woman appears to apply a kind of ἀγωγή spell. I shall begin with the curse that the hag spells out to the young woman in order to show how it is linked to the “separation” curses. According to Eidinow (2007: 207) separation curses “are aimed at a ritual in a love triangle situation and, occasionally, at the object of affection, as well, in order to inhibit contact between the two”. The main purpose of such a curse is “to restrain erotic attraction and break any bond that may have already developed between the accursed and their partner”. This description is very fitting to the case of *Ecclesiazusae*. There is the love triangle situation (young woman, old woman and young man), at least before the rest of the hags appear, and there is an obvious competition between the young and the old woman over the young man, who is soon to appear: the two women exchange insults (884-7, 904-5, 918-20, 926-7, 932), shoo one another away (890, 930), advertise what they have to offer, one in contrast to the other (893-9, 900-5), and both state their superiority and their confidence that they will prevail, the one over the other (921-4, 925-6, 933-5). Before the old woman utters her curse against the young woman, the young woman notes that the hag is jealous of her (900 μὴ φθόνει ταῖς νέαισι) and goes on to give an account of what causes the hag’s

jealousy: the sexual attractiveness that a youthful, graceful body emanates (901-3 τὸ τρυφερὸν γὰρ ἐμπέφυκε/τοῖς ἀπαλοῖσι μηροῖς,/κάπὶ τοῖς μήλοις ἐπανθεῖ). Enraged by her words, the hag immediately exclaims her curse.

906-10

ἐκπέσοι σου τὸ τρῆμα
τό τ' ἐπὶ κλιντρον ἀποβάλοιο
βουλομένη σποδεῖσθαι.
κάπὶ τῆς κλίνης ὄφιν
<- υ > εὖροις καὶ προσελκύσαιο <- υ >,
βουλομένη φιλῆσαι.

The hag phrases her curse in the form of separation:¹²⁹ she uses the “wish formula” (optative)¹³⁰ to put the curse into words and attempts to prevent the girl from having sex with the young man by a) targeting a specific part of the girl’s body (τρῆμα), b) focusing on relevant objects or locations, such as the bed or part of the bed (ἐπὶ κλιντρον, κλίνης) and c) using an analogy to condemn any act of sexual nature between the two and, at the same time, control the young man’s potency (909-10). All these features are also to be found in separation curses. The curses often deploy a binding formula, which targets parts of the body and aspects of the behaviour; for example one (DT 86) is directed against an *hetaira* and binds her food, her drink, her sleep and laughter, as well as her buttock and her eyes: these last two probably evoke the sexual power of the woman, that someone was desperate to disable.¹³¹

¹²⁹ For a publication of separation curses see Faraone 1991 and the catalogue in Eidinow 2007.

¹³⁰ See Faraone 1991: 5; Eidinow 2007: 150.

¹³¹ See Eidinow 2007: 143-4; 217-8.

Side A:

παρατίθωμαι Ζο-
ίδα τήν Ἑρετρικήν
τήν Καβείρα γυναῖκα
-[τ] ἦ Γῆ καὶ τῷ Ἑρμῇ, τὰ βρώ-
ματα αὐτῆς, τὸν ποτᾶ, τὸν ὕ-
πνον αὐτῆς, τὸν γέλωτα,
τήν συνουσίην, τὸ κιθ{φε}άρισ [μα]
αὐτῆς κῆ τήν πάροδον αὐ-
[τῆς], τήν ἡδον<ήν>, τὸ πυγίον,
[τὸ] (φρό)νημα, {ν} Ὀφθα[λμοὺς]
- - ἀαπηρη(?) τῇ Γῇ.

Other curses target female genitalia (*DTA* 77 κύσθους, κύσθον, *DTA* 89 ἀκρωτήρια), which, apart from inhibiting sexual contact, may also signify the intention of causing infertility.¹³² In *Ecclesiastusae* the situation is very similar: the crude curse of the hag has obviously erotic overtones, since she targets the “hole” of the young girl, wishing that it falls out,¹³³ when she is about to perform the sexual act. Most importantly, she may also wish to bring about infertility and childlessness for the young woman. Since we have already discussed the implications of infertility and cessation of reproduction that the new sexual laws bring about to the new world, this curse makes perfect sense: at the rare instances that a young woman is able to mate with a young man, before any other old and ugly woman, the union is still not allowed to result to the production of children: the curse of the hag prevents it.

The reference to the bed is also very common in curses and binding spells. In *DT* 68 and 69 the κοίτη is mentioned as a way to imply sexual act: in *DT* 68 a woman called

¹³² See Eidinow 2007: 151.

¹³³ Probably a medical reference to ὕστερική πρόπτωσης. See Ussher 1973: 201.

Theodora is cursed in her relationship with Charias (probably that of a *hetaira* with a client):¹³⁴

Side A:

[κα] ταδῶ Θε [ο] δώρα [ν] πρὸς [τ] ἡ-
[ν] παρὰ Φε [ρρε] φαττη καὶ πρὸς
[το (ὀ) ς] ἀτελ [ἐ] σ [το (υ) ς] · ἀτελῆς [ε] ἴ [η] α [ὑτῇ
κα] ἰ ὅτι ἄμ πρὸς Καλλίαν διαλ [ἐγειν] μέλ-
[ληι καὶ πρ] ὅς Χαλλίαν ὅτι ἄν διαλ [ἐγειν] μέλληι
καὶ ἔ] ργα καὶ ἔπη καὶ ἐργασίας· α πρ
ἔπη λόγον ὃν ἄμ πο [τε] καὶ λέ [γηι · καταδῶ (?)
Θεο] δώραν πρὸς Χαρίαν ἀτελῇ αὐτῇ (ν) ε [ἰν] αι
[καὶ ἐπι] λαθέσθαι Χαρίαν Θεοδώρα [ς] καὶ το [ὕ π] α [ι-
δί] ο (υ) τοῦ Θεοδώρας ἐπιλαθέσ [θ] αι Χαρί [α] ν
[καὶ τῆς] κοίτης τῆς [π] ρὸς Θε [οδ] ῶρα [ν.]

Side B:

[ὡς] οὔτος [ἐ] ντ [α] ὕ [θ] α ἀτε [λ] ῆς κ [εἴται, οὔ -]
[τως] ἀτέλεστα εἶναι Θεοδῶρ [ας πάντα]
[κα] ἰ ἔπη καὶ ἔργα τὰ πρὸς Χαρίαν καὶ
[πρ] ὅς ἄλλος ἀνθρώπος καταδ [ὦ Θεόδω-]
[ρον π] ρὸς τὸν Ἑρμῆν τὸ<γ> χθόνιον κα [ἰ πρὸς]
τὸς ἄ] τελέστος καὶ πρὸς τὴν Τῆθυν· ἄ [τελέστ-]
[α κ] αὶ ἔργα τὰ πρὸς Χαρίαν · καὶ τὸς ἄλλος
[ἀνθ] ρῶπος καὶ [τὴν] κοίτην τὴν π [ρ] ὅς Χαρίαν
[ἐπι] λαθέσ [θ] αι Χαρίαν τῆς κ [οί] της [Χ] αρ [ίαν]
καὶ· το (ὕ) παιδί (υ) [Θ] ε [οδ] ὦ [ρας ἐπιλαθέ-
σθαι ἦσ] π [ερ] ἐρᾶ [ι] ἐκε [ἵνος]
γ ο

The person who curses the relationship asks that Charias forgets the bed (κοίτης) of Theodora and that Theodora and her deeds towards Charias (and other men) prove to be useless (καταδῶ Θεοδώρα πρὸς Χαρίαν ἀτελῇ αὐτὴν εἶναι, ἀτέλεστα καὶ ἔργα τὰ πρὸς Χαρίαν καὶ τὸς ἄλλος ἀνθρώπος). Thus, the main target appears to be the sexual power and success of Theodora, mainly with regard to Charias; the sexual contact may have already

¹³⁴ See Eidinow 2007: 218.

taken place or it could be the possibility of it that the curse is targeting. One of the possibilities for the writer of the curse is that it was a woman jealous of Theodora's trade, a *hetaira* perhaps.¹³⁵ Again, the situation is reminiscent of that in *Ecclesiazusae*. The hag wishes that the girl loses the headrest (ἐπίκλιντρον) when she lies down with her man, and we may reasonably assume that it is the sexual act that she wants to impede or prevent from taking place. On the other hand, if Sommerstein (1998: 216) is right that the ἐπίκλιντρον refers to the girl's bum, then the hag is trying to immobilize another part of her body, a particularly erogenous one. In the last part of the curse (908-10 καπὶ τῆς κλίνης ὄφιν/εὗροις καὶ προσελκύσαιο/βουλομένη φιλῆσαι) the text is corrupted and not very clear: probably the snake alludes to the phallus of the young man,¹³⁶ to which the hag addresses her curse. Since snakes are also symbolic of death,¹³⁷ it could be that the hag curses the man's phallus to be limp, so that the sexual union with the girl is unsuccessful. Again, there are some parallels in curses, where the male genitals are targeted (DTA 77 ψωλάς, ψωλήν) not always in an erotic context, but as a wish for an enemy's general ill-will (SGD 88). The writer of SGD 57 wants to separate Euboula from Aeneas, but more attention is drawn to the male half of

¹³⁵ See Dickie 2000: 516; Eidinow 2007: 218. Cf. a text from Attica (4th cent. B.C.) which seeks to bind the wife of Dion, Glykera, so that she becomes ἀτελῆς γάμου, which may be a curse to the couple's hope for children. See Kovacsovics 1990; Eidinow 2007: 350.

¹³⁶ See Ussher 1973: 201; Henderson 1991: 127. Cf. also the traditional psychoanalytic interpretation of the snake as a phallic object (Slater 1992: 80).

¹³⁷ Cf. the Erinyes which are portrayed as dragons with attendant vipers (A. Ch. 549, E. IT 286) and the snakes on Greek portrayals of royal tombs (see Slater 1992: 85).

the couple, since his body parts are mentioned, from which Euboula is cursed to stay away (cf. esp. πρωκτοῦ and, possibly, ψωλίου in line 8):¹³⁸

ἀποστρέφω Εὐβουλαν
ἀπὸ Αἰνέα, ἀπὸ τοῦ^{vv}
προσώπου, ἀπὸ τῶν ὀφ-
θαλμῶν, [ἀπό] τοῦ στόμα
τος, ἀπὸ τῶν τιθθείαν,^v
ἀπὸ τᾶς ψυχᾶς,^{vvv}
ἀπὸ τᾶς γάστρου, ἀπὸ
[τ] οὔ...., ἀπὸ τοῦ πρω
κτου, ἀφ' ὅλου τοῦ σώμα
τος. Ἀποστρέφω Εὐβου-
λαν ἀπ' Αἰνέα.

A close reading of the hag's curse shows that it has many similarities with separation curses and binding spells. It is noteworthy that the curse in *Ecclesiazusae* is addressed to the young woman in person, by contrast to the aforementioned separation curses, which were written on tablets and not pronounced in front of the person.¹³⁹ One must bear in mind, however, that the pronouncement of the curse was as important as its inscription on lead, wax or other pliable material. The cursing formula attended the gesture, as it could be recited over the tablet while it was being twisted and perforated.¹⁴⁰ It may be that the practice of writing binding curses grew out of existing oral traditions, as

¹³⁸ See Eidinow 2007: 220-1 and 418.

¹³⁹ See Eidinow 2007: 140-1.

¹⁴⁰ See Faraone 1997: 4-5. Cf. the use of both inscribed and uninscribed "voodoo dolls" in classical Greece (see Faraone 1997: 24, n.19 and n.31).

many scholars have argued.¹⁴¹ In Euripides' *Medea* plain cursing takes place in the context of erotic competition, as Medea spells out her curses to Jason and Glauke on stage (*E. Med.* 113-4, 160-5, 625-6, 803-6). This shows that cursing was essentially an oral practice, as one would have imagined; but there is also literary evidence that binding songs and magic curses were intoned in Athens at least fifty years before the date given to the first Attic tablets (5th to early 4th century BC). For instance, literary parallels of magic love curses are found in tragedy, which are spoken out spontaneously and are sometimes addressed to someone on stage: in *Eumenides* (306ff.) the Erinyes utter their own binding curse against Orestes.¹⁴² In *Agamemnon*, Clytemnestra's binding spell is sung on stage (958-74)¹⁴³ and addressed to Agamemnon in person (961 ἄναξ, 968 σοῦ μολόντος, 974 μέλοι δέ τοί σοι τῶνπερ ἄν μέλλῃς τελεῖν), in what is suggested to be a context of erotic competition, since Clytemnestra has just seen Cassandra. Moreover, according to Faraone (1999: 8-9), comic writers were also familiar with magic practices and Aristophanes, in particular, appears to parody a magical incantation that turns up repeatedly in Hellenistic and Roman-era charms for erotic purposes.¹⁴⁴ In this light, the curse in *Ecclesiazusae* is not uncommon, neither in terms of its orality nor of its appearance in a comic context.

¹⁴¹ See Wunsch 1887: ii-iii; Audollent 1904: xlii; Eidinow 2007: 140-1. Kagarow (1929: 5-6) believes that the gesture (i.e. the piercing of the tablet) was the original ritual and that the verbal aspect was a later addition that reinforced and eventually replaced the action as people began to forget its original meaning.

¹⁴² See Faraone 1985; Eidinow 2011: 141.

¹⁴³ See McClure 1996-7.

¹⁴⁴ See Faraone 1992.

I will now move on to the “love duet” (960-76).¹⁴⁵ The song, as has been argued by Headlam (1922) and Olson (1988), borrows elements from the *paraclausithyron*, the song sung by an excluded lover from the street to his beloved within. I wish to suggest that the song combines elements from both the *paraclausithyron* song and the ἀγωγή spells. ἀγωγή spells were a form of love-magic which have come down to us from a first-century BC papyrus handbook from Egypt and a second-century lead tablet from Carthage, but there is evidence that they were used in classical Greece from the time of Pindar and were indeed very popular by the late classical period.¹⁴⁶ According to Faraone (1999: 83) these spells were used by men in connection with women and sought to bind the female victim and force her to come and make love to the male practitioner. Most of the extant ἀγωγή spells aimed at torturing the victim until she would be helplessly drawn to the practitioner’s house and bed¹⁴⁷.

In *Ecclesiazusae*, both the girl’s and the young man’s linguistic choices evoke the vocabulary one encounters in the ἀγωγή spells; but theirs is a rather unorthodox spell: it is the girl who first applies it, in the presence of the young man, the intended victim, and then the young man takes it from the girl and seems to apply it himself to her. The girl uses the incantatory repetition of δεῦρο (951-3 δεῦρο δή, δεῦρο δή,/φίλον ἐμόν, δεῦρό

¹⁴⁵ As identified by Bowra 1958. His thesis has been refuted by Olson 1988, who gives a much more suitable interpretation of the scene.

¹⁴⁶ See Faraone 1999 (55-95, 133-60 and *passim*), who discusses the cases of Xenophon *Memorabilia* 3.11.16, Aristophanes *Clouds* 996-997, Lucian *Dialogues of the Courtesans* 4.1 and Theocritus’ second *Idyll*.

¹⁴⁷ See Winkler 1997: 225-6; Faraone 1999: 58.

μοι/πρόσελθε), asks that she is released from her torture, the torments of *eros* (958 μέθες, ἰκνοῦμαί σ', Ἔρωσ), and then uses the magic incantation to draw her lover to her house and bed (959-60): ποίησον τόνδ' ἐς εὐνήν/τὴν ἐμὴν ἰκέσθαι. One may compare this line to Simaetha's refrain in Theocritus second idyll, where Simaetha performs an ἀγωγή spell to drive her former boyfriend, Daphnis, away from his current lover and bring him back to her: Ἴυγξ, ἔλκε τὸ τῆνον ἐμὸν ποτὶ δῶμα τὸν ἄνδρα (17, 21, 26, 37, 41, 43, 56, 62). The formula finds also parallels in the *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, such as the inscription on PGM 7.462-6 which reads "cause her, NN, to love me" and on PGM 19b.1-3 "may he [bring] him, NN, to her, NN".¹⁴⁸

The young man, following the girls' lead, repeats the incantatory words (960 δεῦρο δὴ, δεῦρο δὴ, 966-8 μέθες, ἰκνοῦμαί σ', Ἔρωσ,/καὶ ποίησον τήνδ' ἐς εὐνήν/τὴν ἐμὴν ἰκέσθαι), but gives a fuller account of his sufferings (966 Κύπρι τί μ' ἐκμαίνεις ἐπὶ ταύτῃ; 969-70 καὶ ταῦτα μέντοι μετρίως πρὸς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάγκην/εἰρημέν' ἐστίν, 972, 975 διὰ τοι σὲ πόνους ἔχω). He also uses the form "let her come to me", and addresses the girl in person with the incantatory phrase ἄνοιξον, ἀσπάζου με/διὰ τοι σὲ πόνους ἔχω. The part where the practitioner wishes for the victim's torture is missing or is perhaps comically substituted by

¹⁴⁸ See also PGM 36.69-101 "[...] as you are in flames and on fire, so also the soul, the heart of her, NN, whom NN bore, until she comes loving me, NN, and glues her female pudenda to my male one, immediately, immediately; quickly, quickly". A similar formula is repeated in PGM 36.102-33 and 1334-60. Cf. PGM 36.187-210 "Hecate, you, Hecate, triple-formed, since every seal of every [love spell of attractions] has been completed, I adjure you by the great name of ABLANATHANA and by the power of AGRAMARI, because I adjure you, you who possess the fire, ONYR, and those in it, that she, NN, be set afire, that she come in pursuit of me, NN [...]"

the young man's promise of sexual violence (963-5 ἀλλ' ἐν τῷ σῶ/βούλομαι κόλπῳ/πληκτίζεσθαι μετὰ τῆς σῆς πυγῆς).¹⁴⁹

How may we interpret this simultaneous application of love-magic by both the girl and the young man? Just as Aristophanes plays with the conventions of the *paraclausithyron*, by confusing the sexual identities and assigning to the young man lines clearly intended for the young woman, so does he also with the ἀγωγή spells, with the intention of offering an elaborate commentary on Praxagora's new world. The girl initiates a magic process, which was most commonly applied by young, unmarried males.¹⁵⁰ Any women who had recourse to it were either prostitutes or bored married women or perhaps widows, but respectable unmarried girls were hardly credited with practising magic.¹⁵¹ As Faraone has shown:

“Literary evidence beginning in the classical period suggests that one special group of women regularly co-opted these traditionally male forms of magic: courtesans and prostitutes [...] Indeed I would stress the importance of the aggressive stance of the whore, who by using a traditionally male form of erotic magic clearly signals her intent to be the seducer herself. In fact courtesans and prostitutes appear regularly in later literary evidence as users of ἀγωγή spells”.¹⁵²

Faraone discusses the cases of Xenophon *Memorabilia* 3.11.16, Aristophanes *Clouds* 996–997, Lucian *Dialogues of the Courtesans* 4.1 and Theocritus' second *Idyll* in order to show that the courtesan who was often forthright in her pursuit of men through various magical

¹⁴⁹ See Henderson 1974.

¹⁵⁰ See Dickie 2000: 580.

¹⁵¹ See Faraone 1999: 150–4; Dickie 2000: 580–1.

¹⁵² Faraone 1999: 149–50.

practices was a traditional literary stereotype.¹⁵³ Thus, Aristophanes may present the four women in a situation that would have been instantly recognizable to his ancient audience as typical of courtesans who try to get a lover by performing the sort of aggressive erotic magic that was otherwise typical of men.¹⁵⁴ Indeed, the young girl who advertises, by singing in public, her attractiveness and availability, who declares openly how she waits and longs for her boyfriend (912) and advises her rival to order a dildo (915–17), adopts the way of prostitutes.¹⁵⁵ Thus, by presenting the girl as applying a magic ritual which was most common for men, Aristophanes emphasizes her status as a prostitute. Moreover, the young man appears to repeat the spell after the young woman, and phrases which are not even appropriate for his situation: the magic refrain (ποίησον (τόνδ')τήνδ' ἐς εὐνήν/τὴν ἐμήν ἱκέσθαι) makes sense for the woman who is within her house, but not for the man who is on the street. This desperate attempt of the young man to gain control through magic practices over the young woman is comic and vain, something which is further confirmed later on by his submissiveness to the hags' will. One could imagine that the young man's spell, instead of attracting the young girl, worked on the hag, who indeed appears in front of him, but wants to drag *him* into her house. Moreover, if Faraone (1999: 83) is right in arguing that the majority of attractions spells were based on the model of bridal theft, that is, using violent means to extract a woman from her existing family or relationship and

¹⁵³ See Faraone 1999: 1–2, 149–54.

¹⁵⁴ For the social construction of gender in magic see Faraone 1999: 146–60.

¹⁵⁵ The same goes for the three old women who wear heavy make-up (887–9, 929, 1072) and are all dressed up (879 κροκωτὸν) like the old *hetaira* in *Wealth* 959ff. See Halliwell 2002; Sommerstein 2009b: 248–50.

forge a new one,¹⁵⁶ the young man's attempt becomes even more inappropriate: the institution of marriage has been abolished and he is no more in a position to choose the woman he will have sex with; old and ugly women have the right to choose *him* instead. This is painfully obvious in the scene with the hags: as each one of them attempts to snatch him, the magic vocabulary persists. The rivals use various forms of the verbs ἄγω and ἔλκω (1001 ἐγὼ δ' ἄξω σ' ἐπὶ τὰμὰ στρώματα, 1036-7 ποῖ τοῦτον ἔλκεις;/εἰς ἐμαυτῆς εἰσάγω, 1050 ἔλκεις, cf. 886 προσάξεσθαι), which are most common in the ἀγωγή spells,¹⁵⁷ while the man exclaims in fear and disgust that he is being “dragged” (1055 ἐλκόμενον, 1066 οὐκ ἔγωγ', ἀλλ' ἔλκομαι, 1093-4 ἐγγὺς ἤδη τῆς θύρας/ἐλκόμενός εἰμ'). Thus, the violent dragging around of the young man by the sexually aroused women is assimilated to the effect that an ἀγωγή spell would have, if the women cast it on the man. The use of the magic vocabulary in this case offers an ironic comment to the situation of the young man, who has turned from an aspiring magic practitioner and most ardent lover to a sexual victim and most unwilling partner in the hands of the old women, who have to suggest the use of aphrodisiacs (1091-2 {Ἐπ.} πῶς οὖν δικωπεῖν ἀμφοτέρως δυνήσομαι;/{Γρ. Β.} καλῶς, ἐπειδὴν καταφάγῃς βολβῶν χύτραν) in order to make some use of him.¹⁵⁸ The young man

¹⁵⁶ By contrast, Dickie (2000) argues that it is not clear that the spells were written with the intention of achieving marriage, since most of them are directed not at untameable young women, but at women experienced in sex and who sometimes are involved in marriages with someone else. In this case, the man's attempted magic practices would be more appropriate, since his target is not a young virgin secluded in the house and guarded by her relatives.

¹⁵⁷ Faraone 1999: 151 notes the use of the verb ἄγω to describe the effect of the spell.

¹⁵⁸ See Winkler 1997: 221; Faraone 1999: 19-20.

experiences the agonies which the target of the ἀγωγή must feel and be pained with¹⁵⁹ and is, finally, dragged, against his will, to the house and bed of the third old woman.

Thus, the magic practices in *Ecclesiazusae* serve to emphasize the sexual and social confusion in the new world of Praxagora. On the one hand, the men of Athens are weak, effeminized and let themselves be led by their women; on the other hand, the women assume male roles and are transformed into prostitutes and sexual predators. The (mis)application of love-magic perfectly illustrates these changes and the confusion and inversion of the men's and women's sexual and social roles. The association of the practice of magic by women with a dangerous gender inversion, as well as the subversive nature of magic in the new world is in accordance with the position it holds in general in the literary tradition. In tragedy, for instance, women engage with magic in circumstances where their sexual conduct could threaten men's honour and civic identity.¹⁶⁰ Moreover, most of the magic practices invoked chthonic deities like Hecate, just as the third hag does, who swears by Hecate (1097). Since deities like Hecate were considered to be powerful and potentially dangerous forces which normally one was expected to avert, practitioners of these rituals were seen as adopting a deliberately anti-social and subversive stance.¹⁶¹ Indeed, respectable citizen women in fifth-century Athens were extremely unwilling to engage in

¹⁵⁹ See Winkler 1997: 225-6 for the process of denial through which the practitioner transfers his sexual frustration to the victim.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. Sophocles' *Trachiniae* and Euripides' *Hippolytus* and *Medea*. See also Segal 2002 for magic as a threat to masculine identity and sexual dominance in Homer and Ovid.

¹⁶¹ See Stratton 2007: 41-2.

magic practices.¹⁶² Although explicit condemnation, such as legal charges, were not expressed, unless there was harm done,¹⁶³ such practices were looked upon with suspicion and dread.¹⁶⁴ The legal cases that have come down to us concerned women of low social status, such as prostitutes, which were probably seen as interfering with the established traditional religious practices. Moreover, professional μάγοι, although very popular, were often seen with distrust since they were suspected of abusing their privileged relationship with divinity for private rather than public gain.¹⁶⁵ In this light, magic discourse functioned as a foil for the formulation of civic identity.¹⁶⁶ As such, it finds a most appropriate place in the new world of Praxagora.

¹⁶² As shown by the distaste of Deianeira and Phaedra for the magic practices they are advised or forced to follow. See Dickie 2000: 581.

¹⁶³ Fifth and fourth century legal actions that involved charges of using *pharmaka* preserve a distinction between means and intent. For the criminalization of magic in fourth-century Athens see Collins 2001; Eidinow 2007: 29 and nn. 23 and 24.

¹⁶⁴ See Pl. *Leg.* 933b1-4, who shows distrust against the practices of μάγοι and ἀγύρται and believes that they create social tension and do not serve the public interest; [Hipp.] *De morbo sacro* 1.22-46 who condemns the practices of magicians who tried to cure epilepsy through variegated interactions with divinity (ἐπασιδᾶς). See Eidinow 2007: 152; Collins 2008: 33-63.

¹⁶⁵ See Ar. *Nu.* 749-55 where practices like drawing down the moon and creating an eclipse are regarded as an opportunity for the unscrupulous to avoid paying their burdensome debts; S. *OT* 387-9 where Oedipus denounces Teiresias as a μάγος and an ἀγύρτης who only has sight when it comes to profit. See Collins 2008: 49-63.

¹⁶⁶ See Stratton 2007: 39-47, 62-4 who sees the emergence of magic in 5th century Athens as a discourse of alterity and claims that magic in tragedy is associated with feminine subversion of male decisions and sexual freedom.

5. Conclusions

After a close examination, on the one hand, of the ways through which women manage to ascend to power and, on the other hand, of the outcome of their leadership and the circumstances in the new world, one may conclude that the new regime symbolizes a return to a primitive state, where chaos and natural instincts prevail over laws and institutions. Men, on their part, are reduced to a state of weakness, inertia and feminisation, leaving all responsibilities to women and waiting to be fed by them and be chosen as sexual partners: even Blepyros, who at the end of the play is allowed to sleep with a bunch of beautiful young women, seems to rejoice more in the prospect of free food rather than of good sex.¹⁶⁷ As for women, although they temporarily acquire masculine features, they prove to be hyper-feminine and, in the end, they revert to the stereotypical portrayal of women in cultural imaginary: they are perceived as being too close to nature and as submitting to the imperious demands of their bodies for sex. They finally are revealed as a combination of most terrible nurturing mothers and dangerous sexual predators.¹⁶⁸ From the beginning and during the course of the play the practices of cross-dressing and love-magic reveal a gender inversion, which carries implications of death, infertility and savageness, all reinstated at the end of the play. The new world, as it emerges through the

¹⁶⁷ Thus, I do not agree with Leitaio 2012: 162, 181 that Blepyros is comparable to Demos in *Knights*: they are essentially different.

¹⁶⁸ See Reckford 1987: 352 “The nurturing mother image [is] transformed here into the *mère terrible* confronting her son in an Oedipal nightmare. [...] We end with something approaching necrophilia”; Auger 1997: 395; Zeitlin 1999: 190.

abolition of marriage, manifests itself as a savage place, where physical violence replaces the desired image of civic solidarity: women fight men, old women fight young women and men fight other men. The most important festival of the city, the Panathenaia, is ridiculed and abandoned through Chremes' Panathenaic procession of pots (730-45). The end of the play, which is marked by a forced, sterile union between a young man and an old woman, and the consumption of everything by everybody, reveals a dark side of Praxagora's new world. The final scene of the feast hardly creates any festive mood, as it is tainted by the horrendous scene before. Turning the *polis* into an *oikos* may be great fun for the old and the ugly, but, it would seem, just for them.

This reading places much emphasis on the dark aspects of the play;¹⁶⁹ other scholars have treated it as the “most glorious expression, the randy, boisterous, grotesque triumph of comic energy”,¹⁷⁰ while Bowie (1993: 266) notes that “one should probably not choose either pole here”. I would argue, however, that much of the power of the play comes precisely from its combination of horrific and comic elements: one must not play down or disregard the dark aspects of the play simply on the basis that we are dealing with comedy. The scene with the hags gains in comic energy because it *is* horrendous. People would not walk away from the theatre feeling horrified and dismayed, but they would probably be able to absorb the critique of the new world while still enjoying its horrific elements.

¹⁶⁹ For a pessimistic reading of the play see Auger 1979; Saïd 1979; Zeitlin 1999.

¹⁷⁰ Konstan and Dillon 1981: 382.

CONCLUSIONS

In the course of this thesis I have tried to show the importance of approaching Aristophanic leadership through a literary and not a historical aspect. I hope that I have demonstrated that much can be gained by moving away from questions like “how comic leadership reflects contemporary political debates”, “in what ways the comic figures function as contemporary political personas” or “what were Aristophanes’ political views” to an investigation of how the acquisition and manifestation of power is debated by the comic heroes in the context of the plays. In order to examine the manifestations and change of power in Aristophanes, I have focused on four plays which feature the ascent of male and female comic heroes to power and end with either the restoration of the old political order or the construction of a new world. I have argued that the debate about power is intrinsically connected with important elements of the socio-political order of contemporary Greek society, such as ritual practices (female rituals, sacrificial rituals, hospitality rituals, magic rituals), sexuality, medical and rhetorical theories. These specific elements stand for general codes of civilization, such as the ritual, dietary, familial, sexual and linguistic codes, each one of which expresses various versions of the social order. Insofar as leadership operates within these cultural codes, I have suggested that it is not a one-dimensional social category, it is not merely political: it is a culturally encoded process, which evokes various elements of the socio-political structure and shows, in effect, that

power cannot be acquired outside wider institutional contexts within which society operates. This approach of leadership in Aristophanes, I venture to hope, has also shed light on the various cultural constructs with which comic leadership is associated.

The order of the plays has been arranged according to the political changes brought about at the end of them: I have started with the plays in which power is restored to its previous or its lawful owner and moved on to the plays which are marked by the overthrow of the prior leaders and authorities. In *Lysistrata* the female leadership is temporary and in the end gives way to the former male political order. In *Knights* Agorakritos replaces Paphlagon as the political advisor of Demos, but the power is handed back to the lawful master of the city, Demos. In *Birds* Peisetairos outpowers the former leader of the Birds, Tereus, and becomes a new leader and a tyrant reigning not just over birds, but also over people and gods. Lastly, in *Ecclesiazusae* the women seize power for good and radically change the socio-political order in the city.

A number of points may be briefly highlighted: the preoccupation with female sexual desire and the institution of marriage is common in both of the female plays, but these themes are treated in very different ways. The two plays are in some ways mirror images of one another: in *Lysistrata* I have tried to show how female leadership is inextricably linked to the institution of marriage and issues of (female) fertility and reproduction. In doing so, I focused on the ritualistic practices used more or less explicitly by the old women, as well as the indications of female pathology due to the young women's

sex strike. Both courses of investigation showed that women claimed the power in the city by emphasizing the importance of their contribution to civic welfare in the reproduction and provision of children, and by threatening men with its disruption. The end of the play brings about the restoration of marriage and of the former (male) political order.

On the other hand, in *Ecclesiazusae* I have argued that the women disrupt the social order by seizing power permanently and abolishing the institution of marriage. In order to rise to power they dress as men and force the men to wear female clothes. This mutual cross-dressing, as I have shown, serves to emphasize the men's weakness, impotence and sterility. The inversion of the social order is more evident towards the end of the play, where the women actively employ love-magic practices which were typical of men. As I have argued, the control of magic practices by the women over men in *Ecclesiazusae* and the subsequent inversion of their sexual roles illustrate the women's subversive activities and the overturn of the normal social order. In stark contrast with *Lysistrata*, which marks a return to the civilized order, Praxagora's leadership presents and upholds a feminine nature which is entirely opposite to the traditional role of women: it is untamed and shows an affinity with a wild state, where βία seems to prevail over νόμος.

The same opposition between civilized and uncivilized order is also present in the male plays. The beginning of *Knights* marks the dissolution of the dietary and sacrificial code, which is paralleled by the perversion of verbal communication and debased sexual activity: Paphlagon features as a bestial figure, an incessant consumer of all kinds of (non-

sacrificial) food, who is unable to articulate a human-like speech and possesses traits of effeminacy and passivity. As I have argued, the restoration of the civilized order is effected through the emergence of the sacrificer Agorakritos who boils Demos in a sacrificial ritual. The restoration of the sacrificial ritual marks the return to a civilized political order and the reestablishment of Demos as the lawful master of the house and the city.

By contrast, in *Birds* the violation of the civilized order facilitates the ascent of Peisetairos to power. As I have shown, Peisetairos manages to overcome his rival through the abuse of rhetoric and his violation of the ritual, sexual and dietary codes: throughout the political competition Peisetairos violates the rights of hospitality, displays an aggressive sexual appetite and, finally, becomes a cannibal. In doing so, he follows the opposite course of the tragic Tereus and, despite the violations of the civilized order, he is successful: he becomes a king not only over the Birds, but also over humans and gods.

I have suggested a number of ways in which the original audience of Aristophanes, depending on their intellectual background, may have perceived the attempts of male and female comic heroes to seize power. This process of ascending to power presupposes the comic leaders' complex interaction with broad civic structures which underlie the order of the πόλις. At the same time, the way these structures are (mis)treated by the comic leaders reveals comedy's profound tendency to interfere with and poke fun at those aspects of the city which appear to be most stable and authoritative.

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