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EURIPIDES' MOTHER: VEGETABLES AND THE PHALLOS IN ARISTOPHANES

Carl Ruck

OBSCENITY WAS CENTRAL TO THE ancient comic celebrations. The phallic gestures enacted in the theater were the badge of defiance which the trickster figure traditionally has used to protect himself at times of carnival.[1] Greek comedy dared to show the finger to madness; in the name of the phallos the celebrants challenged with ritual immunity the world of ordinary reality, and cavorted safely in the restructured universe of their intoxicated god. The potential terrors of madness were kept at bay and lifted to the positive level of ecstasy.

Actors and dancers wore the phallos, and it would be too much to expect them to make no reference to it in their stage routines. The language of Old Comedy is therefore difficult to interpret, since in such circumstances any appropriate demonstrative is likely to free even the most improbable concepts into metaphoric flight toward the obscene. Comic idiom cannot be understood without some attempt to visualize the activity on stage. Words function in their contexts and should not be confined to their simple lexical equivalents. This is especially true for a literature which is so dependent upon presentation for its meaning, although the tradition of its scholarship, which accumulates eventually in the lexica, has been one of readers, often with some vestigial prejudice against eroticism and obscenity. When the texts have not been actually expurgated, the scenes in which the undeniably indecent words may occur are still explained away in terms of whatever insipid activity could by some stretch of the imagination anchor the language in literal meaning. Political invective, furthermore, instead of being merely a technique of defiance, becomes elevated to the poet's purpose, since the critic thus can salve his offended sensibilities with a morally redeeming quality. Instead of being the trickster's heroic venture, comedy, we are told, is didactic and can be excused.

Two examples, among many possible ones, will illustrate what Aristophanes has been kept from expressing by his critics. The two are united by their common concern for vegetables.

EURIPIDES' MOTHER: ACHARNIANS 478.

In a famous scene in the *Acharnians,* Dikaiopolis, who has just concluded a private peace with the Spartans, and thereby incurred the wrath of the charcoal-makers of Acharnia, goes to Euripides' house in order to beg some used rags from former tragedies, so that he will be suitably attired in a pitiful costume when he explains his actions to his Acharnian pursuers. The comic routine with Euripides culminates when Dikaiopolis asks for some *skandix,* which the tragedian would have got from his mother (*Acharn.* 478). The *skandix* is commonly assumed to be the plant "wild chervil" *(Scandix pecten-veneris)* and the point of the joke is supposed to be some jibe at Euripides' lower class origin: his mother sells vegetables.[2] The joke was apparently repeated often in the comedies,[3] but the point seems to have been misunderstood.

The fourth century historian Philochoros expressly states that Euripides' family was not lower class; it was one of "extraordinary nobility."[4] The same was the opinion of Theophrastos,[5] who recorded in his treatise on intoxication that Euripides as a boy served as wine-pourer at Athens for the "Dancers," a group, perhaps, of satyric[6] dancers, who performed at Delos around Apollo's temple; the dancers and their wine-pourer belonged to the first families of Athens. An ancient biography, perhaps using material derived from the fourth century "life" composed by Satyros, further claims that Euripides was trained as a pancratist and a boxer, and that he competed and won in games at Athens;[7] such athletic activity would again indicate noble background. Euripides also served as "torch-bearer" for the Zosterian Apollo.[8] The family may have been in exile for a while in Boeotia,[9] but even exile implies a family of a certain importance. Whatever reality lies behind the *skandix* joke, it is unlikely that any contemporary of Euripides could have mistaken him for lower class. We might also wonder why the audience, which presumably would have been predominantly lower class, would have been amused by the repeated attacks upon Euripides' supposedly similar background. Fifth century Athens, moreover, was an egalitarian society and was not polarized, at least not openly, between noble and commoner; nobility, in fact, would have tended to connote anti-democratic and pro-alien sentiments during the period of the Peloponnesian War. A person was more likely to have been satirized for noble connections as was the case with Sokrates, whose mother actually was a midwife, and whose father was a stone-cutter.

The noble-commoner polarization was, of course, appropriate to the Hellenistic period, when the scholiast tradition which determined the subsequent interpretation of Aristophanes originated. We can see scholiast prejudice at work in the explanation of the passage in the *Frogs* where Euripides, criticizing the wordiness and misdirection of Aischylean prologues, claims that his own prologue-speaker immediately sets you straight about the subject of the drama. The speaker tells you right away the *genos* of the drama ("genealogy"? or perhaps simply "type" of drama [*Frogs* 945-47]). Dionysos comments: "That's better, you know, than yours" (*Frogs* 947). It has been assumed that he addresses the remark to Euripides, and means that the families in mythology are more noble than the poet's.[10] Throughout this section, however, Dionysos has been siding with Euripides, and he has expressly stated that he cannot understand what Aischylean language means.[11] His comment is surely addressed not to Euripides, but to Aischylos, and simply means that he approves of such straightforward clarity.[12]

The identification of the *skandix* with "wild chervil" can hardly be considered certain. The fourth century authority on plants, Theophrastos, claimed that many plants with curly or chicory-like leaves were classified together and confused with each other; this group included *skandix* and many plants like *skandix* such as *kaukalis,* sweet *enthruskon,* and "goat's beard" *(tragopogon).*[13] *Skandix,* moreover, is classed as an uncultivated herb, and if we are to imagine Euripides' mother as having sold it, we are nevertheless not to imagine her as having grown it. She would, apparently, have gathered it.

Although we cannot identify the *skandix* with certainty, we do have some interesting information about its effect. Pliny records that this plant, which figured in the Aristophanic joke about Euripides' mother, had the ability to give strength to persons exhausted from sexual indulgence and to revive sexual virility in old men.[14] Such seems to have been its effect also in the fifth century. A fragment of the comic poet Telekleides preserves the words of a woman who has apparently been seduced: "He wanted to sleep with me; he importuned me with voluptuous cakes and he gave me a dose of *skandix.*"[15] Some plant of this group was called *paideros,*[16] a name that combines the roots for "boy" and "love." Telekleides apparently used the word as an epithet of Zeus, punning on the oak tree, which was traditionally associated with that god and which was also called *paideros,*[17] and Zeus's notorious pederastic escapades.[18] Another plant called *skandix* in the fifth century was apparently more edible than the *skandix* herb, although not at all a desirable food. Andokides prays that the conditions which existed during the war will never be repeated; he hopes never again to see the country people coming to the city and everybody in arms, and never again to have to eat wild vegetables and *skandix.*[19] Pliny, however, was apparently correct in identifying the *skandix* of the old comedians as an aphrodisiac, and if Euripides' mother did indeed gather and peddle it, she would seem to have been more like an herbalist than a vegetable seller.

It is perhaps the psychotropic effect of the *skandix* which explains the mention of Euripides' mother in the *Thesmophoriazousai,* where a woman is justifying herself against the Euripidean prejudice that all females are lascivious (*Thesm.* 387 sq.). Note also that the second accusatory speech, that of the "Wreath-Seller," again mentions the herbal joke: "He's rough on us, ladies, but what could you expect from someone who was raised on rough vegetables" (*Thesm.* 455-56). A "wreath-seller" is apparently a prostitute; we learn that her husband died in Cyprus, Aphrodite's island, and she was left with five children whom she struggles to feed by "weaving wreaths in the myrtle market" (*Thesm.* 448). Any circular muscle of the body, such as the *sphincter ani,* could be called a "wreath,"[20] and the "myrtle" was slang for penis.[21] Wreath-sellers, moreover, may have been stock figures of comedy.[22] Euripides' remarks about the gods in his tragedies have cut her business in half, but we notice that when she leaves for the market to continue her hard life, she explains that she must go since she has already contracted to weave wreaths for twenty men (*Thesm.* 457-58). Certainly business doesn't seem that bad!

The *skandix* routine no doubt determined why Euripides was chosen for parody in the *Thesmophoriazousai.* As the arch-sexualist, he would quite appropriately be the enemy at the Thesmophoria: the chaste nature of this festival was symbolized by a rite in which the women strewed their beds with "holy mint" *(hagnos kalaminthe)* which was apparently an anaphrodisiac.[23] As such, it is of course the antithesis to that other mint, the aphrodisiac *blechon,*[24] which figured in other aspects of the Demeter-Kore complex.

Very few substances can actually stimulate sexual desire biochemically by a direct physiological reaction on the genito-urinary tract;[25] such a substance, for example, is the blistering compound cantharidine, which is extracted from the integument of beetles of the family *Meloidae,* the most notorious representative being the Spanish fly, *Lytta vesicatoria.*[26] Even the Spanish fly, however, does not so much stimulate or intensify sexuality as irritate the genitalia and, in the male, induce an erection. The term aphrodisiac can also be employed more loosely to designate simply a psychotropic preparation which may induce mild hallucinations and mental ease: alcohol and hashish are now sometimes still classed as aphrodisiacs.[27] It seems probable that Euripides' *skandix* was an aphrodisiac of this second type. We might recall in this context the tradition that Lucretius, despite his Epicurean philosophy and its aversion to passionate sexuality, suffered from recurrent fits of madness caused by a love potion, and which eventually led to his suicide[28]; the association of Lucretius with drugs is an instance of the rumours of psychotropism which have adhered to the Democritean, or pseudo-Democritean corpus.[29]

In the *Frogs* Aischylos calls Euripides the "son of a rustic goddess" (*Frogs* 840); the context for that remark indicates again that the point is not Euripides' lower class origin. Euripides has just strung together a list of pejorative adjectives illustrative of Aischylos' wild and uncontrolled use of language; Aischylos now retaliates with a few more bombastic compounds directed at Euripides and *his* poetic style. The point is clearly that Euripides' language is as wild as that of Aischylos, and that with such a mother, how could it be otherwise? The mother is a rustic goddess since her herb puts her in contact with divinity, and the son's poetic wordiness is derived from that same source.

Euripides, himself, was said to have peddled *skandix;*[30] and the comic routine which opens the *Knights* coins an adverb, "nice-and-Euripidousy" *(kompseuripikos, Knights* 17)[31] to indicate a paraphrastic mode of poetic expression which will clothe in pretty language what one of the characters wishes to say. The other character replies, "No, no, no! Don't give me a dose of *skandix!*" The aphrodisiac meaning is no doubt also implied since the context is definitely sexual: the two servants are attempting to escape from their troubles with their Paphlagonian master; they first try *fellatio,* which they call a flute lament; and then, after a certain reluctance to name openly the second expedient, they try mutual masturbation, punning on a verb which means, "to come by oneself" ("to desert" and apparently "to ejaculate," *Knights* 20 sq.). A fragment of an anonymous comic poet again connects the *skandix*-seller with his para-tragic bombast: "None of that highfalutin talk, the kind of stuff you get from the *skandix*-seller who calls water the sacred effluvium of Pirene."[32] It was apparently the *skandix* that gave Euripides the ability to call things by their equivalents in tragic diction, and for that reason Dikaiopolis needs it to complete his tragic costume in the *Acharnians* (473-74). Perhaps the fact that Euripides refuses to give him the *skandix* is the reason that Dikaiopolis, although suitably attired as a tragic beggar, cannot compose a tragic speech of justification, but merely "trugedy" or *trugoidia,* the comic version of tragedy (*Acharn.* 496 sq.).

We should remember that in this scene Euripides is introduced by his servant Kephisophon as "at home but not at home" (*Acharn.* 396), a paradox which is explained as meaning that his mind is out collecting verses and is therefore not at home while Euripides himself is inside the house, "up" and writing a tragedy (*Acharn.* 397 sq.). Poetic inspiration is similarly parodied in the *Peace,* where Trygaios on his way back from heaven passes the souls of a few dithyrambists who are out fluttering around, collecting their poems (*Peace* 828-31). In the *Birds,* the dithyrambist Kinesias similarly arrives at the bird city in quest of wings so that he will be able to fly up to the clouds for new inspiration (*Birds* 1382 sq.). It is interesting that the poet has a lame manner of walking: he is "circularly circling upwards his club foot"[33] (*Birds* 1379). That such "flight" is sexual is clear from the *Frogs,* where Kinesias becomes Kleokritos' wings and the two of them thus become a boat for "naval battle"[34] (*Frogs* 1437 sq.). Kinesias is Myrrine's ("Myrtle's") frustrated husband in the *Lysistrata;* he enters again with an erection and it is suggested that some plant of Demeter's had something to do with his strange condition (*Lys.* 829 sq.). Kinesias, of course, lent himself to such satirical treatment since his name suggests a pun upon one of the Greek verbs for copulation.[35]

In this episode of the *Acharnians,* Euripides claims he is too busy "to come down," but he consents to roll out on the *enkyklema.* We might compare the similar entrance of the poet Agathon on the *enkyklema* in the *Thesmophoriazousai* (93-208). There we learn from a servant that Agathon is inside writing songs with a *thiasos* of Muses (*Thesm.* 40-2). The *thiasos* is a band of revellers and it is clear that they are sexually cavorting within the house. The servant describes the composing of the poem by the metaphor of building a ship, but the catalogue of activities connotes sexual experience (*Thesm.* 52 sq.).[36] Mnesilochos suspects that it is all just plain fornication, and after he hears about "ship-building" he concludes that it is indeed nothing but "wenching," and offers "to funnel his penis into and to turn and grind it around in the poet's rump!" When the *enkyklema* finally brings out Agathon with his *thiasos,* the comic routine devolves into a fantastic parody of the poet as the hermaphroditic Dionysos. The literary basis for the parody is named as Aischylos' *Lykourgos* trilogy (*Thesm.* 134-35). The transvestism is explained as necessary mimesis for composing female roles, and is in the manner of Euripides as well as of Agathon (*Thesm.* 93). Poets, of course, were also actors and all female roles, with the exception perhaps of hetairas in comedy, were played by male actors; it would be inevitable that transvestism amongst the company of actors should become a subject for comic laughter. Our interest for the moment, however, in the Agathon routine is simply to document the sexual revel as a metaphor for the poet's activity.[37]

Thus in the *Acharnians* we can perhaps understand better the manner of Euripides' entrance. He is *anabaden* (*Acharn.* 399, 410) a word which means "up" in some way, but the precise mode of "up" is not clear. The scholiasts suggested that Euripides had his feet up, or that he was lying on something high, or that he was flying.[38] The last suggestion is most attractive, but it would imply an entrance by the machine rather than by the "roll-out." How does Euripides enter?

The word occurs in one other passage, in Aristophanes'

Ploutos (1123). There the god Hermes is complaining that he no longer gets anything to eat; he goes to bed now hungry and *anabaden.* The foods for which he hungers, however, are again the metaphor of sex as eating: he used to eat intoxicating cakes, figs, and that fleshed limb bone which is the membrum virile;[39] the other foods which he mentions (warm entrails, honey, etc.) no doubt also connoted sexual experience. Hunger for such experience, moreover, tends to induce an erection, a condition which, by an understandable cliché, affects one's ability to walk.[40] Thus the Megarians, "blistered and swollen with pain" for the loss of their prostitutes, hunger *baden* ("walk-wise," cf. *ana-baden*), in Dikaiopolis' fantastic description in the *Acharnians* of the cause for the Peloponnesian War (*Acharn.* 535).

If there is still some doubt about the manner of Euripides' entrance in the scene in the *Acharnians,* we may cite the description which is extant in three authors, all of whom apparently are quoting from Ktesias, the fifth-to-fourth century historian. Sardanapalus (= Ashurbanipal, 668-626 B.C.), the luxurious Assyrian ruler who was given to strange pleasures, was seen by one of his generals sitting with his face painted with white lead, and bejewelled like a woman, combing purple wool in the company of his concubines.[41] He was sitting there *anabaden,* with blackened eyebrows, wearing a woman's dress and having his beard shaved close and his face rubbed smooth with pumice; when he saw the general, he rolled his eyes seductively at him. Surely it would not be overly rash to conclude that *anabaden* means "with an erection" or at least in some sexual position; we might compare the related verb *anabaino,* which designates the act by which the male rises to mount or cover for copulation.[42] "Eat, drink, make love; for nothing else matters."[43] Such was the epitaph for Sardanapalus.

It is interesting also to note that stories circulated in antiquity about Kephisophon, the servant who introduces Euripides in the *Acharnians.* Euripides caught him in adultery with his wife, and when the servant refused to discontinue the affair, Euripides relinquished his wife to him. The anecdote which is extant in the *Life of Euripides*[44] apparently is a paraphrase, and perhaps a misunderstanding, of some comic passage; for the author goes on to quote a few lines of Aristophanes which indicate Euripides' supposed admiration for Kephisophon's swarthy buttocks: the servant used to make music with his master, no doubt on Euripides' phallos.[45]

The sexual nature of the collaboration is clear in the *Frogs,* where Euripides describes his dietary regime for tragedy: he feeds his art only word juice which he filters out of books, and monodies which he gets from "copulation" with Kephisophon. The joke involves a pun on a verb which, in addition to its sexual meaning, can indicate the "mixing" of another item into the diet potion (*Frogs* 944).[46] Later in the play, the collaboration is again mentioned when Euripides offers his gimmick for saving the city: Kleokritos should take wing with Kinesias; the two of them thus will be a boat and when they do naval battle, they can sprinkle vinegar on the enemy. The vinegar was Kephisophon's idea (*Frogs* 1436-53);[47] although the stratagem remains obscure, it is no doubt another version of the action described earlier in the play, when Dionysos claimed that he took ship on Kleisthenes and that together they sank twelve or thirteen ships.[48] Rumours about Euripides' supposed artistic collaborations seem often in fact to contain some sexual innuendo. In a comedy of Kallias, Euripides appeared dressed as a woman and spoke of what he had learned from Sokrates;[49] and a play of Telekleides apparently described Euripides and Sokrates "bolted" together like so many ship planks.[50]

When Euripides is first seen by Dikaiopolis in the *Acharnians,* Dikaiopolis comments: "So you do it 'up' rather than 'down.' No wonder you make your characters lame!" (*Acharn.* 410-11). A correct understanding of this scene is very important, since it gives us the original point of the supposed criticism of Euripidean beggars on the tragic stage. How does Euripides make his characters lame? In the *Thesmophoriazousai* Mnesilochos complains that Euripides is laming him in *both* his legs; what has preceded has apparently been sufficient to produce an ordinary lameness. Euripides and Mnesilochos had been introduced at the beginning of the play in some version of the "leading-on" comic routine:[51] Mnesilochos complains that he is being "threshed" and is about to "ejaculate all his milt" (*Thesm.* 2-3).[52] The conversation devolves into a pseudo-philosophic disquisition on the difference between the organs of seeing and hearing: the ear is a funnel drilled into the body for hearing; Mnesilochos objects that his "funnel" neither hears nor sees (*Thesm.* 18-19). The sexual meaning is made explicit shortly later, when Mnesilochos threatens "to funnel his penis into Agathon's rump" (*Thesm.* 59-62). The threat indicates that Mnesilochos has profited from his "consorting with philosophers" (*Thesm.* 21). His stupidity had just been demonstrated to him, for he had thought that Agathon was "bearded" (*Thesm.* 33),[53] a surprising error in view of the fact that he has buggered Agathon but apparently has never "seen" him (*Thesm.* 30 sq.). The sexuality of Euripides returns as a theme later in the play: Euripides and Mnesilochos, for the first rescue routine, greet each other like long separated lovers. Mnesilochos, as Helen in Egypt, is ashamed to look at her husband in her present depilated condition (*Thesm.* 903); she recognizes that Euripides is Menelaos because of the *iphyon* (*Thesm.* 910). The *iphyon* is apparently another herb associated with the *skandix*-seller; it seems to account for the erection which characterizes the husband who has been so long away from his wife. The plant is supposed to be *Lavendula spica,*[54] but the evidence is hardly conclusive.

In the rescue routine which finally succeeds, Euripides is again an arch-sexualist: with a troupe of dancers and musicians he orchestrates a fantastic scene of seduction[55] and the Scythian archer runs off stage pursuing his hetaira. In this role, Euripides assumes the name of Artemisia, the plant "wormwood" which was perhaps also called *ambrosia* and *botrys,* the "clustered grape" (*Thesm.* 1200).[56] The scene is similar to the passage in the *Frogs* where Euripides' Muse is introduced on stage to dance the parody of his lyrics (*Frogs* 1306 sq.). Dionysos pretends to be shocked by her lascivious actions, because Euripides' music has as much variety as the twelve sexual positions of the notorious Kyrene. Earlier in the play Euripides had been satirized for his prostitute characters, his Phaidras and his Sthenoboias.

It is no doubt a sexualist's role that Aristophanes has accorded Euripides in the *enkyklema* scene for the *Acharnians.* Like Agathon, he is shown with his actors (*Acharn.* 418)[57] in the act of composing. The violence of his inspiration reduces his characters to lameness, a difficulty in walking which is occasioned either by the tension of an erect phallos or by the experience of anal copulation.[58] It is no wonder, as Dikaiopolis says, that his characters are all in rags (*Acharn.* 413)!

The point of the joke remains elusive, but in view of the fact that beggarly costumes on the tragic stage were not uncommon[59] and, in a pre-Aristotelian time, may not have elicited general condemnation, we should perhaps recall a few parallels. In the *Frogs,* when Aischylos mentions the rustic goddess, he also labels Euripides a "lamer" and a "rag-trash-stitcher" (*Frogs* 842, 846). The members of the chorus of Eleusinian initiates in that same play had worn rags as they greeted Dionysos as his chthonic hypostasis Iakchos. The advantage of such a costume, whatever its religious or ritual significance, is obviously that it seductively exposes the body. The initiates claim that Iakchos has rent their sandals, and made their clothing rags, in order to get a laugh and also in order to save money, and that he has discovered a way for them to play and dance with impunity (*Frogs,* 405-9). Critics tend to take the supposed financial expedient seriously. The fact that at this time choregic costs exceeded the resources of individual citizens, and that they therefore shared the expense of production, does not mean that expenses were curtailed. The *Frogs,* in any case, shows no signs of curtailment. The play requires a fourth actor for the part of Plathane and Ploutos;[60] and the chorus requires costuming as frogs and as initiates, and may in addition have been supplemented by female walk-ons (*Frogs* 447, 411 sq.), unless the dancing members were costumed as the two sexes. The chorus speaks as initiates and not as individuals. The rags, like the ribald invective (cf. *Frogs* 394, 420 sq.) and the escorting of Iakchos, were perhaps characteristics of the night-long walk to Eleusis and of the scabrous *gephyrismos* or "passage across the bridge." The ritual rags are given a comic interpretation, since the male chorus has just seen a "female playmate's" breast exposed because of her torn robe (*Frogs* 411-15); it should be obvious what the men mean when they enter the grove to play with the women and girls (*Frogs* 445-46).[61]

Perhaps more to the point, however, is the scene in the *Birds* where the poet who comes to Bird-land introduces himself, quoting from Homer, as an "*otreros* servant of the Muses" (*Birds* 909-10). Pisthetairos responds with two puns which obviously have reference to the poet's costume. First the "servant" is equated with "slave" *(therapon, doulos),* and Pisthetairos asks why the poet, if a slave, has long hair. Long hair would certainly indicate a freeman;[62] but we should also recall that some fifth century comedian claimed that "there's no one with long hair who's not been buggered," using a metaphor from the fertilization of the fig by the gall-insect.[63] The second pun involves the word *otreros,* which in the Homeric formula means something like "nimble," from a verbal root meaning "rouse." Pisthetairos' comments: "No wonder you have a *ledarion* which is also *otreros!*" (*Birds* 915). The *ledarion* is some kind of clothing; to judge from the context earlier in the play (*Birds* 708-15), it is summer as opposed to winter clothing and therefore apparently scant. The scholiast, perhaps merely guessing from what follows, claims that the *ledarion* is "worn-out."[64] It seems likely that the *ledarion,* whatever its condition, actually is "roused," for the adjective *otreros* when applied to bread, designates "roused" or leavened bread.[65] This poet, that is to say, like the other poets we have examined, has an erection; he is in a state of destruction, perhaps even of frustration (*Birds* 916).[66]

When we recall that Aristophanes called Euripides a "rag-stitcher" (*Frogs* 842), we should remember also that comedians apparently saw something similar in the back-and-forth motion of stitching and the act of copulation. Thus Demos in the *Knights* is accused of giving himself to base lovers: "lamp-sellers, sinew-stitchers, hide-cutters, and skin-sellers" (*Knights* 739-40); and the Sausage-seller, in criticizing Kleon's manner of showing his love to Demos, offers to his professed beloved something which he has "stitched up on himself" so that Demos can sit down in comfort for the "naval battle" of Salamis (*Knights* 784-5).[67]

The point, however, is explicitly made in the *Frogs* that Euripides wraps kings in rags "so that they might appear pitiable" (*Frogs* 1062-3). Such costuming is similarly called "pitiable" in the scene in the *Acharnians*. We might ask, with Euripides in the *Frogs* (1064), what is wrong, anyway, with costumes that elicit pity. Even Aristotle recognized pity as a valid element of the tragic experience; and, to judge from the Sokrates of Plato's *Apology* (34c), Athenians regularly expected a defendant to evoke pity. It is only by placing the rag costumes in the context of Aristotle's particular preferences for tragic plots that we get the supposed condemnation of Euripidean techniques; in the Aristophanic contexts, the rags figure differently.

In the *Frogs* routine, Aischylos is criticizing the effect of Euripidean dramaturgy and sophistic education on public morality. Euripides, by composing roles for "prostitutes" like Phaidra and Stheneboia, actually creates prostitutes (with some reference, apparently, to Euripides' private sex life); Aischylos, by contrast, has never had anything to do with Aphrodite nor ever "presented a woman in love" (*Frogs* 1043 sq.). As in the controversy in the *Thesmophoriazousai,* however, it is not denied that women actually are the way Euripides has described them (*Frogs* 1052); Aischylos' criticism is simply that Euripides tells the truth, and that by so doing, he undermines the false model of humanity which Aischylean drama presents. Thus the beggarly kings teach the wealthy Athenians how to avoid the liturgy taxation; and Euripidean rhetoric, like Socratic sophism, teaches young men to desert the palaestra and to be homosexual.

Each of the two examples elicits satiric comments from Dionysos. The point of his remark about the liturgy-evaders is an irrecoverable joke: the wealthy man who protests his pretended poverty wears woolen underclothes and, once he has won his cause, he pops up among the fishes (*Frogs* 1067-68). The scholiast explains the "fishes" as the fishmarket, and assumes that the supposed poor man betrays his actual wealth by buying fish. It is to be doubted that fish in a city so close to the sea would be bought only by those citizens wealthy enough to have bought the city a trireme instead; or that woolen clothing in a pastoral country would likewise indicate such superior wealth. The second comment, however, has a clear sexual meaning; and, for the sake of balance,[68] we might suspect a similar reference in the "fish."[69] Dionysos' remark about the youth of former times is that "they used to fart in the mouth of the rower below, defecate on their messmate, and upon disembarking, steal someone's clothes; they used to row back and forth, whereas now they make rhetorical speeches" (*Frogs* 1074-76).[70] The metaphor is obviously the ship of intercourse[71] and Dionysos thereby shows the reality which underlay Aischylos' bombastic eulogy of the "rowing call" of bygone days. Women have always been prostitutes, and young men always homosexual. In view of such a context, we cannot be sure even that the beggarly "kings" are really the kings of mythology, although, no doubt, a secondary reference to the tragic characters is inevitable.[72]

Our point is simply that the rags critique may well be motivated by some particular comic routine. The same argument applies also to the scene in the *Acharnians* where the explained reason for the disguise in rags culminates again in sexual innuendo. After a two-line quote from the *Telephos* of Euripides ("I must seem to be a beggar today: to be who I am, but not to appear so"),[73] Dikaiopolis rephrases the tragic explanation so that it fits exactly the comic situation: he wants the audience to know who he is while he demonstrates the stupidity of the choral members by "buggering" them with his speech (*Acharn.* 442-4);[74] he uses for this last action a metaphor which designates the insertion of a finger into the ovipositor of a bird in order to determine whether it has an egg ready to lay. His costume as Telephos consists of rags and a felt Mysian cap, which apparently connotes not only foreignness but also sophistic degeneracy (*Acharn.* 439).[75] The costume is something "scant, with frequent intellectual devices" (*Acharn.* 445); it is like the rhetoric which Dikaiopolis hopes to use, for the costume defines the character: as Dikaiopolis puts it on he immediately feels himself "filling up" (*Acharn.* 447) with the words he needs for buggering the chorus. "Bless you—and for Telephos I have something else in mind!" says Dikaiopolis, slightly perverting a line from the *Telephos* (*Acharn.* 446)[76] so that the line implies, beneath a cover of politeness, that the tragedian *and* his character can both be damned for such scant intellectuality. The costume, however, is not yet complete, and Dikaiopolis goes on to wheedle further items from Euripides. The items remain somewhat enigmatic to us, but a second perversion of the quotation from the *Telephos* indicates that Dikaiopolis is now progressing toward items which are perhaps more appropriate to Euripides' mother in some manner of dress, rather than to Telephos in his beggar's costume: "Bless you—*and* your mother! (Do you remember?)" (*Acharn.* 457), Dikaiopolis says as Euripides hits him and attempts to push the beggar from the house, which is paratragically called "stone pillars." The items of the costume, in addition to the obvious beggar's staff, are "a lamp-burnt basket,"[77] "a chalice with its lip knocked off,"[78] "a little pot stoppered or jammed with *spongion* (a little sponge?),"[79] and "some dried leafage for the basket."[80] Both the "chalice" *(kotyliskion)* and the "leafage" *(phylleia)* have psychotropic connotations,[81] and although Euripides does not recognize these latter items as part of the costume of Telephos, he still complains that there is nothing left of his tragedy. "Yes, yes, I'm going!" says Dikaiopolis in answer to Euripides' complaint; and then enigmatically he adds: "I know I am really too much trouble—although I don't think that sovereigns hate me" (*Acharn.* 471-2).

It is difficult to assess what is meant by the concluding remark; it was apparently an ignominiously perverted quotation from another "beggar" play of Euripides, the *Oineus.*[82] The basic idea in the Aristophanic context must be that Dikaiopolis may indeed be disturbing Euripides' "house," but "kings" at least do not hate him. Whether the reference is to some supposed indignation on the part of "kings" for their portrayal as beggars, or to some special function of the herbalist's role is not clear. Some pun, in fact, on "king" may even be intended.[83] Inasmuch as the "leafage" may be an anaphrodisiac, the aphrodisiac *skandix,* which is the final item requested, completes an antithetical pairing of psychotropic substances. We have already suggested such antitheses as part of the symbolism enacting the duality of the Demeter-Kore complex. Beyond this we cannot go. What sacred function did Euripides' mother as an herbalist perform? In what way was her son's poetic inspiration also involved? Whatever the answers, we feel certain that we touch here upon those rites which belonged in the control of the city's most ancient nobility; to debase such exalted functions by confusing them with the character of the wandering witch or the greengrocer of the marketplace is the province of comedy, an activity in which it achieves its sacred satiric function.

We are moving toward realms of greater uncertainty; perhaps it is apposite to conclude with a mention of the "enigma" by which Dionysos in the *Frogs* (61) attempts to explain his yearning for the poetry of the dead Euripides: it is like the sudden craving for *etnos,* a pudding or porridge of various seeds or grains; such a porridge is the initial item in the enactment of the rural Dionysia in the *Acharnians* (245). In the *Ekklesiazousai,* it is the "youngest girls" who will boil up the pots of *etnos;* the context describes a banquet with sexual connotations (*Ekkles.* 845).[84] In the *Lysistrata,* the women of the chorus, in an obvious sexual invitation, claim that they have some *etnos,* and that they have "sacrificed" their "piglets" so that the flesh for the banquet will be good and tender (*Lys.* 1061-62).[85] It is Athena herself who, in the *Knights*, has "ground" up the pea porridge *(etnos)* which Kleon, the lover, offers to win the favor of Demos (1171-72). Kleon, throughout the play, has been portrayed as the strumpet who is competing with the more masculinely equipped Sausage-seller.[86] Athena and Kleon are both "gate-fighters" and their *etnos* is offered to Demos in order to surpass the Sausage-seller's love gift, his piece of "dunking bread" which Athena molded with her own elephantine hand: "That was quite a finger!" is Demos' comment. The craving for such *etnos* had occurred to the Dionysos of the *Frogs* as he was "on board" Kleisthenes and doing "naval battle": he was on the ship reading the *Andromeda* of Euripides when suddenly the desire struck his heart. It is a sexual desire, a small but devastating desire which, despite the fact that he has slept with Kleisthenes, is not for woman, boy, nor man—but for *etnos*. The *Andromeda* is lost[87] but its parody in Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazousai* is still extant. There Mnesilochos, dressed in the turban and saffron robe (*Thesm.* 939-42) used in festivals of Dionysos,[88] is tied to a pillory plank and guarded by a Scythian archer, who has brought out a basket, taken from Euripides, in order to watch him (*Thesm.* 1006). "Do you see?" laments Mnesilochos; "I stand here muzzled with wicker-work, not for choral dancing nor because of girls of my own age, but because I am implicated in bonds, food for the monster: this is not my marriage" (*Thesm.* 1029). Euripides, in the disguise of his Perseus, sees her/him, moored like a ship (*Thesm.* 1106); he and the Scythian enter into a controversy about what sex Mnesilochos-Andromeda is. The Scythian counters Euripides' claim that Mnesilochos is female by avowing that there is not the slightest evidence of female *pudenda* (*Thesm.* 1114). Nevertheless, Euripides is stricken with the sickness of love for this *kore*. It is an affliction which the Scythian does not envy, but if Euripides wants to turn Mnesilochos around, he will not mind if he buggers him—or, for that matter, he can drill right through the pillory plank from behind (*Thesm.*

1118-24). When Euripides persists in his intention to untie Mnesilochos, the Scythian threatens to cut off Euripides' "head" with a sabre which is identified by a demonstrative gesture (*Thesm.* 1126-27). "You wretched fox," the Scythian cries, "how you whet me!" (*Thesm.* 1132). We recall that Euripides-Perseus had entered for the rescue scene carrying the Gorgon's head, which the Scythian had insisted on misunderstanding as the head of some secretary (*Thesm.* 1101-04). (Is it apposite to mention that Dikaiopolis in the *Acharnians* delivers a speech with his "head" on the chopping block [*Acharn.* 318, 355, 365, 366]?[89] Decapitation, moreover, does not seem to have been a common penalty in fifth century Athens.) Whatever the point of the enigma, it seems unlikely that Dionysos was simply hungry.

Let us adduce one more item. When Lysistrata summons her female attendants to her aid in the sexual war which the women are waging with the men, she calls them "seed-merchant-egg-yoke-vegetable sellers" and "garlic-hostleress-bread-sellers" (*Lys.* 457-58). Her complaint is that the men go shopping, raving mad and armored, and that they go about the market like Korybants, roaming through the pots and vegetables in "manly fashion" (*Lys.* 555-59). It is really ridiculous, she says, to see someone with a "Gorgon shield" buying "black birds" (with a pun on "girl-lays," *Lys.* 559-60);[90] and the women agree, for they have themselves seen a long-haired horseman tossing into a felt cap the egg-yolk bean he got from some hag (*Lys.* 561-62). This egg-yolk bean is one of the ingredients of the seed porridge which the wives cook up at home as they wait for their husbands to come back in Pherekrates' lost comedy, the *Deserters* or the "Self-comers" (i.e., "Masturbators").[91]

As a vegetable-seller Euripides' mother may be probably nothing other than the butt of some joke which portrayed her in a sexual role; even if there is no ritual nor religious meaning to the *skandix,* it would thus still be appropriate to her trade. And Euripides' "Andromedan" *etnos* involves simply the tragic actor's female impersonation. Since comic poets tend to view everything sexually, we cannot know where, beyond the systems of comic metaphor, the truth about Euripides and his mother resides. The *etnos* and the *skandix* no doubt refer to the versatility of Euripides' sexual impersonations: in this regard he is identical, at least for the comic view, with other tragic actor-poets.

MUCK DANCING: WASPS 248 SQ.

The chorus of the *Wasps* enters attended by boys: the leader notices some "muck" *(borboros)* and then conjectures that within four days at the most it is going to rain. The lamps, as he explains, have "mushrooms" *(mykes),* by which he apparently means sparks around the wicks,[92] a sign which was commonly supposed in antiquity to indicate the excessive humidity caused by a southern wind, and which was therefore a presage of rain.[93] The passage, however, does not make sense as it has been traditionally interpreted: it is difficult to see why "muck" on the ground should indicate that it is going to rain rather than that it had already rained. Emendation has been proposed, changing *borboros* ("muck") to *marmaros* ("marble");[94] the correction at least dries up the ground, but it is hardly convincing. Nor does it help to speculate that perhaps someone has emptied slops into the street and that the ground is thereby wet in the absence of rain.[95] Anything is of course possible, but the scene must make sense dramatically or comically. I suspect that interpreters have not visualized the stage activity correctly.

Our first concern must be the costume of the members of the chorus and the manner of their entrance. Bdelykleon ("Loathe-Kleon"), who is the son of the monster Philokleon ("Love-Kleon"), describes their appearance to Xanthias just before they make their entrance. The old jurors are like a nest of quick-tempered wasps: they have pointed stingers attached at the groin and with these they sting, screaming and jumping and striking like sparks (*Wasps* 223-27).[96] The ordinary oversized leather phallos of the comic actor has obviously been worked into an ingenious costume.[97] The phallos is thus made into the jurors' weapon: it becomes erect when they are angered (*Wasps* 407, 423); with it they can attack the rump of an enemy (*Wasps* 431),[98] just as they once filled the sky with weapons when they swarmed after the Persians, "harpooning their ball bags . . . stinging their buttocks and groins . . . so that among the barbarians everywhere, even now, there is still nothing called more manly than an Attic wasp" (*Wasps* 1081-90).[99] The sexual nature of the jurors' adjudication is clear in the passage where Philokleon sets up the court at home, so that the old man can do the same things there that he used to do in public courts: when his housekeeper privately opens her "door," he can toss his vote in, his own individual rape of her (*Wasps* 769-71). Conversely, when the wasps relent, they put down their "sticks" (*Wasps* 727): there is a pun here, no doubt, on the staffs of various colors which, in Athenian custom, allowed the jurors admittance to the different courts.[100] Similarly, Philokleon, in pitying the dog who is on trial, laments that something awful is happening to him: he is getting soft (*Wasps* 973-74). The members of the chorus are "wasp-waisted" (*Wasps* 1172) and therefore "wasps"; but it is the stinger which really characterizes them, and the poet is not particularly insistent upon their being wasps rather than some other stinging insect like hornets (*Wasps* 1080)[101] or bees (*Wasps* 241, 366; cf. 1111 sq.).[102] In addition to their appearance, there is an action which is supposed to be characteristic of their waspish pose: "We are in every other way," the choral leader says, "contrived like wasps: assembling in swarms as if to our nests . . . we adjudicate, jammed one into the other, bending down to the ground,[103] barely moving (with a pun on "copulate"), snug as larvae in their cells" (*Wasps* 1106-11). It may be apposite to recall the passage from the *Lysistrata* where the female is the hive whose honey is raped (*Lys.* 474-75). The chorus of wasps, however, is not here involved in heterosexual activity; another metaphor aptly describes the action. We should note that this is not the first time in the play that the wasps are in this crouching position: upon entering for the *mykes* scene with which we began our inquiry, the choral leader told the boy to bend way over, to take the lamp and to jam it forward (*Wasps* 249).[104]

Since the chorus is composed of adult male and boy couples, the choreography and comic routines obviously may utilize this dual configuration for the personality of the chorus. The costume, moreover, depicts the adult males as worker or stinging insects[105] with pinched waists: such an appearance could best be effected by the wearing of an abdominal appendage extending below the waist, thus converting the human trunk into the insect's thorax, with its limbs all attached above the "wasp" waist. This abdominal appendage with its "sparking" stinger, composed of the red-tipped phallos, apparently resembles a lamp with its wick. We must not, however, insist that the costume was anything more than a metaphor. The testes and penis are always, of course, in miniature such an abdominal appendage and the transformation of the phallos into a "wick" can be documented from other plays. Thus the sycophant in the *Acharnians* is teased for "showing without a wick" (*Acharn.* 816);[106] he apparently has no penis, a lack which is appropriate, since as a sycophant he "shows the fig" or the *pudenda muliebria.* We might recall also that a "lamp" or "torch" is used to singe Mnesilochos in the shaving scene in the *Thesmophoriazousai* (238 sq.); Mnesilochos seems to interpret the singeing as an anal rape. This interpretation of "wick" also explains the punning in Praxagora's opening speech in the *Ekklesiazousai:* she has disguised herself as a male and apostrophizes the "shining eye of the wheel-driven lamp," even though lamps, as the scholiast noted, are stamped or molded rather than thrown on the wheel; the turning, no doubt, implies the sexual experience.[107] She goes on at great length, calling the "lamp *(penis coriaceus?)* the most amazing invention amongst the class of things that hit the target." She intends to reveal its "genesis and its experience." It is "driven by a wheel by the ceramist's exertion" and "because of its mucousy snouts it has a shining honor identical with the sun's." She "rouses" it to give "the agreed upon significance of flame," for it is about to "consort" with her present plans to be a male. "To or with it alone do we fittingly reveal, for in the brothels it stands nearby those women who have experience in Aphrodite's turns—of character; no one excludes from the houses its eye, the standby for bodies in sexual contortions; it alone illuminates the forbidden recesses of the thighs, singeing the hair which flowers there; it stands by the women as they open just slightly the storehouses full of harvest and Bacchic fluid" (*Ekkles.* 1-29). She retires to conceal herself when she sees a lamp approaching, in case the person carrying it might be a man, rather than another woman in disguise. The metaphor was so common that a lover who is frustrated by his woman threatens in the *Lysistrata* "to burn her door with his lamp" (*Lys.* 1216-18); and earlier in that comedy, when the men attack the virgin's sanctuary with burning logs, one of them calls attention to the condition of the lamp with which he intends to scorch his opponent (*Lys.* 376).

Before we examine the *mykes* passage more closely, we might notice that the action of bending down close to the ground exhibits that member of the chorus in a quite convincing mimesis of the stinging insect's walk. In this position, of course, the phallos might drag along the ground. It becomes, in fact, a particularly troublesome "toe": the leader of the chorus, speculating about the possible reasons for Philokleon's tardiness, suggests that perhaps he stubbed his toe in the darkness and that his "ankle" became "hot and swollen," a condition which would have quickly caused havoc in his groin, since, after all, he was an old man (*Wasps* 275-7).[108] It is possible, also, that the choreography would imitate at times movements which, at least to an agrarian populace, could have been recognized as insect actions. Bees, for example, when individually joining their front legs to the back legs of others in their clustering or swarming pattern, form a chain that might be misconstrued as engaging in a sexual activity like *fellatio* or *cunnilingus.* One version of Aristophanes' *Clouds,* in fact, contained such an observation of insect behavior: "The two of them will lie together like fornicating bugs."[109] The bees' "wagtail dance" might also be easily misinterpreted as an invitation to anal intercourse. We cannot, of course, reconstruct the movements of the dance but we should bear in mind the possible significance of the action of bending down;[110] the leader of the chorus, for example, in describing Philokleon's bitter personality, again demonstrates: "if anyone opposed him, he would bend down like this and say, 'You're boiling a stone!'" (*Wasps* 277-80). We must always remember that the action on the stage would make clear what in the bare text seems obscure. The "old man" walk of comedy, moreover, may simply indicate a difficulty in walking upright with an erect phallos.

The transformation of the phallos to a lamp wick is perhaps the reason Philokleon so strenuously objects to removing his *tribon* or thread-bare cloak (there is perhaps a pun on the sexual connotation of the verb *tribo,* "to grind"),[111] and is why he becomes so hot when his son wraps around him the refinement of Persian effeminacy (*Wasps* 1121). He becomes, in fact, an oven and asks for a meat hook so that he can be fished out when he's done (*Wasps* 1153-55).[112] Perhaps the abdominal appendage figures also in the routine with the old man's "piss pot" and his handy lentil casserole (*Wasps* 807 sq.).[113] The son, in redirecting the old man's life, has been progressively rendering him more impotent. Earlier Bdelykleon had explained to his father the political corruption that was bought by the jurors' dole, which the politicians drip, drop by drop, like oil on the jurors' wad of wool (wick?) to keep them alive (*Wasps* 701-2).[114] Philokleon had lamented that his anger seemed impotent: a paralysis affects his hand and he cannot control his "sword," but is already soft (*Wasps* 713-14). At the refined drinking party, however, the old man gets drunk, makes some obscure insults to one of the other guests, who "looks like a locust without its *tribon* fig leaves" (*Wasps* 1311-12);[115]

and runs off with the courtesan flute player, hitting a "bread-seller" with his "torch" on the way home (*Wasps* 1390). In the seduction scene with the flute girl, the phallos has apparently turned into a "rope,"[116] with which she is instructed to hoist herself up: "Watch out—the rope is rotten; but don't worry, it doesn't mind being ground down a bit" (*Wasps* 1341-44). The old man, however, seems incapable of the act, and he shifts into a routine in which he imagines that he is still too young, and that she will have to wait until he inherits his son's fortune. The puritanic son's arrival prompts the father to try another ruse. The "rope" becomes a "bundle of faggots," a "torch," and the girl is disguised as a torch stand. Her pubic hair is the pitch oozing out of the lighted torch, and the anus has a branch of the torch protruding from it. The son, dismissing the ruse, claims that the old man is "rotten" and "can't do anything" (*Wasps* 1361-82).

Our digression on the varying phallic metaphors allows us now, perhaps, to imagine the action of the *borboros* scene. There occur remarks which suggest a sexual context for the entire episode. The old man, for example, is called a "dear little bag (scrotum?)" (*Wasps* 314); and he counters the boy's complaints by claiming that the boy's mother bore the child just so that the father would have the trouble of "feeding" him (*Wasps* 312-13). The discussion about food, for all its obscurity, is also suggestive: The father offers "knucklebones" as something nice he can get his boy, but the son prefers "figs" since they're sweeter; "You wouldn't think so," the father complains, "if it were you who were hung up!" (*Wasps* 291 sq.).[117] "Knucklebones" are dice, but their opposition to figs indicates the male organ instead of the female. "Leading" or "escorting" the old man may well involve more than simple motion forward.[118] As the chorus first enters (*Wasps* 245 sq.), the men inspect the surroundings with their "lamps"; they are afraid of stubbing their toe on a "rock" and thus, apparently, of suffering the same inguinal inflammation which they imagine has afflicted Philokleon. The boy objects that there is some "mud" of the clayish, lumpy variety, but the old man disregards the refusal and tells the boy to bend over and "take the lamp" and "jam it forward" anyway. The boy again demurs and instead he pulls the man's "wick" forward with his finger; the old man now complains that he has lost some oil, and that at his age he doesn't have much to spare. The traditional interpretation of this scene derives from an ancient critic's guess: the boy has pulled the lampwick forward with his finger, instead of with a twig, and the lamp is thus burning too brightly. Why a twig should be better than a finger for this task, however, escapes my comprehension. "Where did you learn to shove the wick like that?" the old man asks. The boy threatens to extinguish the man's lamp, and to leave him "without this"(?), to wallow in the clay mud like an *attagas* bird. The old man, however, counters that he has taken care of bigger ones than him;[119] and then apparently the danger of rocks and clay disappears, as he begins to tread genuine *borboros,* mud of the sewerage variety.[120] For the man apparently is engaged in "manure-gathering," the metaphor which customarily describes the action of anal rape;[121] and his "treading" action no doubt has a meaning similar to the "treading" of the old man's youthful northern campaign: he and a friend treaded around at night and sneaked in to steal the "bread-seller's kneading bowl" (*Wasps* 237-38). *Borboros* is apparently in some comic situations desirable: the chorus in the *Peace* describes a male who has the "passion of a Herakles" and "takes on the biggest" as he bestrides the *byrse's* terrible odor *(penis coriaceus?)* and the "*borboros*-inspired violence" (*Peace* 752-53). Herakles is here probably the insatiate sensualist as well as the mythological purifier of the Augean stables. Kleon, with his *byrse,* stirs up the *borboros* as he revels in the turmoil he causes in the city, his beloved Demos (*Knights* 306 sq.). It is difficult for us to imagine a sexual fantasy which entails speculation about the quality of excrement encountered in buggery, and certainly more difficult when the routine involves the female's *penis coriaceus;* but apparently such a fantasy was possible, at least, in Greek comic imagination. Thus we are, no doubt, to understand those delightful Boeotian prostitutes, those Copaic "eels" (*Acharn.* 880 sq.; *Lys.* 700-02), who so much enjoy wallowing in the *borboros* (*Knights* 864-67). In the *Wasps,* therefore, it is possible that neither the rocks nor the different types of muck are on the ground. The discovery of *borboros* excites the aged gentleman. The "wick" on the "lamp" now has a red sparking tip—it has a "mushroom"; and he goes on to speculate on the meaning of this sign: it presages rain, with perhaps a pun on the impregnating urination of Zeus, who is customarily responsible for precipitation.

The old man then goes on to comment that "crops which are not early" need rain followed by a north wind. This is supposed to be an irrelevant mental wandering characteristic of old age: crops that are not early are explained as summer crops, and the north wind in summer is dry; rain followed by a drying wind keeps the crops from rotting. There are, however, several difficulties with this explanation. The time of the performance of this comedy is the January festival of the Lenaea; Greek summers are dry and the land ordinarily does not lack drainage, so that there would be little need for a drying wind after rain to insure the growth of summer crops. The north wind in winter is, of course, cold; and rain and cold weather, which are the January conditions, are suited for the growth of a particular crop which is not early, but rather quite late in the year's cycle of growth. Has the "phallos—mushroom," "lampwick—mushroom" punning culminated in a reference to the mushroom plant, which figured in the maenadic rites of the Lenaea?[122]

In the final scene of the comedy (*Wasps* 1474 sq.), the newly emancipated Philokleon comes back on stage dancing wildly with a number of Crabs, who are all supposed to be members of the Crab family of tragic poets, but who may actually be choreographic representations of that crab-like insect which troubles the pubic hair.[123] The scene begins when Xanthias announces that "some god has wheeled a difficulty into the house." The old man has been drinking for some time inside and listening to flute music, and he is dancing from ecstasy, refusing to stop: he intends to dance a history of tragic dance from earliest times up to the present. He bursts out of the house—the beginning of his dance step or rather, as Xanthias comments, the beginning of his madness: he bends his torso and shouts that the "mucouser is mucousing," *mukter mukatai* ("snout is snotting," "the musher is rooming," etc.), and "the vertebrae" (with perhaps a pun on the "voting pebbles") "are ringing" (*Wasps* 1488).[124] That he is mad is indicated by Xanthias' advice that he drink hellebore (*Wasps* 1489, cf. 1496), the cause which is also, therefore, a cure. The Crabs come on stage and Philokleon challenges one of them to a "knucklebone dance" (*Wasps* 1503); this midmost son of Crab, he vows, "will be drunk down." Another Crabson tragedian comes on stage: this one, Philokleon claims, is a tasty meal. The last Crab enters doing an "owl or mole" dance; he is the smallest of his family, the one who writes tragedies. He is the pinna-guard, a small crab which lives in the pinna mollusk's shell (a pun with *pinos,* "hair filth," or with *pino,* "drink," is possible). It's quite a family of crabs, as Philokleon comments: a veritable multitude of "wrens" (*orchilos,* with a pun on *orchis,* "testicles") which has dropped on him. Xanthias is directed to mix up some salt water, apparently so that these Crabs can be cooked like proper crabs, if Philokleon wins the contest. The comic exodos is accomplished with the old man dancing off with his Crabs: no chorus of tragedians was ever like this, but this, after all, is a chorus of "trugedians," the singers of the *trux* or of the wine dregs.

NOTES

[1] Cf. Thorkil Vanggaard, *Phallos: A Symbol and Its History in the Male World* (Denmark: 1969; translated into English by the author, New York, 1972). Vanggaard documents the instinctual response to the phallos as a sign of aggression.

[2] Schol. in *Frogs* 947; cf. Plin. *N.H.* 22.81; Suidas s.v. *σκάνδιξ*.

[3] *Thesm.* 387, *Knights* 19.

[4] *Vita Eur.* 5 (Manuel Moschopoulou) and Suidas s.v. Εὐριπίδης.

[5] Quoted in Athenaeus 424 ε.

[6] Ibid., loc. cit., cf. Pollux vii 48, where it is stated that the Theraic cloak, which is mentioned by Theophrastos, was used in satyric drama.

[7] *Vita Eur.* 1 and 4 (Thomas Magister).

[8] Ibid. 1.

[9] *Vita Eur.* 5 (Manuel Moschopoulou) and Suidas.

[10] Schol. in *Frogs* 947.

[11] *Frogs* 914 (a response to some gesture implied by 913: γρύζοντας οὐδὲ τουτί), 916-18, 921-22 (addressed to Aischylos), 926 (addressed to Aischylos), 927 (addressed to Aischylos), 930-32 (addressed to audience), 934 (addressed to Aischylos).

[12] Dionysos objects to Euripides only on the subject of democracy; his plays have taught people to quibble (954). Cf. Dionysos' attitude earlier at 915 sq. When he does object, however, he stresses that this is the one point where he must disagree and even then addresses Euripides in a friendly manner (952-53). Euripides, like Sokrates, is being accused of offering a sophistic education and thereby of causing political relativism. Notice, however, that Dionysos continues to be offended by Aischylos' bombast and lack of clarity: 1018, 1020, 1023-24 (Dionysos hits Aischylos!), 1028-29 (Dionysos ridicules some stage action of the *Persians*).

[13] Theophrastus, *H. P.* 7.7.1.
The equation of σκάνδιξ in *L.S.-J.*^{9} as "wild chervil, *Scandix pecten veneris*" or the "Venus comb scandix," implies greater certainty than in fact exists. The references quoted in *L.S.-J.*^{9} may not be to the same plant. Lewis and Short gloss *scandix* as *Scandix caerefolium,* with references to Pliny's *N.H.* 22.80, where it is equated with the Euripidean *scandix;* 21.89, where it is listed, along with *caucalis* and *enthryscum,* as a common food in Egypt and described as the same thing as *tragopogon,* which has leaves like those of saffron. *Kaukalis* is glossed as *Tordylium apulum* in *L.S.-J.*^{9} and as *Caucalis orientalis* in Lewis and Short. *Enthryscum* is glossed as the equivalent of ἄνθρυσκον or *Scandix australis* both in the Greek and in the Latin lexicon. *Tragopogon* is supposed to be "salsify" or *Tragopogon porrifolius (L.S.-J.*^{9}*).* These are the same plants that are grouped together in Theophrastos. "Wild chervil" usually is *Anthriscus cerefolium,* which is a popular culinary herb with a flavor of mild parsley; it is an ingredient of the French "fines herbes."

[14] Pliny *N.H.* 22.81: "peculiaris laus eius, quod fatigato venere corpori succurrit marcentesque iam senio coitus excitat." This notion reappears in the Elizabethan *Herball* (1597) of John Gerard: herbalists often repeat observations which are not their own and which originally pertained to some other plant. I cannot discover whether "chervil" has the effect claimed for it. In an interesting display of selectivity, Starkie in his commentary on this passage (*The Acharnians of Aristophanes,* London: 1909, p. 102) records Pliny's mentions of *skandix* as a not "legitimum olus" but isolates the reader from any knowledge of the supposed aphrodisiac effect of the herb.

[15] Telekleides 38: . . . ξυγγενέσθαι διὰ χρόνου μ' ἐλιπάρει δρυπεπέσι μάζαις καὶ διεσκανδίκισε. The meaning of the δρυπεπεῖς μᾶζαι is not at all clear; δρυπεπής seems to imply "tree-ripened" but a sexual connotation is involved: in Aristophanes Frag. 141 an old man is asked whether he prefers δρυπεπεῖς hetairas or virgin women who are like firm olives soaked in brine; in *Lysistrata* 564 the word describes figs which a Thracian, in a passage not devoid of sexual innuendo, ate after he had given the fig-seller quite a fright (cf. *Peace* 1349-50).

[16] Pliny *N.H.* 19.170.

[17] Paus. 2.10.6, Nic. Frag. 74.55.

[18] Telekleides 49 (Pollux 3.70).

[19] Andokides, Frag. 4. This plant may be the turnip-rooted chervil, *Chaerophyllum bulbosum,* which is boiled and eaten like a turnip. A turnip-rooted chervil, of course, might be considered an aphrodisiac by the "doctrine of signatures" (see below): the turnip shape resembles the female breast (cf. *Thesm.* 1185: ὡς στέριπο τὸ τιττί, ὥσπερ γογγύλη, which is the Scythian archer's comment, in his own dialect, about the dancer who is apparently "dancing" on his lap). We do not know, however, whether the "doctrine of signatures" pertains to pre-Christian herbalism; it seems to have been a discovery of the medieval period.

[20] Pollux 2.211.

[21] *Knights* 964. Cf. schol. ad loc. (Cf. *L.S.-J.*^{9} s.v. μύρσινος II 3). The "myrtle berry" (μύρτον) referred to the *pudenda muliebria:* cf. *Lysistrata* 1004 and schol. on *Knights* 964.

We adduce also the passage in the *Ekklesiazousai* (1030-36) where the sexually reluctant lover advises the hag about what she must do to render the act more palatable: She asks whether he will buy her a "wreath" and he agrees—one of beeswax so that he can fall in through her quickly. A similar idea lies behind the scabrous remarks in the *Lysistrata* about the "gold-pourer" who made a "ring-wreath" for a woman which is too big for the husband's "acorn" (408-13).

Wreaths and hoops commonly indicate lovers in the symbolism of Athenian vase painting: cf. Ganymede's rolling a hoop and carrying a cock (a phallic representation) on an early fifth century Athenian mixing bowl (Louvre, Paris); the sexual symbolism is recognized by Thorkil Vanggaard, *Phallos.*

[22] *Wreath-Sellers,* title of a comedy by Eubolus Comicus (IV B.C.). Fragment 98 makes explicit the fact that his garland-sellers are courtesans.

[23] Aelian *N.A.* 9.26. Some kind of lettuce *(thridakane)* was also an anaphrodisiac, as is clear from fragment 14 of Eubulus' *Impotent Men;* cf. Pliny *N.H.* 19.127. In the *Ekklesiazousai* (648), Aristyllos kisses his suppositious "daddy" and makes him smell of *kalaminthe;* such an odor accompanies Aristyllos because, like a woman, he has strewn his bed either with the anaphrodisiac, or with the *kalaminthe* without the epithet "holy," which indicates the plant has the properties antithetical to the anaphrodisiac. Nothing is known of this Aristyllos, and we therefore cannot choose between the alternatives.

Some plant called *bolbos* was apparently also an aphrodisiac. In the *Ekklesiazousai,* the young man who is being forced into copulation with two unattractive old women is advised to fortify himself with a pot of *bolboi* (1092). The name was applied to many plants and merely indicates some bulbous root.

[24] *Blechon* is usually identified as "penny royal" *(Mentha pulegium),* which is mildly psychotropic: cf. C. Kerenyi, *Eleusis: Archetypal Image of Mother and Daughter* (New York: 1967), Appendix 1, pp. 177-180. There were, however, several forms of *blechon* (Theophrastos, *H. P.* 9.16.1-3; Pliny, *N.H.* 20.156). One of these was *diktamon,* a plant which apparently took its name from Mount Dikte on Crete. A late tradition claims (Pliny, *N.H.* 24.164) that on this mountain grew the magic plant *theangelis* or "messenger of god," which the Magi used in divination. It is possible that the *blechon* of Eleusis, where the religion derived from Minoan precedents, was a stronger hallucinogen of the *Labiatae* family, such as *Salvia divinorum,* for example.

Aphrodisiac or psychotropic properties of *blechon* underlie several jokes in Aristophanes: *Peace* 709-12, *Lysistrata* 87-89, *Acharnians* 860-61; cf. also the pun on *minthoun* in *Lys.* 1174 sq. (cf. schol. ad 313).

[25] H. S. Denninger, "A History of Substances Known as Aphrodisiacs," *Annals of Medical History* II 383-93 (1930).

[26] The "Spanish fly" or "blister beetle" is the κανθαρίς; its ability to "revive sexual potency" was known to Plutarch (*De audiendis poetis* 2.22a). The "scarab-beetle" was κάνθαρος, and although Aristotle (*H. A.* 490^{a} 15, 531^{b} 25) distinguishes between the two words, the distinction was not commonly observed either before or after his time. The scholiast on Nicander's *Alexipharmaka* 115, claims that the κανθαρίς was also called κάνθαρος; and the Aetnaean

κάνθαρος of Aristophanes' *Peace* (73) and of Aischylos frag. 233 (Nauck) is no doubt identical with the Aetnaean κανθαρίς of Plato Comicus frag. 37. We might well wonder whether the flight to heaven in the *Peace* is not effected by the κάνθαρος rather than the κανθαρίς. The scarab was apparently sometimes ascribed aphrodisiac properties in Egyptian art (Denninger, op. cit.). The *dikaion* "bird" of India, which has been identified as the dung-beetle (Darcy Thompson, *Greek Birds*), was said to produce a lethal and soporific "excrement." I cannot accept Thompson's identification of this "excrement" as a resinous preparation of Indian hemp; "hashish" is not ordinarily lethal; nor is there any reason to associate it with a beetle.

The κανθάρεως was the name of a kind of vine (Theophrastus, *H. P.* 2.15.5); the κάνθαρος was the name of a drinking cup (Phrynichus 15, etc.).

[27] The confusion of such classifications can be sensed from the persistence of the aphrodisiac connotations of hashish or hemp, despite the ancient tradition that the drug is actually an anaphrodisiac. Galen (*De simpl. med.* VII-XII 8 Kuhn) claimed that hemp cuts off or dries up the semen. For the similar confusion of the drug's aphrodisiac and anaphrodisiac properties in Islamic civilization, see Franz Rosenthal, *The Herb: Hashish versus Medieval Muslim Society* (Leiden: 1971) 82 sq.

[28] Jerome, *Euseb. Chron.* A.U.C. 659.

[29] William Emboden, Jr., "Ritual Use of Cannabis Sativa," P. Furst, *Flesh of the Gods* (New York: 1972).

[30] σκανδικοπώλης Hsch., Phot., Suidas.

[31] Cf. schol. in *Knights* 18.

[32] Suidas s.v. σκάνδιξ. (Quoted from some anonymous comic author?)

[33] The foot is apparently also the penis in *Lysistrata* 416.

[34] Cf. Note 97 below for the sexual connotations of "naval battle."

[35] Κινησίας· κινεῖν (*L.S.-J.*^{9} II 4).

[36] E.g., κολλομελεῖ (κόλλοψ, peg or screw = ἀνδρόγυνος, *cinaedus* *L.S.-J.*^{9} II 2); γνωμοτυπεῖ (γνώμων, pointer: cf. Diogenes Cynicus, IV. B.C. philosophus, *Epistulae* 35: ὁ γνώμων ἀνίσταται, sens. obsc. *L.S.-J.*^{9}), etc.

[37] The metaphor can be documented also from other plays. In the *Frogs* (94-95), Dionysos claims that the inferior poets are disgusting lovers: they no sooner get their chorus than they urinate, instead of ejaculating in their tragedy-hetaira.

[38] Schol. in *Acharn.* 399, 410.

[39] *Pl.* 1120 sq.: *οἰνοῦττα* is either a cake of some kind (schol. ad loc.) or an intoxicating plant (Arist. Frag. 107); *ἰσχάς* is the dried fig; on *κωλῆ* as the membrum virile, cf. *Clouds* 989, 1019 (and schol. ad loc.).

[40] For documentation, see below, note 58.

[41] Ktesias Frag. 20 (Muller), quoted by Athenaeus 528f.; Plutarch, *Mor.* 336c; Dio Chrysostom 62.6.

Aristophanes costumed a character as Sardanapalus in *Birds* 1022.

I suspect that the original source for Ktesias may have been some fifth century comic routine which has been mistakenly taken literally. In the *Ekklesiazousai* (88-101), for example, "carding wool" involves either some pun or action which will expose the sexual organs and reveal the choral women as male-impersonators (they are, of course, really men disguised as women who have disguised themselves as men).

[42] *L.S.-J.*^{9} s.v. *ἀναβαίνω* II 7.

[43] Plutarch, *Mor.* 336c.

[44] *Vita Eur.* 136 W.

[45] Aristophanes, Frag. 580.

[46] *L.S.-J.*^{9} s.v. *μείγνυμι* B 4.

[47] Line 1442 seems misplaced in its manuscript position and should no doubt follow 1436.

[48] Cf. note 97 below.

[49] Kallias 12.

[50] Telekleides 40.

[51] Cf. the second section of this essay.

[52] The sexual meaning of "thresh" (*ἀλοάω*) should be sufficiently clear from *Frogs* 149 where, in a list of perversions which have earned people a place in Hell's "sewerage" (*βόρβορον . . . καὶ σκῶρ*), we find *ἢ μητέρ ' ἠλόασεν*.

[53] *δασυπώγων* with perhaps a pun on *δασύπυγος* (which means *δασύπρωκτος* according to schol. in Theoc. 5.112). Cf. the "shaggy buttocks" of the Cyprian men in Pl. Com. 3. Cf. *δασύτρωγλος* = *δασύπρωκτος* in *A.P.* 12.41 (Mel.).

White (i.e., hairless?) buttocks (*πύγαργος*) were a sign of cowardice and effeminacy: Sophokles, Frag. 1085, Kallias 12; black buttocks (*μελάμπυγος*) were a mark of manhood: Eubulus 61, Aristophanes, *Lys.* 802, etc. In Kratinos 295, a shaggy ass is caused by a bean (*κυρήβια*) diet; *ἐρεβίνθος* could imply the membrum virile (schol. in *Frogs* 545). We might also adduce *Frogs* 426 sq., where Kleisthenes' son is said to depilate his ass amongst the grave stelai, and to rend his "buttocks" (?): he is mourning for Sebinos, even though he is himself a masturbator (schol. in *Frogs* 427). Sebinos is a name which indicates a more interpersonal form of copulation (*σὲ βινεῖν*); cf. *Ekkles.* 979-80. He is, however, apparently also having sex, for in the upper world everyone is a corpse (*ἐν τοῖς ἄνω νεκροῖσι* 424), and thus Aristophanes has described a fantastic pun on ritual mourning (shorn locks and scratched cheeks) and anal copulation: note, for example, the mourner's position: *κἀκόπτετ' ἐγκεκυφώς.*

Note also the effect of Euripidean education: *Frogs* 1070: *καὶ τὰς πυγὰς ἐνέτριψεν.*

[54] Hsch., s.v. *ἴφυα . . . ὃ ἡμεῖς Λαβαντίδα καλοῦμεν.*

[55] *Thesm.* 1185-9 can leave no doubt about the sexual nature of the stage action.

[56] Cf. Dsc. 3.113-4.

[57] *Οἰνεὺς ὁδί* indicates that Euripides has either actors or their costumes with him on the *enkyklema.* Cf. 427: *ὁ χωλὸς οὑτοσί.*

[58] In the *Lysistrata,* the Spartan herald describes the lame walk of the frustrated husbands: they "bend forward like men carrying lamps" (1002-3). When they later enter (1072 sq.), they are so doubled up with spasms that their beards cover their groins like a woman's "sanitary napkin" (*χοιροκομεῖον*).

[59] If we adduce merely the extant tragedies of Sophokles, we note several "beggar" roles: *Oidipous Koloneus, Philoktetes,* Herakles of the *Trachiniai, Elektra.* Of the remaining three plays, *Ajax,* fresh from the slaughter of the cattle, and *Oidipous Tyrannos* after the self-mutilation, are certainly poor examples of kingly splendor; even *Antigone* we might imagine to be a little less than magnificently attired, since she has disfigured herself for ritual mourning.

[60] Dionysos, Xanthias, and the hotel hostess are all present and speaking on stage when Plathane speaks at line 552. The fourth actor would also play the role of Ploutos with Dionysos and Euripides and Aischylos all present.

[61] For sex as "play" see also *Ekklesiazousai* 922.

[62] Schol. in *Birds* 911.

[63] Adespota 12.

[64] Schol. in *Birds* 915.

[65] Matro Parodius (IV B.C.), *Convivium* 92.

[66] We can parallel the occurrence of a noticeable erection beneath clothing in the appearance of the Spartan herald in *Lysistrata* 980 sq.

[67] On the sexual meaning of the "naval battle," see note 97 below.

[68] Note the balanced oaths: *Frogs* 1067: νὴ τὴν Δήμητρα . . . and 1074: νὴ τὸν 'Απόλλω. . . .

[69] Cf. for example *Peace* 814, where "fish-destroyers" have smelly armpits, are polluted, and "shoo away old women birds." Hetairas quite often have bird names and we may wonder whether "birds" as well as "fish" are prostitutes. We might recall that the nightingale of the *Birds* is clearly an hetaira (cf. 670-74), and that she dances during that play's parabasis. It is interesting also to speculate about what stage action is involved when the priest enters "blowing" on a pipe (859) and singing "for the sake of joy" (855), and inviting "Joy" to sing along too: he or the two of them together are the unusual sight of a "crow with a mouthpiece." None of the other visitors to Bird-land are dressed as birds. There are, furthermore, no indications that the chorus wears the phallos, although the visitors may (Kinesias: see line 1379; poet: see line 915; Meton: note puns on ὀρθῷ . . . ὀρθαί . . . ὀρθαί 1004-8 as he measures and maps out the air). Note also the joke about Philokrates, the "sparrow-lecher" (1077: cf. Hsch.) who "blows" on thrushes and "defiles" them: he sells decoy birds, with a pun perhaps on prostitute. Females are birds also in *Lysistrata* 115, 131, 776.

There is sexual innuendo probably also in the "fish" (τριχίς, with a pun on τριχίας, etc., "hairy") which the husband got his fill of, so that he coughed all night long in the *Ekklesiazousai* (55-6); the wife complains that she got no sleep, and her complaint is obviously similar to the previous woman's complaint that her husband "drove" her all night (37-39).

[70] Rhetorical babbling is characteristic of "buggered youths" as is evident from a passage in the *Ekklesiazousai* (111-14) where a woman claims that she too has had that experience, and therefore should be able to speak as well as any young man. Later in the play it may be apposite to recall that the female's *penis coriaceus* is called a woman's "straight-talker" (916, cf. schol. ad loc.).

[71] See note 97 below.

[72] We should also consider the possibility that the reference involves the Aristophanic criticism of Euripides as much as it involves actual Euripidean dramaturgy. There is a certain nostalgia in the *Frogs* caused by the realization that the poet is putting to rest, with one final variation, some of his favorite comic routines: there will be no more Euripides. The "beggar-kings" bring the

comic poet back to the *Acharnians* and the days of his youth. Otherwise we must assume that Aristophanes was so outraged by the technique (which by the time of the *Frogs,* at least, was no longer solely Euripidean), that he never tired of voicing his indignation.

[73] Eur., Frag. 698 (Nauck). Cf. schol. in *Acharn.* 440.

[74] Cf. schol. ad loc.

[75] Cf. *L.S.-J.*^{9} s.v. Μυσός, and Antiphanes (comicus) 33, where members of Plato's Academy are satirized for their foreign affectations in dress.

[76] Cf. schol. ad loc.

[77] Note that Euripides realizes that this item is not part of his costume as Telephos. The scholiast's explanation of this item is nonsense, since he is vainly trying to find some appropriateness for the basket as part of an "old man's" costume: "Old men, because they walk so slowly, hide their lamp in a basket so as to preserve the fire." The same attempt leads him to identify line 454 as a quote from *Telephos,* although the similarity to Eur. frag. 717 is based on an entirely undistinctive sequence of words: τί δ' ὦ τάγας; we might well doubt that anyone in the audience could have identified the source.

[78] The *kotyliskos* is the sacred mixing bowl of Dionysos, and also the vessel with which the initiates pour their libations (Athenaeus 11.479c, who cites Nicander of Thyateira and Aristophanes, frag. 380, as his sources; cf. Hsch.). In a fragment of Pherecrates (69) a woman complains that her "bile" has never been the same since the day that she drank the "drug" from such a chalice.

[79] As the profusion of wild guesses indicates, the scholiasts were quite baffled by this item. Apparently there was nothing in their texts of the *Telephos* to justify such an oddity.

[80] One scholiast's interpretation identifies *phylleia* as the leaves of *thridakine,* which had anaphrodisiac properties (Eubolus 14).

[81] See notes 78 and 80 above.

[82] Cf. schol. in *Acharn.* 472. Some unknown Symmachos apparently found the line in his text of the *Telephos,* but the scholiast's edition did not contain it.

[83] Neither in the *Frogs* nor in the *Acharnians* is the word *basileus* ("king") proper used: *Acharn.* 472: κοιράνους; *Frogs* 1063: βασιλεύοντας.

[84] The lines which follow the mention of *etnos* defy comprehension: "and amongst those youngest girls, Smoios, the sullen, dressed

as a horseman purifies the women's *tryblion*-cups" (846-7). His special dress no doubt qualifies him as the "mounter" (cf. *Lys.* 60 and schol. ad loc.; *L.S.-J.*^{9} s.v. κέλης III 1). In the *Acharnians* it is Dikaiopolis' daughter who ladles the *etnos.*

[85] That the δελφάκιον is the *pudenda muliebria* is recorded in Hesychios; such a possible meaning is indicated in any case by the χοῖρος scene of the *Acharnians* (729 sq.).

[86] On Kleon's role in the *Knights,* see 315, 325, 352, etc. Kleon is the "skin-sticker" who is trying to pass himself off as a man: he has gone around getting seeds into his sack for so long that now he thinks he has some to give to others. The harlot impersonates a male with her "skin" imitation of the Sausage-seller's authentic item.

[87] Fragments 114-156 (Nauck).

[88] Cf. *L.S.-J.*^{9} s.v. κροκωτός. A man, wearing the *krokotos,* became an impersonation of Dionysos or a woman: cf. Kratinus 38.

[89] Although the word ἐπίξηνον occurs often in the *Acharnians* the only other fifth century occurrence is in a lyric passage in Aischylos' *Agamemnon* (1277): *L.S.-J.*^{9}'s gloss "executioner's block" may be misleading since Kassandra is lamenting that she is to be "slaughtered" (1278), not "executed." The *epixenon* is a kitchen tool, not an instrument of punishment (cf. Suidas, Hsch., *Etym. Gen.* Cf. also Pollux 6.90, 10.101. Note that the *epixenon* is brought from inside the house in *Acharn.* 359); E. Fraenkel (*Aeschylos Agamemnon,* Oxford: 1950, line 1277 = p. 593 vol. 3) criticizes the accuracy of the *L.S.-J.*^{9} gloss. We suspect that too much is made of the *epixenon* in the *Acharnians* for the comic routine to have involved simply the head on the "butcher block." Dikaiopolis does mention the "head" (318, 486) and the "neck" (492), but both terms easily admit of metaphorical extension: Aristotle *H. A.* 510a 14 (ἡ κεφαλὴ τοῦ ὄρχεως) and Pollux 1.90 (αὐχήν is the handle of the steering-paddle of a ship). The chorus in the *Acharnians* (360) asks "what is this thing which is so big" which Dikaiopolis wishes to say, and later (368), Dikaiopolis doesn't bother "to put the shield on" as he begins his speech. The speech itself concerns the rape of the Megarian prostitutes as the cause of the Peloponnesian War: are we to imagine that Dikaiopolis actually has his head on the butcher block for all this? If our suggestion is accepted, there is obviously a special point in Dikaiopolis' having to deliver his speech even without the *skandix* (480); there is a special point also in his "beggar" pose. When Lamachos comes rushing in after Dikaiopolis' speech, he asks who has "roused the Gorgon from the covering" (574); and Dikaiopolis insinuates that Lamachos, even though well equipped, does not have sufficient strength to peel back the foreskin of Dikaiopolis (591-92).

[90] κορακίνους (with pun on κόρας κινεῖν?).

[91] Pherecrates 22.

[92] Scholia in *Wasps* 260. Cf. 262.

L.S.-J.^{9} s.v. μύκης 5, glosses "snuff of a lamp-wick." Such a definition explains the metaphor of a "lamp-mushroom" by assuming that the ancients' inability to comprehend the nature of fungoid growth allowed them to see something similar in the mushrooms which appeared on putrefying damp wood and the sooty excrescence on the wick. The scholiast, however, is quite clear in defining the "lamp-mushroom" as sparks; even the variant opinion that it is an "insect" is merely an attempt to offer a physical reason for the sparks around the lamp wick.

[93] Theophrastos, *de Signis Tempestatum* 14, 42, et al.

[94] G. Hermann, *De choro Vesparum dissert.* (Leipzig: 1843) p. 7.

[95] S. Srebrny, *Eos* 1 (1959-60) 43 n. 2; followed by MacDowell in his commentary (*Wasps*, Oxford: 1971).

[96] Note the scholiast's gloss for *φέψαλοι· Σπινθῆρες, οἷον πῦρ πνέουσιν.* Despite the gloss, the scholiast has not understood the situation. MacDowell argues (225 *ἐκ τῆς ὀσφύος*) that the stinger is "coming out of their backs"; but surely that is a strange place for it: stinging insects in antiquity had stingers in the belly anyway (cf. Pliny 11.60: "aculeum apibus dedit natura ventri consertum"): and Aristophanes would have to have been a fool to lose such an opportunity for comedy. It is true that the stinger is called "this tail piece" in line 1075, but the metaphor, accompanied by a demonstrative gesture, would be not only understandable, but quite hilarious: "tail" (*L.S.-J.*^{9} s.v. οὐρά I 2) can, in any case, be documented as meaning the sexual organ. I also find it difficult to follow MacDowell in assuming that the stingers are not visible to the audience until line 408, when the wasps remove their cloaks for battle: it is at this point, when they are angered, that they "get an erection." The stinger is apparently maneuverable, like a weapon, and it is the extraordinarily formidable appearance of it now which causes Xanthias to remark about it (420), for he has already been told, in line 225, that the old jurors have stingers. MacDowell's posterior stinger would require that the wasps, mustering for attack, would have to back into their foe! Note also that a prostitute in line 740 grinds down the penis and the *osphys*. In the *Lysistrata* (962-6), the *osphys* is one of the parts of the male body which suffers from sexual frustration.

"Spark" (*φέψαλος*) may have been an "argot" metaphor for the "glans penis": cf. *Acharnians* 279, where Dikaiopolis is privately celebrating the Dionysia. He will rape the Thracian maenad, get "high," drink the sedative potion, and finally hang the "shield" on the "spark." The traditional explanation of this passage disregards the erotic context and places the shield in the "chimney place"; the *φέψαλος*, however, is not the chimney place. In the *Lysistrata* (107-10), a woman complains about the disastrous state

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of sexual affairs: there is not a "spark" (φεψάλυξ) of an adulterous male left; and ever since the Milesians revolted, she hasn't even seen a good, long *penis coriaceus*, the "leather aid"; the problem is that the husbands, even if they ever do come home for a moment, just have time enough to grab the "shield" and then off they go again to war. The implement apparently could be red or have a red tip: cf. Herodes 6.19 (βαυβών is another name for the ὄλισβος; from *Thesm.* 560, it appears that the implement could be metaphorically called an "axe," πέλεκυς: cf. πελεκάω *L.S.-J.*^{9}).

We can document a sexual meaning for the verb προσβάλλειν in *Peace* 994. For weaponry as sexual "equipment," cf. *Acharn.* 591; *Lys.* 156, 800.

[97] In the *Clouds* Aristophanes similarly used the phallos as part of an unusual costume: the clouds have noses (340 sq.):

> STREPSIADES: Tell me, why is it that if they're really clouds, they resemble mortal women? Women aren't like that.
> SOKRATES: Well, what do you think they look like?
> STREPSIADES: I don't know, really. These look like fluttering puffs of wool—and not like women—no, by god, not at all: these have noses!

The point of the joke is made clear in the ensuing parody of Socratic dialectic. Clouds assume the appearance of whatever they happen to see, and these clouds have just seen the female impersonator Kleisthenes and therefore are women with phalloi! (The penis is called a "nose" also in *Ekkles.* 630.)

In the parabasis of the *Clouds*, the choral leader claims that the comedy, like an Elektra, is a good girl: "for the first time she comes on stage not having stitched together a leather thing, hung down, red at the end, thick so that the kids can get a laugh." Aristophanes is here saying not that he has rejected the use of the comic phallos but rather that he has been inventive in its employment.

Inventiveness in the employment of the comic phallos is also evident in the costume of the King's Eye in the *Acharnians*. The ambassador apparently has the phallos protruding through an oarlock, which in Greek was called an "eye" (cf. scholia in *Acharn.* 95; the oarlock was lined with leather to protect against wear; this becomes the leather sacking [i.e., testes?] which Dikaiopolis notices beneath the King's eye, 97). Thus the ambassador has a "shipwreck look" though he is about to enter harbor (96), which is no doubt the point of the mention of the "gape-assed" Ionians which follows (104-6, cf. 133). Cf. Pl. Com. 3, where the oar is clearly a penis, and the act of rowing is copulation.

Whether such costumes were actually represented, or merely fantastic metaphors, we cannot know.

I might further suggest that this connotation of the oar underlies the manner of dance which carries Dionysos in the *Frogs* across the Styx in Charon's boat. In answer to Dionysos' question as to how he will cross, Herakles points to a "little boat" and adds that the fee is "two obols" (139-40). (The two obols have caused critics much trouble since Charon's fee is supposed to be only one obol: if the demonstrative has pointed to what I have implied, then the dual nature of the coins should be obvious. Two obols, of course, may simply indicate a round trip.) Thus there is some trouble about the manner in which Dionysos is to sit when he embarks: "Sit to the oar!" Charon says. "Hey, what are you doing?" Dionysos answers, "What am I doing? What else? I'm sitting to the oar, just like you said." "Not there, you stomach!" Charon replies. "There, shove forward and stretch out your hands." (196-201) Dionysos has apparently sat on the oar-penis, but Charon insists that Dionysos, despite his inexperience as a sailor "drive." We must entertain the possibility that the entirety of the very famous frog chorus is an accompaniment to a dance of anal intercourse (cf. *Frogs* 237-38). We adduce in support of this fantastic suggestion, the conversation in the *Ekklesiazousai* where two hags are fighting over the young man who is reluctant to sleep with either one of them, as he is required now by law, in the newly established, female-dominated, communist regime: he calls them difficult "ferry men" because by pulling (on his penis) they "scrape" the sailors; how, he asks, can he "row" both of them at once? The vagina, moreover, is the "hole" or "oar-lock": *Ekkles.* 624: τρύπημα (cf. *Peace* 1234); *Ekkles.* 906: τρῆμα (cf. *Lys.* 410); thus, earlier in the *Ekklesiazousai,* a woman complains that her husband, who is an heroic sailor, kept her awake all night "driving" her on the bed.

Lest we doubt that a Creek god could be shown on the stage in such an unbecoming activity, we may recall the scene (*Frogs* 482 sq.) where Dionysos apparently wipes his anus, which he calls his "heart," with a "sponge." (Cf. also 740.) We should remember also that Dionysos himself claims that he "embarked" on the (hermaphroditic) Kleisthenes and "did naval battle" (48-49). (Cf. also 432 sq., where Kallias, identified with a demonstrative, is said to have covered his "vagina" with a lion skin and done "naval battle." In the *Birds,* Pisthetairos wants to get between the goddess Iris's thighs and claims that she will be amazed that, although he is old, he has an erection "three prow rams long" (1256); Iris, upon her entrance, for some reason of costuming, had looked like a boat (1202 sq.).

We may wonder, furthermore, about the manner of Dionysos' entrance with Xanthias at the beginning of the *Frogs.* Is Dionysos the "ass" and has he let Xanthias "ride" him, punning on a verb which means also to "cover" or "copulate" (21 sq.)? (ὀχέω, cf. ὀχεύω, ὀχευτικός, ὀχευτής in *L.S.-J.*^{9}; φέρω would presumably refer to the action of the mounted rather than to that of the mounter: thus, πῶς φέρεις γὰρ ὅς γ' ὀχεῖ; 25.) Notice that Xanthias must dismount (35) so that Dionysos can knock on Herakles' door ("centaur fashion" [38]. A centaur is glossed in Hesychios as a παιδεραστής); the ass disappears from that moment on, even though Xanthias repeatedly complains that he is carrying a burden (87, 107, 115): why doesn't he put his burden on the now unoccupied ass—unless there never was one on stage?

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[98] Stingers are wont to attack that part of the anatomy: cf. Pl.

Com. 173.21, where a stinging scorpion also behaves in this manner.

[99] A more traditional interpretation has the wasps harpooning the Persians' pajama pants and stinging them in the jaw and lower back. Note, however, that θυλάκη is the "scrotum"; *L.S.-J.*[9] glosses the plural of θύλακος as "slang term for the loose trousers of Persians and other Orientals," but the only other occurrence of the word (Euripides, *Cyclops* 182) is clearly in a passage of sexual innuendo: such oriental pajamas were apparently so called by analogy with "scrotum sacks." In the *Ekklesiazousai* (730-33), a man tells his beautiful "chaff-mover" (κιναχύρα, "sieve for flour," with a pun on κινεῖν, "copulate") to show itself at the "door" like "market wares" so that it can be "ground down" and "carry the basket" while rotating downward his "many *thylakoi.*" In the *Knights* (369 sq.), Kleon threatens the Sausage-seller with the *byrse,* the female's *penis coriaceus,* which Kleon has taken in order to be a man after so many years of "collecting grain" like a woman; the Sausage-seller counters the threatened *byrse* by claiming that he will "skin" Kleon and make the *byrse* into a *thylakos* for the grain Kleon has stolen. The sexual nature of the threats is firmly established by the context.

In the *Thesmophoriazousai* when Mnesilochos is shaved for his disguise as a woman, there can be little doubt that it is not the beard alone that is being shaved. He first must remove his clothing (214); he bends over (230, 236, 239); he is being changed into a *delphakion—pudenda muliebria—*(237) and will have to go on military duty bald (232); and finally when he is "singed," his ass catches fire (242 sq.), and his anus must be washed out (188), apparently with sperm. It must therefore have been hilarious when for the shaving scene he is told "to puff out his right cheek" (221); Euripides, who is doing the shaving, has extracted the "razor" from Agathon's "razor sheath" (218-20), and the razor, as well as the instrument later used for singeing, is apparently the phallos. The fantastic riddle in Eubulus 107 assumes that the rump can be confused with the face: it speaks, without a tongue, it is both smooth and shaggy, it is the same for both male and female. Cf. also the contexts for γνάθος in *Lys.* 361 and *Ekkles.* 1101.

[100] Scholia in *Wasps* 1110.

[101] τἀνθρήνια (rather than σφηκιᾷ, as in 224); cf. 1107.

[102] In *Lysistrata* 475, Aristophanes again confuses wasps and bees. Wasps and hornets were considered "degenerate varieties" of bees: Pliny *N. H.* 11.61.

[103] MacDowell acknowledges that he can see no reason for the wasps bending to the ground: "Perhaps they sat on low backless benches which induced a crouching posture. To say that they stooped with age would be inappropriate to this context, where the subject is the conditions in the courts" (op. cit., 275).

On the "worms" in the κύτταροι, we might compare a passage in the *Thesmophoriazousai* (515-16), where the nurse who brings the supposititious infant to the deluded husband says, "His little foreskin is just like yours, all wrinkled and twisted just like a *κύτταρος*." Note also Aristoph. Frag. 583, where the "grinding woman" shares her life with her lover, feeding on "worms and mill-roaches."

[104] Note the similar occurrence of the verb *βύω* ("stuff, jam") in this passage and in 1110.

[105] The worker insects are, of course, actually female: the stinger is a peculiar development of the ovipositor. It is the stingerless drone who is the male. The matriarchal nature of the hive community, however, was not always understood in antiquity, or at least not in later antiquity, and the queen was thought to be a king. A scholiast, commenting on Aristophanes' *Wasps* (1114), does, however, recognize that the drones are male; and Aristotle knew about the queen wasp (*H. A.* 627^{b} 32).

[106] Cf. *Lys.* 1024, where *φαίνω* means to expose the penis.

[107] Cf. *Lys.* 845-46, where the "wheel" is the cause of Kinesias' erection.

[108] The traditional interpretation of this passage assumes that old men have poor circulation, and that therefore it is quite expectable that a stubbed toe should cause blood poisoning and a subsequent inflammation of the groin. Surely this is overly subtle for comedy?

[109] Aristophanes, Frag. 377 (cf. Photius and Suidas, s.v. *πηνίον*). The action is supposed to be performed by Sokrates and Chairephon.

[110] The action of "bending over" seems indicative of anal copulation in *Acharnians* 16, where the musician Chairis ("Joy") bent over into the "upright" (i.e., musical nome).

[111] Cf. *Wasps* 739-40; *Acharn.* 1147; *Peace* 11-12.
On *tribon* as "penis" or "foreskin," cf. note 115 below.

[112] The scene, despite several improbable interpretations in the scholia, remains quite obscure. Note the pun, for example, in 1131-32: *τὸν τρίβων' ἄφες, τηνδὶ δὲ χλαῖναν ἀναβαλοῦ τριβωνικῶς*; the son insists on giving the old man a nice experience (1125, 1130), although the father claims that the *tribon* is the only thing that saved him during the northern campaigns, and that he tried the son's suggestion once but it didn't agree with him—he got his fill of "grilled fish" and ended up owing the "wool-comber" (*κναφεύς*, with a pun on *κνάω*, "scratch"; a cheese "grater" is the penis in *Lys.* 237) a three-obol piece. The old man has engendered and raised a child only to find that "he wants to choke him" (on the sexual sense of "choke," cf. *Knights* 894). Then follows a series of puns on what the new thing is called: *καυνάκης*, with a pun on *καίω*, "burn," or *καῦμα*, etc., "heat"; *σισύρα Θυμαιτίς*, punning per-

haps on *ἐπιθυμεῖν*, "desire"; *Μορύχου σάγμα* (cf. the comic routine in *Acharn.* 574?) *κρόκης χόλιξ*, "thread sausage"; etc. Is the son perhaps instructing the father in some variety of sexuality?

The suggestion is somewhat difficult to accept, but the meat hook in two other passages is the penis: *Knights* 770-72, where the Sausage-seller, in vowing his love for Demos, hopes that he may be grated in honey-porridge, and be dragged by his testes' meat hook to the Potters' Quarters; and *Ekklesiazousai* 1002-4, where the meaning is obscure but the context is obviously sexual.

[113] On the *πάτταλος* as the penis, cf. *Knights* 371, 375-81; *Ekkles.* 1020.

[114] MacDowell (op. cit.) suggests that the metaphor refers either to the use of oil as a cure for earache, or to the inadequate feeding of invalids, but he admits that neither idea makes sense.

[115] From a comparison with *Acharnians* 150 sq., where locusts, fig leaves, and the penis again occur, it is obvious that the "fig leaf" is the foreskin, and that Philokleon in the *Wasps* is therefore saying that the other guest has a circumcised look. The *tribon* in this passage is either the penis or perhaps (defining genitive) the "worn-out foreskin coat." (Cf. scholia in *Acharn.* 156; also *L.S.-J.*[9], s.v. *ἀποθριάζω.*) This meaning of the "fig leaf" apparently also lies behind Bdelykleon's saying earlier in the *Wasps* that the attacking members of the chorus are just "fig leaf noise" (436). Fig leaf noise is proverbial for "empty threats" (cf. scholia in *Wasps* 435 and *L.S.-J.*[9], *θρῖον* I 2), and in view of the phallos stinger of the wasps, the point is obviously that they are "impotent" noise. Note also the fig leaf jokes in *Knights* 954, *Lys.* 664.

[116] Cf. *Peace* 36-37, where a sexual innuendo for the rope also seems probable.

[117] That the boy and man are father and son does not rule out the possibility of sexual meaning: cf. *Wasps* 608, where father and daughter engage in *καταγλωττισμός*.

On sexual activity as "eating," cf. *Peace* 885, where the senator has a passion for licking up the hetaira Festivity's "broth"; cf. also, perhaps, the philathenian Thracian's passion for "sausages" in the *Acharnians* (145). Cf. Pl. Com. 43, 173, etc.

[118] Cf. *πρόβυσον* 249-50 (?). A husband is led by his penis in *Lys.* 1119.

The opening routine of the *Thesmophoriazousai* introduces Euripides leading Mnesilochos in what is again apparently a sexual mimesis: cf. 18 sq.

[119] In view of the wasps' "sexual" use of their stingers in chastisement, *κολάζω* need not imply a reference to some recent law case, as the traditional interpretation explains. Note also the innuendo of sadism in *Wasps* 448 sq.

[120] Hesychius, s.v. *βόρβορος*. Cf. *βορβορυγμός* *L.S.-J.*[9]

[121] *Lys.* 1174: κοπραγωγεῖν; *Knights* 295: κοπροφοήσω σ' εἰ λαλήσεις. Λαλέω is "anal" speech as opposed to γρύζω, swine sound or "vaginal" speech: thus the threat for the latter is διαφορήσω.

[122] The psychotropic character of Dionysian rites was first suggested by Robert Graves: "Centaurs' Food," *Food for Centaurs* (New York: 1960) 257-282; the suggestion was repeated in the introduction to his *Greek Myths* (Baltimore: 1960), and more recently in his *Difficult Questions, Easy Answers* (Garden City, N.Y.: 1973). The idea has been popularized by John Allegro's controversial *The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross* (Garden City, N.Y.: 1970). All studies of the sacred mushroom are indebted to the remarkable work of the ethnomycologist Gordon Wasson, who has argued convincingly for the identification of the botanical original of the shaman's "World Tree" and of the Soma plant-god of the *Rig Veda* as the birch or pine with its attendant fungus, the *Amanita muscaria: Soma, Divine Mushroom of Immortality* (New York: 1972, reprint of the Hague: 1968).

Classicists have generally ignored the serious consequences this work has for our conceptions of Greek culture; cf., for example, the ridicule accorded Graves in John Peradotto's "Classical Mythology: Bibliographical Survey" (APA: 1973), although the reviewer obviously has nothing but his native intellect to guide him.

The present essay is part of a longer work in which I investigate the psychotropic nature of Greek wine, and the role of mushroom lore in Greek rituals and tragic symbolism.

[123] I find it difficult to assume, with MacDowell (op. cit., 327), "that the sons of Karkinos appeared in person in the original performance of *Wasps*." MacDowell further argues that the warning not to dance with Karkinos' sons a year later in the *Peace* (781-6) indicates "that their participation in the *Wasps* was a failure and Aristophanes regretted allowing them to take part"; it was supposedly their unsatisfactory dancing which spoiled the play's spectacular ending and caused it to fail to win first prize. Surely, however, that is a very tenuous argument; critics repeatedly forget, in any case, that the element of chance selection in the judging and voting procedure made it possible for a poet to earn the majority opinion and still lose (cf. Pickard-Cambridge, *Dramatic Festivals of Athens*).

I am not contesting the historicity of a fifth century Karkinos who was a general in the early years of the Peloponnesian War (Thucydides 2.23; *I.G.* I^2 296.30-40) or that he had sons, some of whom wrote tragedies (Aelian *V.H.* 2.8) and were engaged in political activities (Isocrates 17.52). Our information about them, however, has been inflated by scholiast explanations of misunderstood comic routines. They obviously offer a fortunitous opportunity for a pun on the crab.

Although *karkinos* as the insect pest cannot be directly documented, the insect is quite recognizably crab-shaped and *karkinos* would be the obvious name for it in Greek. (The crab-louse, *Phthirius inguinalis,* is quite different in shape from other lice, for which the generic name in Greek was φθείρ, related to the verbal idea of "destruction" or "corruption." The crab-louse grows to a considerable size: it is approximately one-tenth of an inch in length and its crab-shape is clear to the unaided eye.) The passage in the *Peace,* after the admonition not to dance with the Crabsons, offers some suggestive descriptions of them: they are quite small "dwarfs," in fact; "little bits of dung," "versatile creatures," "home-grown quarrelsome birds," "dancers with shielded necks" (789-90). The context for the admonition, moreover, is an invocation of the Muse, who is asked to celebrate weddings and banquets: "Too bad!" said Papa Crab; "It was too good to be true, anyway!" (791-95). The diminutive size of the Crabsons is also stressed in the *Wasps,* where one of them is called *ὁ πινοτήρης . . . ὁ σμικρότατος*, i.e., the pinna-guard or the crab so small that it actually lives in a mollusk shell. We might note that the "foot" of the mollusk is penis-shaped and that the *pinoteres* crab lives in the pinna shell in symbiosis with the mollusk. It is this crab who writes tragedy obviously because of the phallic symbolism in Dionysiac rites (1510-11).

It seems unlikely that Karkinos actually had "three dwarfish and deformed sons" (Maurice Platnauer, commentary on the *Peace,* Oxford: 1964, p. 135). The number of the sons, in any case, is not certain; scholiast opinion varies between three and four. By one view, Datis of the masturbation passage in the *Peace* (289-91) is identified as one of the Crabs. Note also a passage later in the *Peace* (863-64) where the context is clearly sexual: Trygaeos is the envied bridegroom of the prostitute "Harvest" and fantasizes about the moment when he will sleep with her and hold onto her teats; the leader of the chorus tells him that he'll be more fortunate then than the Crab "twirlers."

A passage from the parabasis of the *Knights* (595-610) goes far toward justifying our fantastic suggestion. There we have to do with a Corinthian "crab"; and, at least for the world of comedy, Corinth was a city famous for its brothels. The members of the chorus of cavalry men (with a sexual connotation of "mounter": cf. note 84 above) are praising their horses. These beasts, provisioned with Spartan drug crops and garlic and onions (plants identified with the sexual organs: cf. *Acharn.* 164-65, etc.), jump aboard the cavalry transport ships in manly fashion (it is usually they who are mounted, but the ships offer an interesting variation), grab the oars and thrust them in (rowing is a recurrent metaphor for copulation: cf. note 97 above), and thus sail to Corinth. There the younger of them dig their beds ("digging" indicates vaginal copulation: cf. *Lysistrata* 1174 and *Peace,* passim) and graze, not on Persian grass (plants are often substituted for pubic hair: cf. *Lysistrata* 87 et passim) but on crabs, if one should happen to creep out from the "depths" to the "door" (obviously indicative in comic idiom of the vagina: cf. *Lysistrata,* passim). That is what these horses hunt; and a Corinthian crab is thus prompted to comment that neither on land nor sea can the crabs now hide in the "depths" to escape the "horsemen."

[124] *οἶον μυκτὴρ μυκᾶται καὶ σφόνδυλος ἀχεῖ.* On the *σφόνδυλος* voting counter, cf. Pollux 8.17.