

# Aristophanes on his own poetry

Autor(en): **Bremer, J.M.**

Objekttyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **Entretiens sur l'Antiquité classique**

Band (Jahr): **38 (1993)**

PDF erstellt am: **23.05.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-660842>

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## IV

J.M. BREMER

### ARISTOPHANES ON HIS OWN POETRY

With due respect to Socrates, poets are generally very well aware of what they are doing: aware not only of their craft in general, of the function of poetry, of the relationship between poet and audience and so on, but also of the individual way in which they operate, and of the impact they want to have. Their texts show this awareness, and literary scholarship has been keen on elaborating explicitly and systematically what poets have suggested only by implication or stated incidentally. Perhaps it is due to the autumnal overripeness of our present European culture that this self-awareness is so much in evidence in the texts of 20th century poets: Rilke, Valéry, Auden, to name a few; and the playwright B. Brecht has even written a treatise to explain the nature of his drama. But in the spring of the same European literature, Greek poets have shown the same awareness. Homer, Pindar and Callimachus are striking examples, and scholars have elaborated their 'poetics'<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> E.g. W. MARG, *Homer über die Dichtung* (Münster 1971), and C. MACLEOD, «Homer on Poetry...», in *Collected Essays* (Oxford 1983), 1-16; M. BOWRA, *Pindar* (Oxford 1964), 1-41 and 193-238; and E.-R. SCHWINGE, *Künstlichkeit von Kunst*, *Zetemata* 84 (München 1986), 1-47 on Callimachus.

In the context of these *Entretiens* it will be rewarding to investigate Aristophanes' poetics. As far as I know, there is as yet no comprehensive treatment of this subject in the form of a monograph or an essay, although aspects of it have been discussed in books or articles. In 1967 Cantarella had already said<sup>2</sup>: «Nella immensa bibliografia aristofanea manca finora, tuttavia, uno studio completo ed esauriente su Aristofane come teorico e critico di poesia.» Instead of setting myself to the task of (a) discussing Aristophanes' theory of poetry in general, I have decided to confine myself to (b) tracing his ideas *about his own activity as a poet*. Why? In the first place because (a) — if it is feasible at all — will be much more rewarding once Dover's edition of *Ranae*<sup>3</sup> has become available; in the second place because (b) seemed to me more centripetal and promising for these *Entretiens*. On the basis of an unbiased re-reading of the complete Aristophanes I have written this paper, perhaps amounting to not much more than a rough sketch. Others will come and contest or correct the lines of this sketch: they are most welcome<sup>4</sup>. I will first give a summary.

<sup>2</sup> R. CANTARELLA, «Agatone e il prologo delle *Tesmoforiazuse*», in ΚΩΜΩΙΔΟΤΡΑΓΗΜΑΤΑ. *Studia Aristophanea W.J.W. Koster in honorem* (Amsterdam 1967), 7 n. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Already R. CANTARELLA had pointed out (see my previous note): «un simile studio ... è possibile soltanto dopo una esatta valutazione, nei particolari e in generale, del problema della poesia nelle *Rane*.» Cantarella ignores C.M.J. SICKING's *Aristophanes' Ranae. Een hoofdstuk uit de geschiedenis der Griekse Poetica* (Assen 1962). For my purpose Sicking's book is not strictly relevant, as he concentrates on what A. says about tragedy.

<sup>4</sup> Already in September 1991, one month after these *Entretiens*, Allan SOMMERSTEIN presented a paper «Old Comedians on Old Comedy» at a colloquium held in Zurich; it will appear in the 1992 issue of the periodical *Drama*.

1. Aristophanes' programmatic assertions about the lessons (political and moral) to be drawn from his plays are sincere in so far as the city and its citizens are the constant theme and focus of his plays.
2. He is constantly aware of the fragility of the link between himself as a poet and his audience, and shows himself, if not always, at least often prepared to accommodate his plays to what this audience likes and dislikes.
3. His texts may strike a modern reader by their colloquialisms, but proximity to the talk of the man in the street is not what Aristophanes strives after in the first place. He aims at upgrading comedy, and — by means of constant 'intertextuality' — at placing it in the context of Greek poetry.
4. If he claims originality (and he does), he will have been thinking in the first place of the grand design of his plays, the creative, and so often absurd, comical concepts behind the plot. I shall try to substantiate these four statements in this order.

## I

As Aristophanes is conscious of his place in the great tradition of Greek poetry (my third section will be devoted to that theme), he poses as an educator, who criticizes his audience for bad conduct, and teaches them what is right and wrong<sup>5</sup>. There is no need to be long in discussing the relevant passages: we are all familiar with them:

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<sup>5</sup> Cp. W.J. VERDENIUS, *Homer, the Educator of the Greeks*, Med. Kon. Ned. Akad. Wet., afd. Lett. 33, 5 (Amsterdam 1970); M. DETIENNE, *Les maîtres de vérité dans la Grèce archaïque* (Paris 1967); and, short but very relevant, K.J. DOVER, *Greek Popular Morality* (Oxford 1974), 29-30.



- ἄλλ' ὑμεῖς τοι [sc. τὸν ποιητὴν] μὴ ποτ' ἀφῆσθ' · ὥς κωμωδήσει τὰ δίκαια·  
φησὶν δ' ὑμᾶς πολλὰ διδάξειν ἀγάθ', ὥστ' εὐδαίμονας εἶναι (*Ach.* 655-656)<sup>6</sup>
- (ὁ ποιητῆς) τολμᾷ λέγειν τὰ δικάια (*Eq.* 510)
- τοιόνδ' εὐρόντες ἀλεξίκαχον τῆς χώρας τῆσδε καθαρτὴν (*Vesp.* 1043)
- τὸν ἱερὸν χορὸν δίκαιόν ἐστι χρηστὰ τῇ πόλει  
ξυμπαραίνειν καὶ διδάσκειν (*Ran.* 686-687; cp. *Lys.* 648)

And in *Ranae* 1009 Aristophanes makes even Euripides say that a good poet deserves admiration not only for his cleverness but also for political and civic advices: δεξιότητος καὶ νοουθεσίας, ὅτι βελτίους τε ποιοῦμεν / τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν (*Ran.* 1009-1010; cp. 1500-1502).

The question whether or not Aristophanes, with his poetical productions, intended to take an independent stand in the political debate of his time, has in its turn been the subject of a lively scholarly discussion in our time. In 1938 two papers appeared, one by K. Reinhardt and one by A.W. Gomme<sup>7</sup>. The first scholar, speaking from Nazi Germany and deeply impressed by the courageous performance of Athenian democracy, stated that Aristophanes considered it his vocation to be the «Warner und politischer Erzieher. [...] Die stets wache

<sup>6</sup> In *Ach.* 500 Dicaeopolis says τὸ γὰρ δίκαιον οἶδε καὶ τρυγωδία. In CQ N.S. 33 (1983), 331-333 O. TAPLIN argues forcibly that, although the context is not that of a parabasis, the speaker = Aristophanes. «Tragedy's acquaintance with justice is something everybody takes for granted — the novelty is to claim the same for comedy.»

<sup>7</sup> K. REINHARDT, «Aristophanes und Athen», in *Europäische Revue* 14 (1938), 754-767, and A.W. GOMME, «Aristophanes and Politics», in CR 52 (1938), 97-109. Both papers can conveniently be consulted in H.-J. NEWIGER (ed.), *Aristophanes und die Alte Komödie*, Wege der Forschung 265 (Darmstadt 1975), 55-74 and 75-98 (henceforth I shall refer to this volume as *AAK*). The page-numbers in the text refer to the pagination in *AAK*.

Sorge auf dem Grunde seiner Tollheit kann nur überhören, wer ihn nach dem Weltkrieg... überhaupt nicht... las» (69). Gomme, writing in the safety of British democracy, insisted that one should study and appreciate Aristophanes not as if he were a politician but as a poet and a dramatist<sup>8</sup>; «this is the great claim which he makes for himself in his early plays, that he had raised the comic drama to a higher level... not by giving good political advice — that is only his jest, or at best only incidental — but by (...) dealing in the true spirit of comedy (not of satire) with important matters» (97-98).

The debate has continued. About twenty years ago G.E.M. de Ste.Croix<sup>9</sup> followed the line taken by Reinhardt (admiration for Athenian democracy and for the outspokenness of the comic poet in political matters), and considered Aristophanes to be «a man of very vigorous political views of a conservative, 'Cimonian' variety (not at all untypical among the Athenian upper classes)» (371). More recently, the issue of Aristophanes' politics has been taken up by at least four scholars: I refer to Walther Kraus' *Aristophanes' politische Komödien*<sup>10</sup>, Malcolm Heath's *Political Comedy in Aristophanes*<sup>11</sup>, Simon Goldhill's *The Poet's Voice*<sup>12</sup> and Jeffrey Henderson's essay *The Demos and*

<sup>8</sup> In *Hermathena* 50 (1937), 87-125, an article devoted to a discussion of the comic technique of Aristophanes, D. GRENE had said exactly the opposite: «First and foremost the Attic Comedian is a propagandist, and only secondly a playwright.» (88).

<sup>9</sup> *The Origins of the Peloponnesian War* (London 1972), app. xxix: «The political outlook of Aristophanes», 355-371.

<sup>10</sup> Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, phil.-hist. Klasse, Sb. 453 (Wien 1985).

<sup>11</sup> *Hypomnemata* (Göttingen 1987).

<sup>12</sup> Cambridge 1991. Goldhill deals also with Homer, Pindar and Theocritus; but his chapter (167-223) on Aristophanes is a substantial discussion.

*Comic Competition*<sup>13</sup>. It is only proper that, given the limits of this single paper, I shall *not* venture to approach the problem as if I were working from zero and to work out in a few reckless pages a standpoint of my own, opposed to or pedantically distinguished from what these scholars have argued in their carefully argued papers. Rather I shall outline the positions they have taken in this debate, and indicate which one seems to me to be most probably right.

According to Kraus, the bulk of whose book is a discussion of *Ach.* and *Eq.*, Aristophanes *does* take a stand for truth, justice and even for pity (30, 100) and *is* deeply interested in the issues of war and peace, sycophantism and justice, deceitful demagogues and naive demos. But he acknowledges that the frame of reference within which Aristophanes had to operate, did not allow him to be serious, straightforward or consistent: a performance of a comedy is an activity of (a part of) the Athenian population itself and not an 'ego-trip' of an individual poet; it is meant for one particular occasion and part of a Dionysiac celebration which aims at liberating the mind from pressure and anxiety. Especially this last aspect of comedy explains, according to Kraus, why all the endings of Aristophanes' plays are so fantastic. It seems certain that the Athenians enjoyed this, although none of them on their way home could have failed to perceive that the final euphoria is 'real' only in the realm of the fantastic, the miraculous or the downright impossible<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> In *Nothing to do with Dionysus*, ed. by J. WINKLER and Fr. ZEITLIN (Princeton 1990), 271-314.

<sup>14</sup> Only gradually W. KRAUS makes his position clear; the statements given in my text are found on his pp. 30, 92, 98-101, 186-187. B. ZIMMERMANN, reviewing Kraus in *Gnomon* 58 (1986), 481-484, criticizes Kraus, too much so to my taste, for viewing Aristophanean comedy in a one-sided way «als politisches Forum».

Heath's monograph is in fact a brief discussion of some of Aristophanes' more famous 'stands': against Socrates in *Nub.*, against Cleon in *Ach.* and *Eq.*, in favour of peace in *Lys.*, in favour of the καλοὶ καγαθοί throughout his plays, according to De Ste.Croix. I quote Heath's conclusion: «Aristophanic comedy is and is not, in my view, political. It is political, in the sense that contemporary political life is its point of departure; political reality is taken up by the poet and subjected to the ignominious transformations of comic fantasy. But the product of the fantasising process did not and was not intended to have a reciprocal effect on political reality. [...] Politics was the material of comedy, but comedy did not in turn aspire to be a political force.» (42) Heath compares Aristophanes to tragedy: there, too, the political positions are «patriotic and democratic in tendency, [...] consensual rather than partisan» (42 n. 89).

The merit of Goldhill's discussion is that he describes better than most how elusive Aristophanes' voice is. Who is speaking to whom? This question is crucial throughout, but there is a most telling instance in *Ach.* When Dicaeopolis speaks, who is so easily taken as speaking for the poet (especially in view of 502-504), «we have an actor (who might be Aristophanes) who is playing a comic figure called The Man of the Just City, who is playing the Mysian prince Telephus, who is pretending to be a Greek beggar in order to argue his own case before the members of a comic chorus who are playing old Acharnian coal-burners who are now going to be treated as Achaean dignitaries»<sup>15</sup>. To argue whose case? Telephus'? Dicaeopolis'? Or Aristophanes'? Goldhill concludes that «the different levels of fiction in Aristophanes' dramatic writing can produce vertiginous destabilization of the poet's voice» (196). It is essential for the

<sup>15</sup> S. GOLDHILL (191 n. 90) borrows this from K.J. RECKFORD, *Aristophanes' Old-and-New Comedy I* (Chapel Hill 1987), 179.



game Aristophanes plays that he is elusive, and it is up to us (us the audience, or us the scholars) to determine in each case where the poet himself stands, to attribute a position to him. Goldhill calls this «the audience's or critic's *negotiation* of the boundaries of comic transgression» (196).

Finally, there is Henderson's essay, in my view the most pertinent of them all. Like Goldhill, he locates the poet of old comedy by comparing his voice to that of other 'critics': some of them speaking from without the consensus of the democratic community, like the Old Oligarch and Plato; others from within: political orators, tragic poets and the orators selected for the annual funeral oration. Henderson points out that — unlike autonomous carnival — comedy shared with other public assemblies an institutional structure whose common denominator and ultimate judge was the *demos*. Contrary to the 'anything goes' view of the carnivalists, comedy was *not* exempt from the laws regulating other forms of public discourse. Nor was it harmless: at least Cleon did not think so, and he hit back as hard as he could; Socrates, Hyperbolus and Cleophon knew where their unpopularity had started, and suffered for it in the end. In Henderson's own words: «In return for accepting the guidance of 'the rich, the well-born and the powerful' the *demos* provided that they be subjected to a yearly unofficial review of their conduct in general at the hands of its organic intellectuals and critics, the comic poets. [...] For all public competitors this meant potential deflation. But compared with the other institutions the *demos* could bring to bear against them, comedy must have seemed no worse than fair warning.» (307)

This survey of current scholarly opinion has led me to adopt a position closer to Kraus and Henderson than to Goldhill; closer to Reinhardt than to Gomme. The two most striking cases are *Lys.* and *Ran.* For the two earlier 'peace comedies' it is possible to argue that in *Ach.* the individual and highly egoistic (cp. 1038-1047) peace concluded by Dicaeopolis is excellent

material for fun, no more, and that in *Pax* Trygaeus is, to use Dover's words, «a man who performs on a level of comic fantasy a task to which the Athenian people had already addressed itself on the mundane level of negotiation. The progress of events made the play more of a celebration than a protest.»<sup>16</sup> But in 411 the situation of Athens was so bad that defeat was a real possibility<sup>17</sup>; political factions were stirring. Newiger<sup>18</sup> has argued convincingly that in *Lys.* the two themes, the *panhellenic* aspect of peace and the necessity for Athens of *domestic* reconciliation as a prerequisite for peace abroad, are so consistently executed, so central to the plot, and, pace Heath<sup>19</sup>, *not* annulled by laughter that only one conclusion is open: in this comedy, apparently the most hilarious and provoking of

<sup>16</sup> *Aristophanic Comedy* (London 1972), 137. C.M.J. SICKING's suggestion («Aristophanes laetus?», in *Festschrift Koster*, 115-124, see p. 126 n. 2), viz. that this comedy is not the celebration of a *γεγόμενον*, but the comic and fantastic evocation, in the form of an *ἁδύνατον*, of a truly panhellenic peace, has not yet been refuted; but it is also hard to prove that he is right.

<sup>17</sup> Athens had not yet recovered from the staggering blow received at Syracuse; the Spartans dominated Attica permanently from Deceleia, and were helped by the Persians; important allies revolted: Chios, Miletus, Cnidus, Rhodes.

<sup>18</sup> «War and peace in the comedy of Aristophanes», in *YCS* 26 (1980), 219-237. Compare also J. HENDERSON on p. XXX of the Introduction to his *Lysistrata* (Oxford 1987): «We must not, however, imagine that *Lys.* was a purely escapist entertainment. True observation and just advice are as much a part of comedy as fantasy, distortion, and farce. Indeed, there were thoughts best publicly articulated in comic guise. Who in 411 could tell the Athenians that the Probouloi were decrepit bunglers, that the politicians were selfish and thievish, and that the Spartans were old friends? Who could give public expression to the desolation and fear suffered by the women? It was the comic poet who gave communal expression to the social currents running beneath the surface of public discourse.»

<sup>19</sup> *Op. cit.*, 15-16.



all comedies of Aristophanes as far as explicit mention of sexual organs and activity is concerned, the poet is at the same time most serious, and comes very close to taking an explicitly political stand, especially on the second of the two themes mentioned.

It may not be pure chance that it is this same theme of civic harmony which is prominent again in the parabasis of *Ranae* (686-705 and 718-737). A reliable source, Dicaearchus, informs us that *Ran.* was given a second performance (ἀνεδιδάχθη) precisely because of this parabasis. Of course quite a few Athenians may have wanted to laugh again at Xanthias' buffoonery (see the next section of this paper), but at least this parabasis was not for fun; in 405 it was dead serious.

I finish this first section by giving as my opinion that Aristophanes, in stating his claims as a teacher and critic of public morals and politics, was not just striking an impressive pose, not speaking tongue in cheek, but, for once, serious<sup>20</sup>.

## II

In this second section I shall discuss the question whether Aristophanes was susceptible to the way his plays were received by the members of his audience, and, if so, how he catered to them. Again I am in the fortunate position that the ground has been recently explored, in this case by Cortassa<sup>21</sup>. The best opening is to quote two lines from the parabasis of *Eq.*:

<sup>20</sup> On this question whether or not Aristophanes could be serious, read J. HENDERSON (1990)'s eloquent paragraph on p. 312.

<sup>21</sup> Guido CORTASSA, «Il poeta, la tradizione e il pubblico. Per una poetica di Aristofane», in *La polis e il suo teatro*, a cura di E. CORSINI (Padova 1986), 185-204. Some of the points he makes are already found in Chr.A.

κωμωδοδιδασκαλίαν εἶναι χαλεπώτατον ἔργον ἅπαντων ·  
πολλῶν γὰρ δὴ πειρασάντων αὐτὴν ὀλίγοις χάρισσασθαι.

«To make and produce a comedy is the most difficult thing of all, for although many have tried to seduce<sup>22</sup> her, she has given her favours only to a few of them.» (516-517) That Aristophanes does not just mean to say that the genre as such is a difficult one, becomes clear from the immediately following passage (518-550) which deals with the fickleness of the Athenians: instead of cherishing their good poets (Magnes, Cratinus, Crates), they use them as throwaway articles as soon as they fail to please and/or get older. Aristophanes expresses his concern that this might happen to him. The Athenian public is a mistress whom it is hard to please.

He learnt his lesson soon enough, at the occasion of his *Nubes*: after the victories obtained<sup>23</sup>, he had now to swallow the

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MICHAEL, 'Ο κωμικὸς λόγος τοῦ Ἀριστοφάνους (Athens 1981), 140 ff.; see also Th. GELZER's article «Aristophanes», in *RE Suppl.-Bd.* XII (1970), 1531-1538.

<sup>22</sup> J. van LEEUWEN *ad loc.* points out that in 5th-4th century Attic the active *πειράω* is used only in erotic contexts; he adduces Aristoph. *Pax* 763, *Plut.* 150, 1067; Eur. *Cycl.* 581; Lys. *Or.* I 12.

<sup>23</sup> The hypotheses contain documentary evidence that with *Ach.* (425) and *Eq.* (424) he obtained first prizes. His very first comedy, *Banqueters*, of 427 got him already a second prize (*test.* vi in R. KASSEL-C. AUSTIN [eds.], *Poetae Comici Graeci* III 2 p. 123). A. PICKARD-CAMBRIDGE, *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens* (Oxford 1968), 85 n. 9, affirms (referring to the didascalic inscription *IG II<sup>2</sup> 2325*) that Aristophanes' second play, *Babylonians*, of 426, won him a victory. Th. GELZER, in his *RE* article of 1970, 1407-8 and H.-J. NEWIGER, in his contribution to *Griechische Literatur*, ed. E. VOGT (Wiesbaden 1981), share this view (p. 202). It is contested by C.F. RUSSO, *Aristofane autore di teatro* (Firenze 1984), 36-40, who is, however, compelled to admit another Aristophanean victory with an unknown play at the Great Dionysia of 425, a few months after his Lenaeon victory with *Ach.*

unpleasant fact of a third and last place in the contest. We will never know what confident tones he had struck in the original parabasis of *Nub.* In point of fact his *Vespae*<sup>24</sup> is the first text from which we learn how he reacted to the failure of his *Nubes*. In the prologue he is very careful to catch the attention of his public. Slave Xanthias informs them that they should not expect stale jokes stolen from Megara, nor slaves throwing nuts into the audience, nor an effeminate Euripides or a Heracles cheated of his dinner, nor even<sup>25</sup> a renewed attack on Cleon (56-63). «What we have got for you today, is a little intelligent story (ἔστιν ἡμῖν λογίδιον γνώμην ἔχον), no cleverer than you are yourselves (ὅμων μὲν αὐτῶν οὐχὶ δεξιώτερον), but definitely more sophisticated than vulgar comedy (κωμωδίας δὲ φορτικῆς σοφώτερον)» (64-66).

Later in the same play, when the poet has hooked his audience with Philocleon's efforts to escape from his house («one of the best scenes of slapstick in A.», D.M. MacDowell *ad* 136-229) and with the dog's trial, Aristophanes ventures to be more outspoken. How can the Athenians have rejected the poet who has struggled heroically against the monstrous Cleon (1028-1036) and against the hardly less horrible sycophants (1037-1042)? The only consolation for the poet is that he has kept his reputation among the more sophisticated part of his audience (ὁ δὲ ποιητής οὐδὲν χείρων παρὰ τοῖσι σοφοῖς νενόμισται, 1049).

<sup>24</sup> Written a few months after, and under the immediate impact of the failure of *Nubes*.

<sup>25</sup> I translate «nor even», for there is a climax in the series of four possibilities rejected here by A., from the throwing of nuts, *via* Heracles and Euripides, to Cleon. The first possibility is most unworthy of a comic poet (cp. *Plutus* 795 ff., and my note 34), while the fourth, an attack upon a politician, comes much closer to the proper task of a comic poet. This climax is underlined by γε (metrically not necessary) after Κλέων in 62.

In the parabasis of his next play, *Pax*, Aristophanes repeats his claim that he does away with vulgar tricks (740-748, 750b; cp. *Vesp.* 56-63), and repeats his boast of having attacked Cleon (754-760, cp. *Vesp.* 1030-1036), but adds that he has gone about his job παῦρ' ἀνιάσας, πόλλ' εὐφράνας, πάντα παρασχὼν τὰ δέοντα (764): he has aimed at providing little pain and much pleasure, in short: to deliver all the goods. And the coryphaeus (obviously speaking on behalf of Aristophanes who was bald himself<sup>26</sup>) goes on: «in view of this, you should be on *my* side, all of you: not only the men but also the boys; and I appeal to the bald men in the audience to join in the effort to give me the victory»:

πρὸς ταῦτα χρεὼν εἶναι μετ' ἐμοῦ  
καὶ τοὺς ἄνδρας καὶ τοὺς παῖδας ·  
καὶ τοῖς φαλακροῖσι παραινοῦμεν  
ξυσπουδάζειν περὶ τῆς νίκης. (*Pax* 765-768).

The poet aims at amusing the elder members of the audience, but also the young ones.

Sometimes after *Pax*, between spring 420 and winter 417<sup>27</sup>, the poet returned to the text of his *Nubes*, and composed the parabasis which is now in the manuscripts of this play. This text shows unmistakable signs of disappointment and anger. Not only are his competitors qualified as vulgar and tasteless (ὑπ' ἀνδρῶν φορτικῶν / ἡττηθείς, 524-525), but also a part of his audience. For that is the implication of his words: ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὥς ὑμῶν ποθ' ἐκὼν προδώσω τοὺς δεξιούς 527: «those of you who are clever, I shall never desert *them*». At them, he had been aiming with his *Nubes* (ἥδ' ἡ κωμωδία / ζητοῦσ' ἦλθ', ἣν που 'πιτύχη θεαταῖς οὕτω σοφοῖς, 534-535), and for that reason he had refrained from presenting the well-known vulgar tricks of

<sup>26</sup> *Nubes* 540, 545; Eupolis, *Baptai* fr. 78 K/89 KA.

<sup>27</sup> K.J. DOVER (ed.), *Aristophanes. Clouds* (Oxford 1970), p. lxxx.



comedy (phalluses, beatings, fooling around with firebrands, 538-543). Nor had he gone on the beaten track of writing another comedy on a politician<sup>28</sup>. «If there are spectators», he says, «who prefer to laugh only when offered this kind of comic stuff, well, it is up to them if they will get no fun from *my* plays»: ὅστις οὖν τούτοις γελᾷ, τοῖς ἐμοῖς μὴ χαίρω! (560). This is an angry declaration: the poet says he does not care about a part of his audience, he writes them off<sup>29</sup>.

In point of fact no playwright can afford to do that, and Aristophanes knew better than to alienate his audience. He needed it, he needed some amount of popularity — otherwise he might run the risk of not even getting a chorus! In the comedies performed in the decades before and after 400, there is ample evidence of the poet becoming increasingly cautious towards his audience.

In both *Lys.* and *Eccl.* a scene occurs in which some drastic stage business is enacted: in *Lys.* 1216-1220 an Athenian knocks a doorkeeper out of the way and threatens to singe the hair of some slaves with a torch<sup>30</sup>; in *Eccles.* 884-887 an old hag announces her intention to seduce a nice young man with a

<sup>28</sup> *Nubes* 551-559 is proof that other poets did keep to this road: Henderson is probably right in supposing that the audience appreciated *this* kind of entertainment: they evidently derived pleasure from seeing the 'spitting images' of their own leaders, with due exaggeration of their well-known weaknesses and vices.

<sup>29</sup> In *Eq.* 232-233 he had said confidently about his audience *as a whole* that they were certainly clever enough to appreciate his presentation (the point at stake there is the Paphlagonian's mask): πάντως γε μὴν / γνωσθήσεται. τὸ γὰρ θέατρον δεξιόν.

<sup>30</sup> Cp. K.J. DOVER, *Aristophanic Comedy* (London 1972), 11-12; and J. HENDERSON *ad* 381, *ad* 1216-1238 and *ad* 1218b-1220. To the parallels adduced by Henderson one might add *Vesp.* 1330-1331, and *Plutus* 1050-1054 where the Young Man comes dangerously close to the Old Lady's face with his torch.

lewd song; at that very moment a young girl leans out of her window and says that if anybody is going to do that, she will do it herself<sup>31</sup>. The common feature in both scenes is that the character apologizes for rather cheap stage business<sup>32</sup>. In *Lys.* the Athenian says:

φορτικὸν τὸ χωρίον.  
οὐκ ἂν ποήσαιμι'. εἰ δὲ πάνυ δεῖ τοῦτο δρᾶν,  
ὅμῃν χαρίζεσθαι ταλαιπωρήσομεν (1218-1220);

and in *Eccl.* the girl says:

ἐγὼ δ' ἦν τοῦτο δρᾶς, ἀντάσομαι.  
κεῖ γὰρ δι' ὅχλου τοῦτ' ἐστὶ τοῖς θεωμένοις<sup>33</sup>,  
ὅμως ἔχει τερπνὸν τι καὶ κωμωδικόν (887-889).

In both cases the poet is saying in an aside to the highbrow members of his audience: «You must believe me that I feel slightly embarrassed about introducing this silly business into my play, but as it is sure to produce some hilarity I cannot afford to leave it out.» The compromise again<sup>34</sup>.

<sup>31</sup> Cp. R.G. USSHER (Oxford 1973) *ad* 877-1111 and *ad* 888-889.

<sup>32</sup> There is between these two cases also an important difference: while the vulgarity in *Lys.* 1216-1222 takes very little time, in *Eccl.* the scene of the young man confronted with a) his girl, b) the ugly old woman, c) the two even uglier hags, fills much of the second half of the play. «It is best seen as an instance (particularly striking) of the debt which the Old Comedy is under — at this late stage still — to Doric farce.» So R.G. USSHER, «The Staging of the *Eccles.*», in *AAK* p. 400. B. ZIMMERMANN, *Untersuchungen zur Form und dramatischen Technik der ar. Komödien* II (Königstein 1985), 62-63 refers to a possible folklore of singing contests («volkstümliches Wettsingen»).

<sup>33</sup> R.G. USSHER *ad* 888-889 refers to Rogers' keen observation that no doubt after line 888 the actors gave the audience an opportunity for shouting 'NO!'.

<sup>34</sup> *Plutus* 795 ff. proves that the problem remained with Aristophanes until the very end. Chremylus' wife wants to throw around figs and other fruits



In the prologue of *Ranae* the poet has found a clever solution to the same problem: the polarity between the two kinds of spectators is theatrically enacted between Dionysus and Xanthias. If I may quote Stanford: «It allows him by referring to some well-seasoned jests to get a series of easy laughs from the cruder members of the *Audience* and at the same time to guard himself from incurring the more critical spectators' scorn for poets who use stale jokes. So Dionysos is made to play the part of a man of some discrimination in his choice of jokes — in contrast with Xanthias, who is ready to provide any cheap buffoonery.»<sup>35</sup>

Not only the prologue, but the whole play shows the same dexterity: the first half, with Xanthias (and his master!) being beaten (644 ff.), with a greedy Herakles (62 ff.) and with Dionysus shitting in his pants (479) has been written to provoke uproarious hilarity, while the contest of the two tragedians in the second half is much more demanding. The poet shows that he is anxious about this. When the contest is in full swing and the rival poets are going to give precise criticisms on each other's prologues — some members of the audience might find this too clever by half — the chorus addresses the two poets as follows:

εἰ δὲ τοῦτο καταφοβεῖσθον, μή τις ἀμαθία προσῇ  
τοῖς θεωμένοισιν, ὥς τὰ  
λεπτὰ μὴ γνῶναι λεγόντοιν,  
μηδὲν ὀρρωδεῖτε τοῦθ' · ὥς οὐκέθ' οὕτω ταῦτ' ἔχει.  
ἐστρατευμένοι γάρ εἰσι

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in honour of the god who approaches her house. Plutus says she should give him these sweets in her house, for that is the rule. ἔπειτα καὶ τὸν φόρτον ἐκφύγοιμεν ἄν. / οὐ γὰρ πρεπῶδές ἐστι τῷ διδασκάλῳ / ἰσχάδια καὶ τρωγάλια τοῖς θεωμένοις / προβάλλοντ' ἐπὶ τούτοις εἶτ' ἀναγκάζειν γελᾶν. It is obviously *infra dignitatem* for the poet to buy laughter with some sweets.

<sup>35</sup> W.B. STANFORD (ed.), *Aristophanes. The Frogs* (London 1963), ad 3-4.

βιβλίον τ' ἔχων ἕκαστος μανθάνει τὰ δεξιὰ · [...]  
 μηδὲν οὖν δείσητον, ἀλλὰ  
 πάντ' ἐπέξιτον, θεατῶν γ' οὔνεχ', ὥς ὄντων σοφῶν. (1109-1118)

The poet fears that the discussion of particular lines and phrases of Aeschylus and Euripides may be difficult to digest for many members of his audience. Therefore he proclaims in an 'apotropaic' fashion that, as *all* members of his audience are literate, they are veterans who served in many campaigns, well equipped to appreciate whatever will be presented to them. Guido Cortassa comments: «Dichiarandosi certo che il pubblico sarà perfettamente in grado di capire e di gustare le battute dei due contendenti per la sua intelligenza e la sua cultura, Aristofane si premunisce abilmente: in tal modo gli spettatori sono messi in condizione di non poter lamentarsi di non aver capito e di non essersi divertiti...» (*art. cit.* [*supra* n. 21], 200)<sup>36</sup>.

The last comedy which shows several signs of Aristophanes' preoccupation how precisely to cater to his audience is *Ecclesiazusae*. I have already commented upon 887-889, and want to focus now on two other passages, in the first place on 577 ff. Praxagora is on the verge of explaining what it means that the ἐκκλησία has decided to give all power to the women. The chorus encourages her to sketch a daring plan: «Our city is in sore need of a clever invention; beware that you do not present things which have already been done or said before: for they hate it if they have to watch old stuff over and over again.» In the poet's own words:

δεῖται γάρ τοι σοφοῦ τινος ἐξευρήματος ἡ πόλις ἡμῶν.  
 ἀλλὰ πέραινε μόνον  
 μήτε δεδραμένα μήτ' εἰρημένα πω πρότερον.  
 μισοῦσι γὰρ ἦν τὰ παλαιὰ πολλάκις θεῶνται. (577-580)

<sup>36</sup> Cortassa's comments are in line with Ed. FRAENKEL's *Beobachtungen zu Aristophanes* (Roma 1962), 177-178.

The word *θεῶνται* (580) betrays that the chorus is speaking here about the audience in the theatre and not about the persons Praxagora has in front of her. For the members of the chorus, who have just arrived from the assembly, are already informed; there are now two old men waiting to *hear* what Praxagora is going to say, viz. her constipated (320-371) husband Blepyros and his impotent (468) friend Chremes: they will not be the progressive people who cannot stand anything they have never heard before!

The poet, answering the chorus through the mask of Praxagora, does not share its confidence:

καὶ μὴν ὅτι μὲν χρηστὰ διδάξω πιστεύω · τοὺς δὲ θεατάς,  
εἰ καινοτομεῖν ἐθελήσουσιν καὶ μὴ τοῖς ἡθάσι λίαν  
τοῖς τ' ἀρχαίοις ἐνδιατρίβειν, τοῦτ' ἔσθ' ὃ μάλιστα δέδοικα  
(583-585)

«I am confident that the revolutionary things I am on the point of explaining *are* profitable; but I am particularly afraid that the members of the audience may prefer to stick to old routines, and are not at all prepared to open new veins.» Again the poet is painfully aware of the ambivalence in his audience: he hopes and expects that they enjoy novelties, but then again they may just be staunchly conservative and not like them at all. You never can tell with those Athenians.

*Eccl.* ends with an exodos song performed by the chorus. Before embarking on their long pnigos-like recommendation of the delicacies of the dinner (1166 ff.), they address the audience and, in the audience, the judges, «no longer speaking as women of the city but as choreutae involved in the success of the production»<sup>37</sup>, in the following terms:

<sup>37</sup> R.G. USSHER *ad* 1140-1143.

σμικρὸν δ' ὑποθέσθαι τοῖς κριταῖσι βούλομαι,  
 τοῖς σοφοῖς μὲν τῶν σοφῶν μεμνημένοις κρίνειν ἐμέ,  
 τοῖς γελῶσι δ' ἡδέως διὰ τὸν γέλων κρίνειν ἐμέ, κτλ. (1154-1156)

As far as our evidence goes, Aristophanes had not obtained all that many victories: there is certainty only for the victory of *Ach.*, *Eq.* and *Ranae*<sup>38</sup>. As a relatively old man (he is about sixty by now), he addresses his audience through the mask of the chorus and begs for their favour. He urges upon the sophisticated members of his audience not to forget the clever things (ideas, lines of poetry, scenes etc.) they have enjoyed just now and, consequently, to vote for him; and he implores the other part of the audience, those who have had a jolly good laugh, because of that laugh, to vote for him...

Nobody will despise Aristophanes for this dependence on his audience, its more vulgar members included. In his *Nubes*, *Vespae*, *Pax*, *Aves* he *did* produce daring plays, full of invention and wit, without slapstick scenes and without knocking politicians around. His problem was that his most daring and innovative plays had failed to obtain victories. He took all this in his stride, but did not conceal that he wanted to be appreciated and get the prize. His problem is a problem which those who have had to write, produce or perform for large audiences will understand all too well, especially in our days of performances for the mass-media.

<sup>38</sup> For the victory with the *Babylonians* see my note 23. H.-J. NEWIGER: «Vielleicht lässt sich aus dem Rang der Komödien beim Agon aber doch eines ablesen: dass die zur aktuellen Politik deutlich Stellung beziehenden Stücke, *Babylonier*, *Acharner*, *Ritter* und die *Frösche* mit ihrer hochpolitischen Parabase, am meisten Beifall fanden» (*op. cit.* in the same note 23, 202).



## III

In this third section I start from two wide-spread ideas about Aristophanes: (a) that his language (at least in the spoken verses) is plain and vulgar Attic and if not vulgar then certainly full of colloquialisms<sup>39</sup>; (b) that if Aristophanes quotes, or alludes to, texts of other poets, this is just for the sake of fun, mockery or contempt. It will appear from Aristophanes' own theory and practice that neither of these ideas is completely justified.

First a few words about (a). There is an utterance of the poet himself, in which he deals with this aspect of his comic poetry:

διάλεκτον ἔχοντα μέσσην πόλεως  
οὔτ' ἀστείαν ὑποθηλυτέραν  
οὔτ' ἀνελεύθερον ὑπαγροικοτέραν (*inc. fab. fr. 685 K/706 KA*)

<sup>39</sup> NEWIGER's bibliography, *AAK*, 487-510, helpful in so many ways, does not even have a section on 'language'. The same volume contains only one paper (124-143) on this topic, by K.J. DOVER who confines himself to analyzing the diction of Aristophanes in the prologue of *Ach.* — In the introduction to his *Les images d'Aristophane. Etudes de langue et de style* (Paris 1965), Jean TAILLARDAT offers a few observations on metaphors taken by the poet from daily life. Systematic research on 'colloquialisms in Aristophanes' has been done only in a distant past: L. BAUCK, *De proverbiis aliisque locutionibus ex usu vitae communis petitis apud Aristophanem Comicum* (Königsberg 1880); O. LOTTICH, *De sermone vulgari Atticorum maxime ex Aristophanis fabulis cognoscendo* (Halle 1881), and W. DITTMAR, *Sprachliche Untersuchungen zu Aristophanes und Menander* (Leipzig 1933). The major textbooks contain one or two pages with some generalities: A. MEILLET, *Aperçu d'une histoire de la langue grecque* (Paris 1930), 216-217; Ed. SCHWYZER, *Griechische Grammatik I* (München 1939), 111-112; A. THUMB, *Handbuch der griechischen Dialekte*, 2. Aufl. von A. SCHERER (Heidelberg 1959), 306-308. — More useful and detailed information is found in R. HIERSCHE, *Grundzüge der griechischen Sprachgeschichte bis zur klassischen Zeit* (Wiesbaden 1970), 163-177.

Here we seem to find Aristophanes defining his own position between two extremes: by keeping to the 'middle of the road talk of the town' he avoids *both* the diction of a sophisticated and effeminate élite (no doubt he is thinking here of Agathon, and perhaps also of Euripides) *and* the danger of speaking in the idiom used by slaves or peasants. The context in which these lines are quoted by Sextus Empiricus does not allow to assert with certainty that they refer to the 'linguistic choice' made by Aristophanes. Two arguments, however, make this reference a plausible one: (a) anapaestic dimeters are found at the end of parabaseis (*Ach.* 659-664; *Eq.* 547-550; *Vesp.* 1051-1059; *Pax* 765-774; *Aves* 723-736), and (b) the phrasing of fr. 706 reminds one of the lines *Vesp.* 65-66, lines in which the poet uses also comparatives to refer to two extremes he wants to avoid<sup>40</sup>.

There is another fragment which might be relevant in this context: fr. 334 K/348 KA in which a comic chorus speaks about the way their διδάσκαλος instructs them:

μήτε Μούσας ἀνακαλεῖν ἐλικοβοστρύχους  
μήτε Χάριτας βοᾶν ἐς χορὸν Ὀλυμπίας  
ἐνθάδε γάρ εἰσιν, ὥς φησιν ὁ διδάσκαλος.

There is no need for the choreutae to invoke glamorous Muses with a fancy hair-do, or to shout out for the Graces to come down from the Olympus: the poet has informed them that the Muses and Graces «are already *here*». What does that mean? Certainly that, according to Aristophanes, comedy is at home in

<sup>40</sup> For an interpretation of this fragment see J. TAILLARDAT (work cited in previous note), 12-14. In another fragment (fr. 579 K/688 KA) the poet shows the same awareness that in his diction he should avoid extremes and cater for his audience: «Athenians do not find pleasure in poets who are austere and stiff, just as they do not enjoy Pramnian wine which makes them contract eyebrows and stomach: it is the fragrant and honey-dripping wine they enjoy.»



Athens, and probably also that it is typical for comic poetry to use normal Attic speech: if dithyrambic poets have to roam through the skies to pick up their highflown ouvertures (ἀναβολὰς... ἐνδιαεριαυερινήχτους, *Pax* 829-830<sup>41</sup>), comic poets can stay in Athens, for they will find their Muses «here».

This impression is confirmed by a glance at the passages from the preserved plays in which the poet deals with the Muses; given the topic of this paper I have to go into the poet's way of referring to the Muses, anyway, so I might as well do it now. In *Vespae* 1022 and 1028 the poet uses two surprising verbs for his relation to the Muses: ἡνιοχεῖν and χρῆσθαι which suggest that he has familiarized, almost domesticated them. In the parabasis of *Pax*, after having quoted two 'Musical' passages from Stesichorus in 775 ff. and 796 ff. (to which I shall return), he speaks in 816 of the Muse with his own voice again as if she is his playmate and fellow-dancer: Μοῦσα θεά, μετ' ἐμοῦ ξύμπαιζε τὴν ἐορτήν. In the parabasis of *Aves* the birds proclaim that henceforward men can use them (χρῆσθαι again) as their μάντεσι Μούσαις: these bird-muses will not be faraway gods, on the contrary: παρόντες they will provide them with happiness, peace and music: εὐδαιμονίαν... εἰρήνην... χορούς (729-734). The Μοῦσα φλεγυρὰ Ἀχαρνική of *Ach.* 665 and the Μοῦσα λοχμαία of *Aves* 737 are other examples of the same tendency: there is 'music' in the humble realities on which the poet focuses. Aristophanes ventures to situate the Muses even in the marshes where the frogs (207) sing their songs:

ἐμὲ γὰρ ἔστερξαν εὐλύροί τε Μοῦσαι  
καὶ κεροβάτας Πάν ὁ καλαμόφθογγα παίζων (*Ran.* 229-230)

Is it too presumptuous to conclude from all this that Aristophanes speaks about the Muses in a way which is significantly different from earlier poets: no epiphanies, no *Dichterweihe*, no location of the Muses on Helicon (Hes. *Theog.*

<sup>41</sup> Cp. also *Nubes* 332 and *Aves* 1383-1387.

1-8) or on Olympus (Pindar, *Pyth.* 1, 1-4<sup>42</sup>), no vision of the Muses driving their chariot<sup>43</sup>, but instead the poet conversing with his Muses in a familiar way, having them within easy reach, even to the point of «using them», «driving them», as if they were the horses before his, the poet's, chariot. The implication is that his poetry is 'epidemic'. i.e. Attic by birthright, and not lofty and high-flown. But even so (and here fr. 706 KA, already quoted by me, is crucial) he avoids easiness and vulgarity of language. His ideal comic poetry is self-controlled, and professionally composed (I am using here the qualification used in the *Nubes* parabasis: σώφρων, 537, and σοφώτατ' ἔχειν 522<sup>44</sup>).

The subject I am discussing here has even been a matter of dispute between Cratinus and Aristophanes himself; at least that is how Arethas presents it in a scholion on Plato *Apol.* 19c: ('Αριστοφάνης) ἐκωμωδεῖτο δ' ἐπὶ τῷ σκώπτειν μὲν Εὐριπίδην, μιμεῖσθαι δ' αὐτόν. Κρατῖνος

τίς δε σύ; κομψός τις ἔροιτο θεατής·  
 ὑπολεπτολόγος, γνωμιδιώκτης, εὐριπιδαριστοφανίζων.  
 Καὶ αὐτὸς δ' ἐξομολογεῖται Σκηναῖς Καταλαμβανούσαις  
 χρῶμαι γὰρ αὐτοῦ τοῦ στόματος τῷ στρογγύλῳ  
 τοὺς νοῦς δ' ἀγοραίους ἦττον ἢ 'κεῖνος ποιῶ  
 (PCG III 2, test. 3 = fr. 471 K)

Evidently Cratinus felt that, compared the coarser tradition of Old Comedy such as he (C.) himself had known and practised,

<sup>42</sup> The ἁοιδοί of *Pyth.* 1, 3 are the Muses: see my remarks in *The Poet's I in Archaic Greek Lyric*, ed. by S. SLINGS (Amsterdam 1990), 54 with note 34.

<sup>43</sup> See e.g. Pind. *Ol.* 1, 110. W.J. VERDENIUS gives parallel passages and bibliography in his *Commentaries on Pindar* II (Leiden 1988), 48.

<sup>44</sup> I think it is important to note that in 522 Aristophanes does not say that this comedy is the most clever (sophisticated) of all his plays so far, but ταύτην σοφώτατ' ἔχειν τῶν ἐμῶν κωμωδιῶν: the state it is in, is the result of professional workmanship, it is a well-written text.

there lurked (ὕπο-) in Aristophanes' use of language a refinement (λεπτότης), which taken together with the cleverness of his 'little sentences' (γνωμίδια) brought him on the very track of Euripides. According to Arethas, Aristophanes confessed that «indeed he *did* use the rotundity of speech characteristic of Euripides». Habemus confitentem reum.

To prove the point I am trying to make here, would require not only more time and space in these *Entretiens* than I am allowed to use, but also more evidence than we in fact have: one would have to attribute to the linguistic elements (words, phrases, idiomatic expressions) used by Aristophanes precise places on the scale between the baser Attic διάλεκτος and the speech used by upper class Athenians of that time<sup>45</sup>. One would also have to define Aristophanes' linguistic-stylistic position within the group of Cratinus, Telecleides, Eupolis and Crates.

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<sup>45</sup> It is *a priori* probable that there were, besides the standard Attic (A<sup>1</sup>) spoken by the élite and used in official documents, several other forms of substandard Attic:

- (A<sup>2</sup>): the speech of less well-educated town-dwellers and peasants; and the small-holders living close to the Boeotian or Megarian border will have accepted some elements of their neighbours' speech;
- (A<sup>3</sup>): the speech of the metics who had come from distant parts of Greece to Athens, and had adapted their way of speaking to (A<sup>1</sup>) but perhaps not faultlessly;
- (A<sup>4</sup>): the poor Greek spoken by the slaves who served Athenian masters and had come from non-Greek areas like Caria, Thracia, Lydia, Paphlagonia (!), etc.

Of (A<sup>1</sup>) we get a fair impression from Plato's dialogues and from the official inscriptions; about (A<sup>2</sup>) only graffiti on pots and sherds give glimpses; (A<sup>3</sup>), probably important, escapes us (Lysias knew his A<sup>1</sup> only too well), and for (A<sup>4</sup>) there is the Scythian in *Thesm.* Cp. C.J. RUIJGH, *Scripta Minora* (Amsterdam 1991), 655-656 = *Mnemosyne* S. IV 31 (1978), 83-84.

For both searches the material is scanty; my grasp of it is too weak, and it would deserve full-length treatment.

Therefore I pass on to the second widespread idea, viz. that whenever Aristophanes introduces, or alludes to, bits and pieces from other poets, it is for the sake of fun, mockery or contempt. Fundamental work has already been done by Rau in his excellent monograph<sup>46</sup>. But the very task Rau had set himself kept him from a full assessment of Aristophanes' relationship to earlier Greek poetry; for he focused on parody of tragedy. Before starting to indicate in Aristophanes' texts what I mean, I want to introduce in a few words the term 'intertextuality'<sup>47</sup>. This has become, if I may use Culler's words, «less a name for a work's relation to particular prior texts than a designation of its participation in the discursive space of a culture»<sup>48</sup>. The same thought has been expressed in a more compact and metaphorical way by Roland Barthes: «chaque texte est une chambre d'échos»<sup>49</sup>. Elsewhere in these *Entretiens* Zimmermann explores how Aristophanes echoes the intellectual innovations of his time; here I want to pay attention to how Aristophanes echoes the poets of his own time, and of earlier times. One thinks of *Thesm.* and *Ranae* in the first place: comedies in which Aristophanes keeps up an almost continuous (and indeed mostly, but not exclusively parodical) dialogue with other poets. For my purpose I concentrate on *Pax*, *Lys.* and *Aves*.

<sup>46</sup> Peter RAU, *Paratragodia. Untersuchungen einer komischen Form des Aristophanes*, Zetemata 45 (München 1967). For Aristophanes' use of parody see also S. GOLDHILL, *op cit.* (in my note 12), 201-223.

<sup>47</sup> Essays on various aspects of it are found in *Intertextualität*, ed. U. BROICH & M. PFISTER (Tübingen 1985). Fascinating and playful is G. GENETTE's *Palimpsestes* (Paris 1982).

<sup>48</sup> Jonathan CULLER, *The Pursuit of Signs* (London 1981), 104.

<sup>49</sup> Roland Barthes par R. BARTHES (Paris 1975), 78.



*Pax* then. First an inventory. In the text of this comedy one finds elements of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, ps. Homer (*Epigoni*, *Cert. Hom. et Hes.*), Archilochus, Sappho, Alcaeus, Stesichorus, Aesopus; as far as tragedy is concerned, elements are used from Aesch.' *Dictyulci*, Soph.' *Ajax*, Eur.' *Aeolus*, *Bellerophontes*, *Heraclid.*, *Medea*, *Telephus*, *Stheneboea*, and from Achaëus' *Momus*<sup>50</sup>. In a number of cases the effect is indeed

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<sup>50</sup> I give here the list of instances according to the line-numbering of *Pax*:

- 58-176 : Eur. *Bellerophontes* N<sup>2</sup>
- 62 : Soph. *Aj.* 585
- 114 : Eur. *Aeolus* fr. 17, 18 N<sup>2</sup>
- 124-126 : Eur. *Stheneboea* fr. 669 N<sup>2</sup>
- 129 : Aesopus
- 228 : Eur. *Hipp.* 599; *HF* 1143; *Suppl.* etc.
- 296 : Aesch. *Dictyulci* fr. 46a18, 46c5-7 (*TrGF* III Radt)
- 316-317 : Eur. *Heraclid.* 976-977
- 356 : Achaëus, *Momus* fr. 29 (*TrGF* I Snell)
- 528 : Eur. *Telephus* fr. 727 N<sup>2</sup>
- 582-583 : Sappho fr. 48, 1 and 102, 2 Voigt
- 591-592 : Sappho fr. 94, 11 Voigt
- 629 : Eur. *Medea* 1349
- 699 : Eur. *Oeneus* fr. 566, 2 and *Thyestes* fr. 397 N<sup>2</sup>
- 774 ff.
- and
- 797 ff. : Stesichorus' *Oresteia* fr. 210, 211, 212 Davies
- 1090-1093: a Homeric cento, taken from *Il.* I 46, XVI 251, XVII 243, *Od.* VI 261 and VII 137
- 1097-1098: *Il.* IX 63-64
- 1177 : Aesch. *Myrmidones* fr. 134 (*TrGF* III Radt)
- 1270 : *Epigoni* fr. 1 Davies
- 1273-1276: *Il.* III 15, IV 446-450
- 1280-1283: *Certamen Hom. et Hes.* 107-108 Allen
- 1287 : *Il.* XVI 267
- 1298-1301a: Archilochus fr. 5 West
- 1301b : Alcaeus fr. 6, 13-14, cp. M.G. BONANNO, in *MCr* 8/9 (1973/74), 191-193.

highly comical: I need only refer to Trygaeus' flight to heaven (58-176) underlined with delicious bits taken from E. *Belleroph.*, and to Cleonymus' (the shield-loser's) son who starts singing ἀσπίδι μὲν Σαίων τις ἀγάλλεται (1298). But in other instances no such comic effect seems to be intended: the tenor of the poetic element taken from the earlier poet is perfectly in line with the tenor of Aristophanes' own scene, even of the entire comedy.

A simple example is *Pax* 1097-1098. The oracle-monger Hierocles enters and shows himself dissatisfied with the peace just restored. Trygaeus answers him with the two emphatic lines spoken by Nestor in book IX where he puts his foot down to forbid the Achaeans fighting between them:

ἀφρήτωρ ἀθέμιστος ἀνέστιός ἐστιν ἐκεῖνος  
ὃς πολέμου ἔραται ἐπιδημίου ὀκρυόεντος (63-64).

The quotation is framed by Trygaeus with an introductory line which stresses the appropriateness of the Homeric words. The voice of Aristophanes does not mock Homer's voice: the two voices speak *in unison*<sup>51</sup>.

I pass on to some expressions in the lyrics with which the chorus greets Peace. From line 520 the statue of Peace is visible and Trygaeus reminds the chorus how delicious life is going to be from now onwards<sup>52</sup>. The chorus welcomes Peace with a

<sup>51</sup> Of course there are parodical elements in the Hierocles-scene as a whole: Hierocles speaks in hexameters even when he does not quote oracles, and Trygaeus answers him in hexameters (1064-1114); this implies also the occasional use of a non-Attic word or ending: 1088 μῆρα (Hierocles), 1106 μαχάρεσσι (Tryg.). But all the other hexameters are pseudo-homeric, cento; the homeric authenticity of *Pax* 1097-1098 is therefore the more striking.

<sup>52</sup> I for one am a great admirer of 566-579: the agricultural tools gleaming, the little piece of land waiting to be worked on, and the small amenities of farm life waiting to be enjoyed: figs, myrtle, wine, and the violets around the well.

love-song (582-600) which contains two moving accents from Sappho: ἤλθες ...σῶ γὰρ ἐδάμην<sup>53</sup> πόθω 582-583 (Sappho: ἤλθες.. fr. 48, 1 and πόθω δάμεισα fr. 102, 2), and πολλὰ γὰρ ἐπάσχομεν ..γλυκέα καὶ φίλα 591-593 (Sappho: σ' ἔγω θέλω ὁμναισαι..οσ[α -10- ] καὶ κάλ' ἐπάσχομεν, fr. 94, 9-11). Here the sweet accents of Sappho melt in the mouth of the chorus to make this song addressed to Peace more moving.

My third and last example from *Pax* is taken from the parabasis. Ode and antode open with words taken from Stesichorus<sup>54</sup>: Μοῦσα, σὺ μὲν πολέμους ἀπώσαμένη μετ' ἐμοῦ κτλ. (774) and τοιάδε χρὴ Χαρίτων δαμώματα καλλικόμων κτλ. (796), registered as frg. 210-212 by Page and Davies. The scholiast on Aristophanes uses the term παραπλοκή: i.e. a quotation from another text, woven into the primary text<sup>55</sup>. The term could not be more proper in the framework of intertextuality. Everybody will agree that the *ethos* of the Stesichorean words is in perfect harmony with what Aristophanes is presenting in this play<sup>56</sup>.

<sup>53</sup> In Attic ἐδάμην is not found; there are some instances of ἐδαμάσθην. The verb is poetical anyway.

<sup>54</sup> In some cases Aristophanes has adapted Stesichorus' words to Attic: Μοῖσα > Μοῦσα, ἀπώσαμένα > -μένη. He left δαμώματα untouched: there is no Attic counterpart for it.

<sup>55</sup> The term παραπλοκή is also used in Aristoph. *inc. fab.* fr. 590 KA = POxy. 2737 i 25 (see Lobel's note). This text, an ancient commentary to a lost play of Ar., is (with so many other passages in the scholia) proof of the fact that already in Antiquity scholars were keenly aware of Aristophanes' 'intertextual' activities.

<sup>56</sup> There are good grounds for supposing that Stesichorus' *Oresteia* covered at least considerable parts of the story dealt with by Aeschylus almost a century later; if this is correct, it is hard to guess how this opening address to the Muse, with its accent on wars ended, marriage celebrated etc. accords with the generally gruesome incidents of the Atreid family. But that is another matter.

He must have reached out for these venerable words in order to give his own ode and antode more resonance on a decisive moment. In this connection I draw attention to a fundamental paper written thirty years ago by Eduard Fraenkel<sup>57</sup>. In the first place he gives a hypothetical but well-founded sketch of the traditional Greek *Kultlieder*, as a background for the numerous hymns composed by Aristophanes as odes-cum-antodes in his parabaseis. In the second place he points out that in some of these hymns Aristophanes, instead of pursuing the traditional path of cult poetry, borrows a highly individual phrase from Pindar (*Eq.* 1264 ff., from Pindar fr. 89 Snell) or Stesichorus (the present case in *Pax*, 774, 796). Fraenkel's comment is too important not to be quoted in full: «Es handelt sich dabei nicht allein und nicht einmal in erster Linie um das, was wir heutzutage unter Parodie verstehen, obwohl auch das zu seinem Recht kommt, denn wir sind in der Welt der Komödie. Aber wichtiger noch ist der neue positive Impuls, die Bereicherung der musikalischen wie der stilistischen Ausdrucksmittel, die der enge Anschluss an berühmte Werke einer damals schon klassisch gewordenen Lyrik mit sich bringt.»<sup>58</sup> — So far about the *Pax*.

The *Lysistrata* shows a comparable state of affairs as far as allusions to and citations from earlier poets are concerned. I again give the list: of the non-tragic poets Homer, Hesiod, Sappho, Alcman, Alcaeus, Aesopus; then Aesch.' *Agam.*, *Septem*;

<sup>57</sup> In his *Beobachtungen zu Aristophanes* (Roma 1962), 191-215; reprinted in H.-J. NEWIGER's *AAK*, 30-55. In this paper Fraenkel refers to his earlier «Der Zeushymnus im Agamemnon des Aischylos» which appeared first in *Philologus* 86 (1931), 1-17 and was reprinted in his *Kleine Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie* (Roma 1964), I 353-369.

<sup>58</sup> *AAK*, 45.



Soph.' *Antig.*, *Tyro*; Eur.' *Androm.*, *Alc.*, *Erechth.*, *Medea*, *Melaniepe*, *Telephus*<sup>59</sup>.

When the Proboulos says angrily ἄταρ οὐ γυναικῶν οὐδέποτε ἔσθ' ἡττητέα ἡμῖν (450 f.), this reminds one strongly of Creon's words in Soph.' *Antigone* κοῦτοι γυναικὸς οὐδαμῶς ἡσσητέα (678, cp. also 680). The borrowing is not parodical in so far as in both cases the playwright makes the man who is confronted with a non-submissive woman utter a 'macho' statement which will be dramatically overruled by the course of events: the man has to accept defeat in the end in both cases.

In 640 ff. the chorus of women remembers proudly how as little girls they participated in the sacred rites of Athens. In that

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<sup>59</sup> According to the line-numbering of the play:

- 127 : a Homeric cento, cp. *Il.* XIII 279 = XVII 733; XXIV 794 = *Od.* XXI 86
- 139 : Soph. *Tyro* fr. 657 (*TrGF* IV, Radt)
- 182,192 : Alcaeus fr. 129, 14-15
- 188 : Aesch. *Th.* 43-47
- 369 : Eur. *inc. fab.* fr. 882a Nauck-Snell
- 406 : Aesch. *Th.* 594
- 450 : Soph. *Ant.* 678
- 467 : Aesch. *Th.* 1006
- 538 : *Il.* VI 492
- 632 : *Carm. conviv.*, *PMG* fr. 893, 895
- 638 : Soph. *Ant.* 1183; Eur. *IT* 1422
- 644 : Aesch. *Ag.* 239
- 695 : Aesopus
- 706 : Eur. *Telephus* fr. 699 N<sup>2</sup>
- 713 : Eur. *inc. fab.* fr. 883 N<sup>2</sup>
- 865-869: Eur. *Alc.* 940 ff.
- 962 ff. : Eur. *Andromeda* fr. 116 N<sup>2</sup>
- 1173 : Hes. *Op.* 391-392
- 1247 ff.
- and
- 1296 ff. : Alcman. See E. CAVALLINI, «Echi della lirica arcaica nella *Lisistrata* di Aristofane», in *MCr* 18 (1983), 71-75.

context they say: καὶ χέουσα τὸν κροχῶτὸν ἄρκτος ἢ Βραυρωνίοις (644-645)<sup>60</sup>. The chorus is perfectly serious here, and the Aeschylean phrase gives poignancy to their language. No parody here, for certain.

At the end of the play the Spartan ambassador sings two songs; he first invokes Mnemosyne to send her daughter the Muse, for she knows the heroic past of the Athenians and the Spartans when they defeated the Medes in a joined effort, and he begs Artemis to come and protect the new peace-treaty (1247 ff.); then he implores his Spartan Muse to sing the praise of Artemis and Apollo, Athena and of course the Dioskouroi and Helen (1296-1320). For a detailed discussion of the language and content of these lyrics I refer to Henderson's commentary, and to Zimmermann for the metrical peculiarities<sup>61</sup>. The latter is perfectly right when he considers these lyrics as referring *in a non-parodical way* to earlier poetry, especially Alcman<sup>62</sup>. Special attention should be paid to frg. 8 and 10 of Alcman, in which Mnemosyne, the Muses, Eurotas, Amyclae, the Tyndaridai are mentioned: elements also present in the Aristophanean lyrics. By taking these Spartan topics and Alcmanic reminiscences the comic poet did not intend to ridicule either the Spartans or Alcman, or both. He wanted to weave his text into the poetical tradition, and to give it an extra splendor in that way.

<sup>60</sup> See J. HENDERSON's comm. *ad loc.* for the choice of the reading καὶ χέουσα, first proposed by T. Stinton.

<sup>61</sup> *Op. cit.* in my note 32, 42-49.

<sup>62</sup> J. HENDERSON *ad* 1296-1315 aptly remarks that Aristophanes did *not* aim at provoking hilarity here, as if Spartan dialect and poetry were clumsy and inferior to Attic. More probably «he wanted an agreeably quaint and old-fashioned sound. That is, the spectator's feeling of superiority derives not from the rhythmical and linguistic features of the song but simply from the genial amusement always created by the behaviour of visiting foreigners.»

As for the *Birds*, I shall confine myself to a discussion of the ode and antode of the parabasis; for here one finds allusions to Alcman, Phrynichus and Alcaeus, three poets who excelled in musicality, and two of them even more especially in incorporating and imitating bird-songs in their poetry<sup>63</sup>.

Alcman says of himself *Φοῖδα δ' ὀρνίχων νόμῳ παντῶν* (fr. 40 Page = Davies; he knows to imitate the sound of cackling partridges, fr. 39, and describes even the silence of birds sleeping, fr. 89). Aristophanes here uses an Alcmanic phrase in 740 (cp. fr. 56) and describes in 777-778 the silence of nature in words close to Alcman's famous fr. 89 (*εὐδουσι δ' ὀρέων κορυφαί*).

In Alcaeus' famous but unfortunately lost hymn to Apollo swans, nightingales and swallows sing in honour of this god (fr. 307 Voigt). That not only Alcman but also Alcaeus was particularly keen on imitating the sounds of birds in his poetry can be derived from Himerius (whose paraphrase of this hymn is the only source of our knowledge); he says (Himer. Or. XLVIII 11, p. 201 Colonna) ἄδουσι μὲν ἀηδόνες αὐτῷ (i.e. Ἀπόλλωνι) ὅποῖον εἶδος ἄσαι παρ' Ἀλκαίῳ τὰς ὀρνιθας. Sommerstein deserves much credit for having been the first, so far as I know, to draw attention to the relation of *Aves* 769 ff. to Alcaeus' hymn<sup>64</sup>. The opening of the antode (*τοιιάδε κύκνοι*

<sup>63</sup> The long and rich text of the *Aves* would offer much material for my purpose, e.g. 685 ff. which far from being just a cento, alludes to *Il.* VI 146-149 and to Aesch. *Prom.* 547-550; see A.H. SOMMERSTEIN *ad loc.*, and also Richard GARNER's recent *From Homer to Tragedy: the Art of Allusion in Greek Poetry* (London/New York 1990), 229 n. 47. We shall never know the extent to which Aristophanes followed specific examples of bird-songs imitated in poetry by Alcman and the other two poets; we can only admire virtuoso passages like *Aves* 227 ff. (the Hoopoe's song), 310 & 314 (alarm calls turning into human speech) etc.

<sup>64</sup> In his commentary to the *Birds* (Warminster 1987), 248. He observes that in Himerius' text the performance of the swans is limited to drawing the

κτλ.), in combination with the imperfect tense ἴαρχον, seems to refer both to be mythical event (Apollo's triumphant flight from the Hyperboreans) and to the poetical example imitated by Aristophanes.

Phrynichus, the third poet who is important here, is the only one explicitly referred to:

δι' ἐμῆς γένυος ξουθῆς μελέων  
 Πανὶ νόμους ἱεροὺς ἀναφαίνω  
 σεμνά τε μητρὶ χορεύματ' ὀρεῖα, ...  
 ἔνθεν ὥσπερ εἰ μέλιττα  
 Φρύνιχος ἀμβροσίων μελέων ἀπεβόσκετο καρπὸν αἰὲ  
 φέρων γλυκεῖαν ὥδαν. (744-750)

According to Fraenkel<sup>65</sup> Aristophanes implies here that ἔνθεν refers to a stock of Attic cult-hymns addressed to Pan and the Mother, a repertory *from which*, in his time, Phrynichus had taken his honey-sweet tunes. Kakridis<sup>66</sup> argues from the same passage that Phrynichus, the tragic poet, had composed an hyporcheme, addressed to Pan and the Mother and performed by a bird-chorus; in Kakridis' view this specific poem would

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god's chariot, and that only Aristophanes makes them sing (772). Considering (a) that in Alcman fr. 1, 100-101 a swan sings (the chorus of the ten maidens φθέγγεται δ' ἄρ' ὥτ' ἐπὶ Ξάνθῳ ῥοαῖσι / κύκνος), and (b) that if Alcaeus presents the musical god as served by birds, he will probably have chosen the most impressive *singers* among them, I prefer to think that they sang in Alcaeus' hymn as well as in Aristophanes'. It looks very much as if Alcaeus' hymn itself was a grand piece of poetics, a glorification of the power of music and poetry.

<sup>65</sup> In his paper about «Die Parabasenlieder», in *AAK*, 49-50.

<sup>66</sup> T.J. KAKRIDIS, «Phrynischeisches in den Vögeln des A.», in *WS N.F.* 4 (1970), 39-51. Kakridis' hypothesis is discussed, and rejected, by M.J. ALINK in his dissertation *De Vogels van Aristophanes* (Amsterdam 1983), 96-104.



have been the 'source' for Aristophanes here. Both constructions are too artificial to my taste.

What the text conveys is *in the first place* that the birds sing to Pan and the Mother (divinities related to animals more than to human beings and having their habitat among them), and that their music is as it were the meadow from which good old Phrynichus gathered his honey: the bird-music comes first, for it is the 'natural' and primary thing, Phrynichus' music is the 'cultural' and secondary product. As I see it, the text conveys *in the second place* almost the opposite: for in fact there are no birds singing, it is a chorus performing a score which Aristophanes has written for them: this cultural product, in point of fact a musical imitation of singing birds, stands in a tradition of refined music in which Phrynichus is the 'past master'<sup>67</sup>: he, Phrynichus, comes first, and Aristophanes after him. In a mixture of modesty and justified pride the comic poet points to the relation between himself and the famous tragic poet.

The ode and antode end in a kind of apotheosis, in so far as the bird-music is described as penetrating the clouds and resounding on the Olympus<sup>68</sup>:

εἶλε δὲ θάμβος ἄνακτας Ὀλυμπιά-  
 δες δὲ μέλος Χάριτες Μοῦ-  
 σαί τ' ἐπωλόλυξαν. (781-783)

In the fictional frame of reference, it is the birds who are singing and describe the impact of their singing: it has an Olympian

<sup>67</sup> For the reputation of Phrynichus as composer of lovely songs see the testimonia conveniently assembled in *TrGF I* (ed. B. SNELL), pp. 69 ff.

<sup>68</sup> That this is important for Aristophanes, is indicated by the fact that in the (shorter) song of the Hoopoe the same constellation is described: bird-song ascends to Zeus' throne and finds divine response and approval (213-222).

echo and is received in tones of admiration<sup>69</sup> by the Charites and Muses, *les connoisseuses par excellence*. But in the pragmatic frame it is Aristophanes' chorus which is now performing his virtuoso music for an Athenian audience, and if he makes this song end with the supreme approval of Muses and Charites, I take this as an in-built applause, as a proud piece of immanent poetics. It is as if he says: this ode-cum-antode in which I compete with famous predecessors is a masterpiece which deserves highest credit, and don't you forget it.

Already in the second section of his paper it appeared that Aristophanes wanted to find a way out of the cheap comic effects which had been characteristic of comedy so far. The third section has confirmed this view, for it has become clear from Aristophanes' explicit claims and from the implicit poetics which we can derive from his practice, that he intended to lift comedy from the level of broad farce and low diction, and to produce a product of more stylistic and literary refinement<sup>70</sup>. This is claimed in as many words in the parabasis of *Pax*; there the coryphaeus says about his poet

τοιαῦτ' ἀφελὼν κακὰ καὶ φόρτον καὶ βωμολοχεύματ' ἀγεννῇ  
ἐποίησε τέχνην μεγάλην ἡμῖν κἀπύργωσ' οἰκοδομήσας  
ἔπεσιν μεγάλοις καὶ διανοίαις καὶ σκώμμασιν οὐκ ἀγοραίοις.  
(748-750).

<sup>69</sup> For ὀλολύζειν as indicating admiration or triumphant jubilation cp. L. DEUBNER, *Ololyge und Verwandtes*, Abh. Preuss. Akad. Wiss., 1941, 1, 10-12.

<sup>70</sup> Given the fact that in *Poetics* 3, 1448 a 26-27 Aristotle mentions Homer, Sophocles and Aristophanes as *the* representatives of epic, tragedy and comedy respectively, he may have been of the opinion that comedy, after making a very informal start and occupying itself mainly with jests and jibes, and having reached some respectability with a chorus given by the archon and with Crates introducing something resembling a plot (all this he says in 5, 1449 b 1-8), finally with Aristophanes ἔσχε τὴν αὐτῆς φύσιν (in 4, 1449 a 15 he uses this phrase for tragedy).

It would of course be absurd to attribute to Aristophanes literary tendencies in the mode of the Hellenistic poets: a comic poet who writes not for industrious readers but for an eager and impatient audience, has no use for obscure allusions and far-fetched quotations or for phrases only intelligible to scholars. It is the famous bits, the golden bits and evergreens from Greek poetry which he uses: from Homer the ἀφρήτωρ ἀθέμιστος and πόλεμος δ' ἄνδρεςσι μελήσει, from Archilochus the ἀσπίδι μὲν Σαίων (*Pax* 1298), Alcaeus' Apollo-hymn, the opening lines of Stesichorus' *Oresteia*, Simonides' «ram» (*Nub.* 1356), Pindar's ὦ τὰι λιπαραὶ καὶ ἰοστέφανοι... Ἀθᾶναι (*Eq.* 1329); of the skolia the ἐν μύρτου κλαδὶ τὸ ξίφος φορήσω (*Lys.* 632), and from the tragedians the best-known plays. But even so he was out for a position not outside the literary world but in it; he knew that he was not just a jester or a clown, but a poet in his own right, and, if I may use Leavis' words, in 'the great tradition'.

#### IV

After so much emphasis upon *tradition*, it is appropriate to give attention, in this fourth and last section of my paper, to Aristophanes' *originality*. He certainly claimed it in the famous lines in *Nubes*:

οὐδ' ὑμᾶς ζητῶ ἑξαπατᾶν δις καὶ τρίς ταῦτ' εἰσάγων,  
 ἀλλ' αἰεὶ καινὰς ἰδέας εἰσφέρων σοφίζομαι  
 οὐδὲν ἀλλήλαισιν ὁμοίας καὶ πάσας δεξιᾶς (546-548).

«I do not try to cheat you by bringing the same stuff for a second and a third time; on the contrary, I exercise my task as a professional by introducing brand-new concepts in each new play: they are clever, and I never repeat myself.»

Someone might object that it is too intellectual to take καινὰς ἰδέας as new *concepts*; does not ἰδέα mean 'form', 'shape'? But

Aristophanes cannot have meant to say that in each case the *form* and *organization* of a new play was new. Long before Zielinski the Athenians, and Aristophanes in the first place, knew that comedy had a traditional form and organization: prologue, parodos, agon, parabasis etc.<sup>71</sup> And the words he uses in other passages claiming originality: *καινοτάταις διανοίαις Vesp.* 1044, *καινόν τι (...) νόημα Vesp.* 1053-1055, *ἐπενόησεν Ran.* 1373, *διανοίαις Eccl.* 581, *τοὺς νοῦς δ' ἄγοραίους ἤττον fr.* 471 K / 488 KA, all point in the same direction. I conclude that with *καινὰς ἰδέας εἰσφέρων* he meant that for each comedy he invented a new concept of presenting comic action; as a consequence of that, each play had a distinct new shape, looked like something new. Now what were these concepts?

Certainly Koch<sup>72</sup> took *καινὰς ἰδέας* in too rational a way when he suggested that for each comedy Aristophanes first sat down to elaborate a 'critical concept' (= some fundamental criticism of Athenian society and for politics), and then worked it out into a 'comical theme' in which the 'concept' was given dramatic reality. If it is legitimate to speculate how Aristophanes went about creating his plays, Newiger<sup>73</sup> probably came much closer to the truth by pointing out that Aristophanes' fancy is often taken by a metaphor, an image already present in popular Greek expressions, or in expressions used by other poets or by himself: he then takes the metaphor literally and makes a

<sup>71</sup> Cp. Th. GELZER's comprehensive essay «Tradition und Neuschöpfung in der Dramaturgie des A.», in *AAK*, 283-316.

<sup>72</sup> K.D. KOCH, *Kritische Idee und komisches Thema. Untersuchungen zur Dramaturgie und zum Ethos der Aristophanischen Komödie* (Diss. Kiel 1953, published in Bremen 1965).

<sup>73</sup> H.-J. NEWIGER, *Metapher und Allegorie. Studien zu Aristophanes* (München 1957). J. TAILLARDAT (see my note 39), who had written his extensive study of Aristophanes' metaphors without knowing Newiger's, acknowledges N.'s point in his very last paragraph, 505-506.



dramatic persona or dramatic action out of it<sup>74</sup>. Given the regrettable circumstance that, although invited, Newiger could not participate in these *Entretiens*, I think it is appropriate to quote the paragraph<sup>75</sup>, in which he brilliantly encapsulates Aristophanes' originality: «Aristophanes (...) hat bemerkenswert oft Metaphern und sprachliche Bilder in Handlung umgesetzt, wie an der Hackblock-Szene und dem Übelkeit erregenden Helm der *Acharner*, dem Kleinleute-Haushalt des Demos, dem in den Lüften schwebenden Sokrates, der Bergung des Friedens, der tragischen Waage der *Frösche*, den zum Stechen gereizten Richterwespen, den Wolken der neumodischen Spekulation oder dem Wolkenkuckucksburg der Vögel gezeigt worden ist. Et hat eine eigentümliche komische Symbolik entwickelt (...), in deren Bereich die Personalmetapher, die 'redenden' Namen der Helden und ihre Verbindung mit Weibspersonen bedeutungsvollen Namens ebenso gehören wie die Erhebung des so privaten Motives der Verweigerung des ehelichen Beischlafs zum Mittel der grossen Politik durch die 'Heerauflöserin' Lysistrate. (...) Das Wirken schöpferischer Phantasie am nicht näher bestimmten Objekt finden wir in griechischer Dichtung nur hier. Epos, Lyrik, Tragödie hatten vorgegebene Stoffe und operierten so stets in einer Beschränkung, die auch die Sprache festlegte. Die Alte Komödie — und das heisst Aristophanes — hatte als Stoff die ganze Wirklichkeit und dazu deren Verzerrung — und darüber hinaus alles was dem Dichter sonst noch einfiel.»

It is obvious, to me at least, that in this way Newiger has come close to the centre, to the elusive secret of Aristophanes'

<sup>74</sup> «Wieder einmal ist die Sprache beim Worte genommen und das Sprachbild für die Handlung verwertet» (52); «Aus der bildlichen Rede erwächst die bildliche Handlung» (180).

<sup>75</sup> Taken from his contribution to E. VOGT's *Griechische Literatur* (referred to in my note 23), 210.

poetical inventivity. 'Elusive' indeed, for metaphorical activity consists essentially in a quick shift, a switch, a flight of fancy. But the more elusive a topic, the more it provokes scholars to grasp and catch it. There have been various attempts by scholars to shed light precisely upon this aspect of Aristophanes. Two of them, present at these entretiens, Gelzer and Zimmermann, have concentrated on the element of fantasy and utopia, and this has been a fertile approach, to the results of which I can simply refer<sup>76</sup>. Other scholars, like Carrière, Ritoók and Goldhill, seek support in the theoretical works of Bakhtin<sup>77</sup>. I am not certain that Bakhtin's theoretical frame (derived from and relevant to Rabelais, and directed at explaining much of modern prose fiction like Dostojevski), brings us very far. Has it not been — long before Bakhtin — common ground among classicists that topsyturvydom ('die verkehrte Welt'), scatology and obscenity, uninhibited enjoyment of sex, wine and food are ingredients of Aristophanes' plays? It is certainly correct to point out that in various phases of the history of mankind comparable cultural institutions (saturnalian or carnivalesque rites) have been created to bring relief from the pressure of everyday needs, concerns and inhibitions. But knowing this we are none the wiser when it comes to understanding the specific artistic creations of Aristophanes. For this understanding one can derive much more

<sup>76</sup> Th. GELZER, «Dionysisches und Phantastisches in der Komödie des Aristophanes», in *Probleme der Kunstwissenschaften* II (Berlin 1966), 39-78; and B. ZIMMERMANN, «Utopisches und Utopie in den Komödien des Aristophanes», in *WJA* N.F. 9 (1983), 57-77.

<sup>77</sup> J. CARRIÈRE, *Le carnaval et la politique* (Paris 1979); Zs. RITOÓK, «Wirklichkeit und Phantastisches in den Komödien des Aristophanes», in *Kultur und Fortschritt in der Blütezeit der griechischen Polis*, ed. E. KLUWE, Akad. Wiss. der DDR (Berlin 1985), 259-275; S. GOLDHILL in the book referred to in my note 12, 176-201.

profit from a precise knowledge of the Dionysiac context<sup>78</sup> of his plays than from the dossiers about medieval carnival<sup>79</sup>.

Although we have one comedy in which Dionysus himself is present from the beginning to the end, he gives his comments only on the production and producers of tragedy. Would it not have been nice to have a theory of comedy explained by Dionysus himself? It would have done very well for me, if I could end my paper with the borrowing of such an authoritative voice. But even if this were the case, it would have been Aristophanes we would listen to, not the god. Therefore I have chosen to end this section with a two-liner of our poet. It is in fact a fragment (*Inc. fab.* fr. 699 K/719 KA). And it needs some introduction. Aristophanes often uses suggestive expressions to describe poetical activity, many of them of a metaphorical nature<sup>80</sup>. I have not discussed this material because these expressions concern virtually always how *other* poets operate: Aeschylus, Euripides, Agathon *et alii*, and it has been my aim throughout this paper to analyse Aristophanes' words and thoughts not just about poets and poetry in general, but about his own poetry. One aspect of his metaphorical expressions about poetry, however, is helpful for the understanding of the fragment I am going to present. He likes to compare the poet's craft

<sup>78</sup> As S. GOLDHILL himself has done so effectively for tragedy, in his «The Great Dionysia and Civic Ideology», in *JHS* 107 (1987), 58-76.

<sup>79</sup> In «Michail Bakhtin und die Karnevalskultur im antiken Griechenland», in *QUCC* N.S. 23 (1986), 25-44. W. RÖSLER shows that Bakhtin, in so far as he dealt with Greek literature (he was not badly informed about it, having been a student of Zielinski in Petersburg) ignores Old Comedy! His theory about carnival and about its relation to literature can be usefully applied in the study of Old Comedy, but only for a broader understanding of its anthropological background.

<sup>80</sup> J. TAILLARDAT (see my note 39), 430-450, discusses this material thoroughly.

to that of other experts, be they charioteers<sup>81</sup>, sailors<sup>82</sup>, architects<sup>83</sup>, cooks<sup>84</sup>, blacksmiths<sup>85</sup> or sculptors in bronze<sup>86</sup>. It is from this last craft that he takes a comparison in the following lines:

ῥήματά τε κομψὰ καὶ παίγνι' ἐπιδεικνύναι  
πάντ' ἀπ' ἀκροφυσίων κάπὸ καναβευμάτων.

From the *Suda* α 2874 and from S. Radt on Soph. fr. 992 we learn that ἀκροφύσια are the bellows used by bronze sculptors to increase the glow of the fire under the melting-pot; in Hesychius we read s.v. καναβοί τὰ ξύλα περὶ ἧ... οἱ πλάσται τὸν κηρὸν τιθέασιν. All this refers to the technique of making bronze sculptures with the technique of *cire perdue*. — If I am right in supposing that Aristophanes in these words refers to his own activity<sup>87</sup>, we have here the poet who, present at the performance of one of his plays, comments on his own production:

«(It has been my aim, dear public), to present deft expressions and playthings (acted out in front of you): all of them (brand-new from my workshop), fresh from the bellows and the wooden models.»

Without claiming such absolute newness for the different parts of my discussion, I express the hope that, taken together, they offer a new look into Aristophanes' workshop.

<sup>81</sup> *Vesp.* 1022, coll. 1049.

<sup>82</sup> *Eq.* 542-544.

<sup>83</sup> *Pax* 749-750; *Ran.* 1004.

<sup>84</sup> *Geras* fr. 130 K/128 KA; *Thesmophoriazusae* B' fr. 333 K/347 KA.

<sup>85</sup> *Thesm.* 55.

<sup>86</sup> *Thesm.* 56-57.

<sup>87</sup> J. TAILLARDAT, *op. cit.*, 443 prefers to think he refers to Agathon; Kassel & Austin, and before them Kaibel, suggest that Aristophanes is here speaking about *his own* productions.



## DISCUSSION

*M. Gelzer:* Sehr interessant ist die Zusammenstellung *aller* zitierten, parodierten oder irgendwie benützten Dichter in den genannten Komödien des Aristophanes. Sie spiegelt offenbar die Bildung der damaligen Athener wieder: das was sie kannten, in der Schule kennen lernten und bei gewissen Gelegenheiten, z.B. an Symposien, vorsingen oder rezitieren konnten.

Gewiss hat Aristophanes selber viel mehr gekannt als das, was er in seinen Komödien benutzte (resp. was wir davon heute noch identifizieren können). Er war sicher ein aktiver und neugieriger Leser und Hörer aller ihm erreichbaren Dichtung. Das, was er davon in seinen Komödien benutzte war also wohl eine Auswahl, und man kann sich fragen, nach welchen Kriterien, mit welcher Absicht hat er das ausgewählt. Ich würde annehmen, er habe das ausgewählt, von dem er voraussetzen konnte, das es seinem Publikum bekannt war. Witze und Anspielungen, die verstanden werden und beim Publikum 'ankommen' sollten, konnten nur mit solchen Dichtern, Liedern und Texten gemacht werden, die ein Athener normalerweise kannte, d.h. wohl eben in der Schule kennengelernt hatte.

*M. Bremer:* It is fair to consider the range of poetry used (quoted, alluded to, parodied etc.) by Aristophanes as standing in some relation to what his audience knew. As I said in my paper: they would recognize evergreens like πόλεμος δ' ἄνδρεσσι μέλησει, ἀσπίδι μὲν Σαῖων τις immediately. You are right in pointing out that Aristophanes himself, who showed at an early age such an outstanding literary competence, will have digested much more poetry than the average Athenian. He used also the more recondite jewels from this treasure-house, but then he took care to let them sparkle: in other words, he betrayed his 'pretexts' by either a non-Attic word like δαμώματα (*Pax* 796) or a non-Attic inflection (ἐδάμην *Pax* 583, τοκῆας *ibid.*, 1301).

*M. Gelzer:* Die Dichter waren Gegenstand der Jugendbildung nicht in erster Linie aus ästhetischen Gründen, sondern weil sie als Erzieher zu gewissen Bürgertugenden geschätzt — oder abgelehnt — wurden (*Nub.* 1355 ff., 1403 ff.). Sie wurden bewundert, weil sie die Menschen βελτίους ... ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν machen, und die guten Dichter galten deshalb als ὠφέλιμοι (*Ran.* 1009 f., 1030 ff.).

*M. Dover:* The conception of poets as ὠφέλιμοι agrees with what is described as contemporary practice in Plato, *Prt.* 325 e - 326 a, the educational prescription of poetry which contains νουθετήσεις and examples which a boy should emulate.

*M. Gelzer:* Max Pohlenz (*Die Anfänge der griechischen Poetik*, in *NGG* 1920, 142 ff.) hat ja auch angenommen, Aristophanes habe in den *Fröschen* eine Schrift eines Sophisten, vielleicht eben des Protagoras benützt und sozusagen zitiert, wogegen C.M.J. Sicking mit überzeugenden Argumenten zeigt, dass die technischen Kenntnisse der Poetik und die Urteile, die Aristophanes auch an anderen Orten ausspricht, es wahrscheinlicher machen, dass ihre Formulierung in den *Fröschen* ihm selber zugetraut werden kann (*Aristophanes' Ranae. Een hoofdstuk uit de geschiedenis der Griekse Poetica* [Assen 1962]; vgl. auch schon J.D. Denniston, «Technical Terms in Aristophanes», in *CQ* 21 (1927), 113 ff.).

*M. Bremer:* The utilitarian, didactic-moralistic view of poetry proclaimed by Aeschylus in *Ran.* 1030-1035, is in the first place an element in the process towards the *dénouement* of the plot: Dionysus' choice of Aeschylus.

*M. Gelzer:* Die Dichtung gehört zu der musischen Paideia, die im Prinzip alle Bürger in der Jugend erhalten. Ihre 'Früchte' parodiert Aristophanes im *Frieden* (1265 ff.).

*M. Handley:* I am glad to take the opportunity of acknowledging the welcome presence of Miss Amy Clark from the University of Bern. It is useful, if we begin from her reference to the Muse of Agathon at *Thesmo-*

*phoriazusae* 107 ff., to go on to think of the image of Euripides' Muse in *Frogs* (1305 ff.) ἡ τοῖς ὀστράχοις / αὕτη κροτοῦσα, the ancien equivalent, one might think, of a dancer in a low night club; at the same time, we should remember the extraordinary compound of kinds of composition of which she is to be patron: 1301-1303.

Another very different image of a poet is given by Aristophanes of Cratinus in the *Knights* (526-530), the man who flowed so powerfully that he carried away oaks, plane-trees and his enemies all together. With that we can compare the image presented by Cratinus of himself in the *Pytine* of 423, especially fr. 186 K/198 KA: ἄναξ Ἀπολλων, τῶν ἐπῶν τοῦ ρεύματος, κτλ.: he could turn the image of full flow his own way, just as he could use Aristophanes' image of him as an old drunkard.

*M. Gelzer:* Es wäre auch von Interesse, solche Dichter zusammenzustellen, die Aristophanes (und sein Publikum) gekannt haben muss, die er aber *nicht* zitiert, z.B. die Dithyrambiker, von denen er nur ganz wenige wie etwa Kinesias nennt, und die Orakeldichter (*Pax* 1043 ff.; *Aves* 903 ff., 959 ff.). Wahrscheinlich ist das Nicht-Nennen der vielen anderen auch Absicht.

*M. Degani:* Nel quadro di questa crescente considerazione di Aristofane nei confronti del 'basso' pubblico, non credi si possa ricordare anche la figura di 'Eracle mangione', motivo supersfruttato quanto volgare, messo dichiaratamente al bando nelle prime commedie (*Vesp.* 60; *Pax* 741) ed inaspettatamente riesumato nelle ultime (*Av.* 1574 ss.; *Ran.* 549 ss.; cf. *Aiolosikon*, la ultima commedia di Aristofane, fr. 12 K/11 KA)?

*M. Bremer:* I could not agree with you more. Compare two other items: 1) the comic use of torches, 'rejected' by Aristophanes in *Nub.* 543, but he uses them in *Vesp.* 1330-1331, *Lys.* 381 and 1216-1220, *Plu.* 1050-1054, and 2) defecation on stage, rejected in *Nub.* 296 (μηδὲ ποιήσεις ἅπερ οἱ τρυγοδαίμονες οὗτοι) and in *Ran.* 5-8, but practised in *Ran.* 479-490 and exploited almost *ad nauseam* in *Eccl.* 316-373.

*M. Zimmermann:* Ein noch deutlicherer Fall liegt in den *Wolken* selbst vor. Heisst es doch da in der Parabase (543) οὐδ' εἰσῆξε δᾶδας ἔχουσ', οὐδ' ἰοὺ ἰοὺ βοᾷ, in der Exodos dagegen erscheint Strepsiades mit einer Fackel um das

Phrontisterion anzuzünden (1490), und der Schüler des Sokrates schreit *λοῦ* *λοῦ* (1493).

*M. Handley*: I should like to remark briefly on the persistence of the torch motif in later Comedy. Torches are in place for a *κῶμος* at the end of a play, as at Menander, *Dysc.* 959 ff. and in other passages quoted by commentators there; and they also feature as an accompaniment to the kind of revel in which a lover visits his mistress (the *paraklausithyron* motif); so *κατακάω* «I burn the house down» at *Dysc.* 60 is recognizable as a reference to this kind of serenade. It becomes a major motif in the play represented by *PKöln* 5, 203 (more fragments in *PKöln* 6, 243); the torch is a normal accompaniment to visiting friends by night (of which the serenade, let us say, is a special case); it is no doubt taken for granted in plays where slaves escort or collect their masters; so Asclepiades, imagining himself at an all-night party, refers to it in an epigram as *κοιμιστὰς λύχνος* (Nr. XVI Gow-Page, = *Anthol. Pal.* XII 50).

*Mme Loraux*: A propos du point 2 de votre exposé — le souci qu'Aristophane manifeste de la réception de ses comédies —, j'aimerais vous demander si vous voyez là une caractéristique entièrement propre à Aristophane et au genre comique; en d'autres termes si, malgré la marque très personnelle qui est celle de ces déclarations, Aristophane n'est pas l'héritier d'une tradition bien antérieure, où l'affirmation de la difficulté de plaire ferait partie de l'auto-présentation du poète dans son œuvre. Pour mieux m'expliquer, je vous demanderais volontiers comment vous situez l'originalité de la position d'Aristophane par rapport à celle d'un Théognis, par exemple, lorsque ce dernier répète qu'il sait ne pas pouvoir plaire à tous ses concitoyens: car il se considère bien, lui aussi, comme s'adressant à la totalité de la cité, même si, dans ses poèmes, il distingue nettement les *ἄγαθοί* des autres (je me réfère, pour l'interprétation de Théognis, aux analyses de Gregory Nagy dans le volume *Theognis of Megara. Poetry and the Polis*, edited by Th.J. Figueira and G. Nagy [Baltimore/London 1985]).

*M. Bremer*: Both poets were worried about unpopularity, but there the comparison stops. The difference in genre is enormous: the elegy of Theognis



is aimed at the small aristocratic audience present at the symposion, most or all of whom shared Theognis' views anyway, while Aristophanes, *qualitate qua*, writes his plays for the δῆμος as such.

*M. Zimmermann:* Ich möchte auf die von Ihnen zitierten Musen-Anrufe zurückkommen (*Thesmophoriazusae* B' fr. 334 K/348 KA; *Ach.* 665; *Pax* 816; *Av.* 737). Mir scheint, dass in diesen Anrufen besonderes Gewicht den Epitheta der Musen zukommt. Der komische Chor soll nicht die 'hohen' Musen von weither zu seinem Gesang einladen (ἐλικοβοστρύχους, 'Ολυμπίας), sondern die ihm nahestehende Μοῦσα Ἀχαρνική bzw. λοχμαία. Dass die Muse in *Pax* nicht weiter spezifiziert wird, hängt mit dem nicht klar abgrenzbaren Charakter des Chors in diesem Stück zusammen. Diese Musen-Anrufe eignen sich m.E. auch besonders gut dazu, um das 'Aristophanische Paradoxon' zu erklären, die Tatsache nämlich, dass Aristophanes häufig — oft in demselben Stück, wie in den *Vögeln* — auf der einen Seite die Modernen und ihre Errungenschaften heftig kritisiert, auf der anderen Seite jedoch sich gerade dieser Innovationen besonders im musikalischen Bereich bedient. Das Paradoxon lässt sich lösen, wenn man Tragödie (und Dithyrambos) und Komödie, wie Aristophanes das tut, verschiedene Musen zuweist: Die Μοῦσα λοχμαία, Vogelgezwitscher, passt nicht in die Tragödie, die olympischen Chariten nicht in die Komödie; jede Gattung hat also ihr πρέπον zu wahren.

*M. Bremer:* The correctness of your comment is evident already in the emphatic position of ἐλικοβοστρύχους, and of 'Ολυμπίας at the end of the paeonic tetrameter in the lines of *Thesm.* B' fr. 334 K/348 KA.

*M. Zimmermann:* Die Beziehung von fr. 348 auf den Dithyrambos lässt sich durch Pindar fr. 75 Maehler erhärten: Δεῦτ' ἐν χορόν, 'Ολύμπιοι, ... (vs. 1).

*M. Gelzer:* Aristophanes nennt oder redet Musen an in verschiedenen Zusammenhängen und mit verschiedenen Absichten. Vielleicht würde es etwas dazu beitragen, verschiedene 'Typen' seines Gebrauchs von Musen-anrufen und Reden von Musen zu charakterisieren, wenn man jeweils zusammen betrachtet die Stellen, wo er sie in gewissen ihrer Form und ihrer

Funktion nach festen Teilen der Komödie nennt wie z.B. in Parabasenoden, wo höher stilisierte Götterhymnen eine Rolle spielen, in Epirrhemen der Parabasen, oder in parodierter Gebetsform (z.B. *Ran.* 674 ff. ὕμνος κλητικός).

*M. Bremer:* Aristophanes' plays are composed to form a coherent whole (cp. M. Heath's *Political Comedy in Aristophanes* [Göttingen 1987], 43-54), but that does not mean they are homogeneous from start to finish. Especially the *Parabasenlieder* in which one finds the non-parodical quotations or allusions I have been discussing, differ from their surroundings: the tone is more serious, and if religiosity is displayed here, it is not for poking fun but for a traditionally pious prayer: see Ed. Fraenkel, *Beobachtungen zu Aristophanes* (Roma 1962), 189-215 = *AAK* 30-54.

*M. Zimmermann:* In dem letzten Abschnitt Ihres Vortrags haben Sie durch die Betonung der Kreativität des Aristophanes implizit gegen Positionen in der Forschung Stellung bezogen, die insbesondere die Aristophanische Lyrik als *konventionell* bezeichnen. Einzelne Elemente der Aristophanischen Lyrik mögen durchaus bei den Lyrikern oder Tragikern belegt sein, die Kreativität des Aristophanes besteht m.E. doch gerade darin, dass er, wie z.B. in *Av.* 769 ff., aus diesen einzelnen Elementen ein neues Ganzes formt, wobei die Anspielungen an bekannte Stücke der Lyrik eines Alkman gerade dazu dienen, beim Zuhörer die Erinnerung an die ihm bekannten Stücke wachzurufen und die Aristophanische Komposition mit der z.B. des Alkman zu vergleichen. Dies passt durchaus in der Intertextualitätsdiskussion, auf die Sie Bezug genommen haben: Texte konstituieren sich immer aus Texten; die Qualität ermisst sich daran, wie sie ihre 'Prätexte' verarbeiten.

*M. Bremer:* As M. Silk's paper (in *YCS* 26 [1980], 99-151) is mainly a matter of literary appreciation («literarisches Werturteil»), it does not lend itself to scholarly polemic. My aim was to stress the importance of the devices by means of which Aristophanes' poetry is linked to and placed in the great tradition; on that point you and I agree.

*M. Handley:* You have referred already to fragments of Aristophanes' *Second Thesmophoriazusae*; it seems to me that there is another fragment which lends some support to your idea of Aristophanes' increasing self-consciousness as a writer: this is fr. 333 K/347 KA. Some of the detail is obscure, but what is essential to our purpose is that in this play (presumably a little later than the extant *Thesmophoriazusae*) Aristophanes is reflecting on Krates in terms which suggest he is thinking of his own innovations alongside the achievements of a master dramatist of the past. It is true that as a young man he looked back to poets of the past, even treating his fellow-competitor Cratinus as a figure from the history of comedy (*Knights* 520-540). But there are other reasons to think that *Second Thesmophoriazusae* may have been a play with features unusual for its time. For instance, it had a prologue-speech by the personified figure of Kalligeneia, the third day of the festival (fr. 335 K/331 KA); for more, see the comic fragment published at *POxy.* L 3540 and the discussion of it there.