

TWO NOTES ON ARISTOPHANES

1. *Equites*: 259—263.

κάποσुकάζεις πιέζων τούς ύπευθύνους, σκοπῶν
 ὅστις αὐτῶν ὤμός ἐστιν ἢ πέπων ἢ μὴ πέπων
 κἀν τιν' αὐτῶν γνῶς ἀπράγμον' ὄντα καὶ κεχῆνῶτα,
 καταγαγῶν ἐκ Χερρονήσου, διαλαβῶν, ἀγκυρίσας,
 εἶτ' ἀποστρέψας τὸν ὄμιον αὐτὸν ἐνεκολήβασας.

In these verses there appears to be an abrupt change of metaphor from 'figs' to 'wrestling' which has been noted before but not adequately explained.¹ Yet there need be no difficulty, provided one realises that Aristophanes is being obscene.

Two preliminary points need to be made before details are discussed. First, the fig was an image of the vagina or the anus;² second, wrestling was frequently a metaphor for sexual intercourse.³ There is constant play between the bribing of auditors who must pass the public accounts of those magistrates recently in office or the squeezing, throttling, and knocking down of a country-bumpkin — country metaphors of farmers testing fruit to see if it is ripe and knocking a lamb on the head to provide meat for a meal — and crude sexual foreplay before violent rape. Consideration of the vocabulary makes this clear.

ἀποσुकάζεις: (i) squeezing figs; (ii) having sexual intercourse. Cf. σुकάζουσαν Strattis fr. 3.⁴

ὤμός unripe; therefore both 'open to corruption' and 'virgin'.

πέπων cooked or ripe; therefore 'experienced'.

ἀπράγμονα inexperienced.

κεχῆνῶτα yawning, and 'bursting with ripeness'.

διαβαλῶν As commentators have pointed out, there is play between διαβαλῶν — bring into discredit, and διαλαβῶν — grasp round the waist. It is at this point the wrestling metaphors begin.

ἀγκυρίσας hook with the leg, a wrestling term ἄγκυρα may also mean 'penis', (Epicharmus 191), as well as anchor or pruning hook, and the verb must mean something like 'to fix in the hook'.

ἀποστρέψας: distinctly a wrestling term here. The movement is illustrated by H. A. Harris: *Greek Athletes and Athletics* (London 1964), figs. 14B and 21.

ἐνεκολήβασας: explained, on the evidence of the Scholiast and Hesychius as 'to gulp down'. The Scholiast, however, has not noticed the obscene play in the passage and has probably derived the word from κόλον and βάλνω (cf. Suidas s. v. ἐκολαβήσας).⁵ Moreover,

¹ See, for example, B. B. Rogers' notes ad locum in his edition of the play.

² E. g. Aristophanes: *Pax* 1350. *Ecclesiazusae* 707—9. *Anth. Graec.* 12.185 (Strato).

³ *Anth. Graec.* 12.206, 238 (Strato); 12.34 (Automedon). Nonnos: *Dionysiaca* 10.339—372.

⁴ I suspect there is double entendre in Aristophanes: *Pax* 1324—5; cf. 1346, 1350: and that Ameipsias, fr. 33 may have been part of a similar joke.

⁵ Rogers' note: „Having got his antagonist into this helpless attitude, what does Paphlagon do with him? He opens his mouth and swallows him down whole at a gulp, just as a boaconstrictor disposes of his victim.“

the transition from wrestling to feeding is very abrupt. If one suggests *κολέον* = sheath, scabbard, and *βαίνω* as an alternative, the natural sequence of wrestling/intercourse is preserved.⁶

I therefore paraphrase the passage thus. „You squeeze and touch up the audit committee, trying to find out which of them is virgin territory, which one is open to corruption, and which is uncorrupted. If you discover one who is inexperienced but wide open to it, you fetch him in from the Back of Beyond,⁷ nobble him, pin him down with your ‘hook’, pull his shoulders back, then ram him right down to the gut.“
2. *Aves*: 1694—1705.

ἔστι δ' ἐν Φαναῖσι πρὸς τῇ
Κλειψύδρα πανοῦργον ἐγ-
γλωττογαστῶρων γένος,
οἷ θερίζουσίν τε καὶ σπει-
ρουσι συκάζουσί τε·
βάρβαροι δ' εἰσὶν γένος,
Γοργῖαι τε καὶ Φίλιπποι.
κάπῳ τῶν ἐγγλωττογαστό-
ρων ἐκείνων τῶν Φιλίππων
πανταχοῦ τῆς Ἀττικῆς ἢ
γλῶττα χωρὶς τέμνεται.

Once again, the joke depends upon two points. *Γλωττίζειν* means to fellate [A n t h. G r a e c. 5.129 (Automedon)], and *συκάζουσι* here means not only to gather figs but to have sexual intercourse. One must remember how many Greek terms for sexual activity are metaphors from farming — *ἀρώσιμος*, *ἀροτήρ*, *ἀροτος*, *ἀροτρον*, *ἀρόω*, to go no further, are all capable of a sexual connotation. Gardens, orchards, meadows, may be terms for the *Mons Veneris*.⁸ Cropping harvest, sowing seed, gathering fruit with the tongue, ‘figging’, therefore, constitute a well-known type of slander on the hated foreigner. He is loud-mouthed, makes a fortune at our expense, and is disgustingly over-sexed.*

Queens' College, Cambridge.

P. G. Maxwell-Stuart.

⁶ Cf. *ἐγκολεῆσατο* = sheathed his sword, Hesychius and Suidas. Notice further what Suidas has to say about *ἐκολάβησας* He uses terms of violence and wrestling first — *προσέκρουσας*, *κατεπάλαισας* before going on to *κόλα δὲ ἢ γαστήρ* Gulping down may have been suggested by verse 258 — *τὰ κοινὰ πρὶν λαχεῖν κατεσθίεις*.

⁷ Literally, ‘out of Chersonese.’ I take it that this is meant to imply that the man is a provincial booby.

⁸ See M. Marcovich: „A new poem of Archilochus: P. Colon. inv. 7511,“ *GRBS* 16 (1975), 12 — his note on line 16 and the other passages there cited. *Clanak* 6a

*) I am grateful to Professor Georg Luck for reading and commenting upon this note.