

A Poet at Work: The Parody of *Helen* in the *Thesmophoriazusae*

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ἐκλέγειν ... ἐκ τῶν γεγραμμένων
Arist. *Top.* 105b

UNE DOUBLE CURIOSITÉ anime la critique moderne: elle veut savoir comment se font les textes, et elle veut savoir comment ils se défont,” noted J. Starobinski¹ in initiating a debate on text genetics some years ago. A similar twofold curiosity is to be found—we might even say right from their very beginnings—in studies on ancient literary tradition: the desire to find out how the texts in our possession were produced, and how they were reused—in other words, to verify the ancient writer’s working methods, the procedures involved in the composition of a literary work, the conditions (even the material ones) for “making” poetry.

Four passages in Greek literature dating from before the fourth century B.C. explicitly portray the poet at work. Three of them are to be found in Aristophanes.² In *Av.* 904a–957 the poet brought on stage is an anonymous character, a person from the

¹J. Starobinski, “Approches de la génétique des textes: Introduction pour un débat,” in L. Hay, ed., *La naissance du texte* (Paris 1989) 208.

²See J. Herington, *Poetry into Drama. Early Tragedy and the Greek Poetic Tradition* (Berkeley) 1985 46–47, who however seems to recognise only the cases described in *Acharnians* and *Thesmophoriazusae*. There is far more evidence relating to the later Greek and especially the Roman eras with information on the process involved in the composition of a literary work, from the preliminary collection of materials to the final definitive writing, ready for publication. This is now the subject of an interesting and well-documented study by T. Dorandi, *Le stilet et la tablette. Dans le secret des auteurs antiques* (Paris 2000); some supplementary notes on Dorandi’s work are in V. Bers, *CR* 21 (2001) 409–410.

city of men hastening to offer his services to the new world. He declares that he has had a great number of hymns honouring the new city ready for quite some time, but he performs as an extemporaneous improviser, and no connection emerges between his activity and writing or written texts.

In *Ach.* 395–413 is a representation of Euripides himself composing a tragedy. We see him dressed in ragged clothes, on the top floor of his house (although “his mind is elsewhere gathering small verses”),³ comically lying on his bed with his feet “dangling in the air” (ἀναβάδην).⁴ In the room we can see, along with the various fittings, the “rags” (ράκια)—perhaps hanging on the wall or heaped on the lid of a chest or on the floor—worn on stage by the various heroes, which presumably served to represent symbolically the texts of the tragedies as they were gradually made reference to.⁵ Even here there is no

³398–400a, ὁ νοῦς μὲν ἔξω ζυλλέγων ἐπύλλια | οὐκ ἔνδον, αὐτὸς δ' ἔνδον ἀναβάδην ποεῖ | τραγοῦδιαν. Beyond the more immediately evident parody of a paradoxical Euripidean-Sophistic way of thinking (396, οὐκ ἔνδον ἔνδον ἐστίν: cf. P. Rau, *Paratragodia. Untersuchungen einer komischen Form des Aristophanes* [Munich 1967] 29–30; F. Muecke, “Playing with the Play. Theatrical Self-consciousness in Aristophanes,” *Antichthon* 11 [1977] 52–67, at 62), we cannot wholly exclude the possibility that the servant’s expression contains an implicit reference to the preliminary work of collection and preparation of the “materials” needed for the composition of a work. Recall that in *Ran.* 940–943 “Euripides” will attribute to himself the boast of having supplied tragedy, “swollen as it was with bombast and overweight vocabulary ... with chatter-juice strained off from books” (transl. A. H. Sommerstein). Cf. *Ran.* 1409, where the theme of the “bookish” nature of Euripidean art is again maliciously put forth. However here the accusation of banality, insubstantiality, and stiffness levelled elsewhere (*Pax* 827–831, *Av.* 1372–1390) against the ethereal poetry of the new dithyramb writers, who flit about in the air intent on gathering preludes, seems completely out of context.

⁴410–411, ἀναβάδην ποεῖς, | ἐξὸν καταβάδην; As to the double meaning—“on the top floor” (399) and “with his feet dangling in the air” (410)—in which ἀναβάδην recurs at a distance of only a few lines, cf. G. Mastromarco, “Due casi di *aprosdoketon* scenico in Aristofane (*Acarnesi* 393–413, *Vespe* 526–538),” *Vichiana* 12 (1983) 249–254, who also takes into consideration the other semantic ambivalences present in the passage (οὐκ ἔνδον ἔνδον ἐστίν and ἐπύλλια).

⁵This is C. W. Macleod’s hypothesis, “Euripides’ Rags,” *ZPE* 15 (1974) 221–222, and “Rags Again,” *ZPE* 39 (1980) 6, which would appear to explain the deictic ὀδί (418) and οὔτοσί (427) for Oineus and Bellerophon, and the metaphorical use of σπάργανα (“swaddling clothes,” 431) and the exclamation

direct reference to writing materials or to the activity of writing, although it is not unrealistic to imagine that the ποιεῖν of Euripides—“il primo drammaturgo che intravediamo nel suo studio piuttosto che sulla scena come autore o cantore”⁶—was perhaps scenically represented by a stylus and tablet placed next to the poet.

In *Thesm.* 101–129 we find Agathon shown performing a lyric interlude,⁷ evidently part of a tragedy (52, δράματος ἀρχάς), in a sort of private rehearsal⁸ where he interprets both the solo and the female chorus parts. In the words of the servant (49–57a), preparing for his master’s exhibition with a propitiatory rite,⁹ the activity of ποιητής is likened to the work of a craftsman. Just like a shipwright, a builder, a carpenter—from whose world a relentless series of metaphors are gradually taken¹⁰—he first of all takes steps “to lay the foundations, the basis of his drama” (52, δρυόχους τιθέναι δράματος ἀρχάς); then he models, moulds, adapts, polishes up, finishes off, and

uttered by Dicaeopolis upon receiving Telephus’ rags and cap (447, εὖ γ’· οἶον ἦδη ῥηματίων ἐπιμπλαμαι).

⁶G. Avezzi, “Il teatro tragico,” in I. Lana and E. V. Maltese, edd., *Storia della civiltà letteraria greca e latina* I (Torino 1998) 236–295, at 265: a collocation which more or less directly refers to the image of a bookish Euripides.

⁷Cf. 67 (μελοποιεῖν ἄρχεται) and 99 (μελωδεῖν αὐτὸ παρασκευάζεται), where first the servant and then Euripides announce his entry on stage, asking for silence (39, 99). The use of διαμινύρεσθαι, with which the Relative at 100 describes the poet’s performance, seems to suggest that Agathon exits “humming” to himself or “warbling”: the root recurs at *Eccl.* 880 and *Vesp.* 219.

⁸Cf. C. Prato, *Le donne alle Tesmoforie* (Milan 2001) 169 (“l’inno non sembra un testo definitivo pronto per la rappresentazione, ma una ‘prova’ teatrale, di tipo privato”); Herington, *Poetry* 47 (“we seem to be witnessing a quite early stage in the composition both of words and melody, before they have reached the point when they can be ‘taught’ to the chorus and actor”).

⁹Cf. 36–38, ἐξέρχεται ... | προθυσομένοσ ... τῆς ποιήσεως, “a servant of his is coming out ... to make an offering ... for his master’s poetry” (transl. Sommerstein), that is, to favour the poetic success of the master. The prefix προ- of προθύω “combines the notions of ‘before’ and ‘on behalf of’” (Muecke, “Portrait” 43 n.18).

¹⁰Cf. schol. 52, 53, 54. See J. Taillardat, *Les images d’Aristophane*² (Paris 1965) 442–443; Rau, *Paratragodia* 102; W. Horn, *Gebet und Gebetsparodie in den Komödien des Aristophanes* (Nürnberg 1970) 97–98; J. F. Gannon, *Thesmophorizusae restitutae: An Essay in Annotation and Interpretation* (diss. Yale 1982) 39–45; and especially Muecke, “Portrait” 44–46.

connects the various materials: “he bends and curves new lines, he polishes them up on a lathe and glues them together, he forges sentences and coins words, casts moulds and rounds off.”¹¹ Thus we find a series of operations which are metaphorically mentioned, in a way that is far more explicit and articulated than in the passage in *Acharnians*: although specifically designed to outline the comic image of Agathon, they correspond at least in part to several moments or phases of the composing procedure and working method of an ancient author. Once again, however, the scene does not contain any specific reference to writing, which is perhaps a sign—if we do not want to ascribe it to deliberate comic distortion of the facts—that the attention of Aristophanes was rather more directed at ridiculing the poet in his quality of inspired poet/craftsman poet/effeminate poet¹²—aspects which for their

¹¹Lines 53–57a, κάμπει δὲ νέας ἀψίδας ἐπῶν, ἢ τὰ δὲ τορνεύει, τὰ δὲ κολλομελεῖ, ἢ καὶ γνωμοτυπεῖ κἀντονομάζει καὶ κηροχυτεῖ καὶ γογγύλλει καὶ χοανεύει: “he is bending new verbal timbers into shape, now gluing songs together, now fashioning them on the lathe, and coining ideas and creating metaphors and melting wax and rounding out and casting in a mould” (transl. Sommerstein). This series of crafts images shows a conception of poetic composition as a process which involves fabrication, elaboration, adaptation, and linking of “materials,” and which is far from the idea of a creative work that flows mysteriously and obscurely from the mind of the genius. In particular note the metaphor of κολλᾶν present in κολλομελεῖν (54: an unusual compound form, cf. Prato, *Le donne* 156), which evokes a similar kind of operation described by Plato in *Phaedrus* (278DE) as being typical of the procedure used by the writer of his time as compared to the dialectical philosopher (see n.75 *infra*).

¹²Cf. Muecke, *Portrait* 41. According to Herington, *Poetry* 47, “the probable conclusion ... is that the late-fifth-century tragedian did not take to his pen or stylus until late in the composition or even until after the process was finished ... we may guess that at least the lyric poetry of archaic Greece, and perhaps its poetry in all kinds, was composed by a similar process, with the act of the writing down occurring toward the end or at the end rather than toward the beginning.” Now, it is true that “per molti secoli dopo l’introduzione dell’alfabeto i Greci non identificarono poesia e scrittura e che l’idea di poesia non evocò l’immagine di una tavoletta di cera, di un rotolo di papiro o della lettura solitaria” (M. Vetta, *RivFil* 112 [1984] 341–342), but beginning in the first decades of the fifth century the association of poetry and writing (scrolls, tablets)—which manages to involve “Sappho,” the Muses, even Mnemosyne herself—becomes a specific and recurring subject in vase paintings: H. R. Immerwahr, “Book Rolls on Attic Vases,” in C. Henderson, ed., *Classical Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies in Honour of B. L. Ullman* (Rome 1964) 17–37, and *Attic Script. A Survey* (Oxford 1990) 99 n.6; F. A. G. Beck, *Album of*

specifically linguistic-stylistic and rhythmical-musical expression obviously could find an adequate parodic realization only through an oral performance.¹³

In contrast, a direct reference to a moment in the writing of a comedy seems to be present in Cratinus' *Wineflask* (first place in the competition of 423). Here, as has been plausibly supposed, the comic poet himself, the main character of the play, is represented in the act of writing, with Comedy, in the guise of his wife, at his side lavish with suggestions: "Don't talk nonsense! Put it into one episode! Cleisthenes, playing dice, will make them laugh," and again "Rub out *Hyperbolus* and write in the market of oil-lamps."¹⁴

Even if these are the only passages where the act of composing (and with it the attitudes and personal ideas of the protagonists) is the direct object of the literary performance, reading between the lines of another comic parodic text can be shown to provide more information on the actual mechanisms present in the process of "making" poetry. Significant and suggestive implications are to be found in the famous passage of

Greek Education. The Greeks at School and at Play (Sydney 1975), esp. II 49; V 12; X 8–12, 22–24, 27, 29, 30–32, 34, 68; cf. J. R. Green, "Oral Tragedies? A Question from St. Petersburg," *QUCC* N.S. 51 (1995) 77–86, on the "intriguing" scene of the Attic hydria of the Pan Painter, from the second decade of the fifth century (*LIMC* III no. 846, pl. 401). There is also a considerable reflection of this motif in the literary world, where for the first time the image of writing defined as μουσομήτορ' ἐργάνην appears with Aeschylus (*PV* 460–461).

¹³In the opinion of M. Cr. Torchio, "Nell' 'officina' del poeta tragico: Ar. *Thesm.* 101–129," *Quad. Dip. Fil. Rostagni* 17 (2001) 127–135, at 131, the scene of Agathon takes us back "a un'oralità legata al contesto comunicativo teatrale"—rather than to an orality of composition (Herington, *Poetry*): in this scene the poet will try out "l'effetto che doveva ottenere l'esecuzione pubblica del suo canto, esercitando una sorta di 'controllo acustico' sul testo drammatico."

¹⁴Fr. 208 (ληρεῖς ἔχων· γράφ' αὐτὸν | ἐν ἐπεισοδίῳ· γελοῖος ἔσται Κλεισθένης κυβεύων) and 209 K.-A. (Ἵπερβολὸν δ' ἀποσβέσας ἐν τοῖς λύχνουσι γράψων). See Kassel-Austin, *PCG* IV 229–230, on problems of interpretation and suggestions for emendations, particularly regarding fr. 208. In his reconstruction of the scene, which is not unlike that already proposed by Fritzsche, Meineke, and Zielinski, M. Heath, "Aristophanes and his Rivals," *G&R* 37 (1990) 143–158, at 151, comments significantly "the conception is stunning: the comedian is being advised by Comedy on writing a comedy in a comedy. Of all lost comedies, this is the one I would most like to read."

the *Thesmophoriazusae* (855–919) that parodies the Euripidean *Helen*.

Concerning the pastiche of Agathon's song in the *Thesmophoriazusae*, Wilamowitz's peremptory claim that Aristophanes must have had the tragedian's works in front of him ("er hatte natürlich Lieder Agathons vor sich")¹⁵ can be seen as anachronistic and excessively "bookish" and quite properly set aside.¹⁶ But the situation in the parody of *Helen* is completely different. Here the full and independent preservation of the original text puts us in the happy position—a unique one¹⁷—of being able to appreciate in all its complexities the technique used by the comic poet and at the same time offers us the opportunity to reflect on the author's working method (the composition procedure, the material conditions, the operational choices) when constructing a text starting from someone else's text.¹⁸

In the *Thesmophoriazusae* the parody of the tragedy, performed successfully one year earlier at the Dionysia of 412,¹⁹ is introduced as a μηχανή of "Euripides," who appears in the guise of

¹⁵U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Griechische Verskunst* (Darmstadt 1921) 341.

¹⁶We have to take into account the possibility that the comic writer was trying here, as elsewhere, to freely reproduce the language, style, and music typical of the dramatist, without making reference to a particular composition: thus for example in *Frogs* 1331–1363. Cf. Prato, *Le donne* 168–169.

¹⁷In fact there are no other examples of such extended parodies of tragic scenes where the "hypotext" has been preserved.

¹⁸The passage has been the subject of a number of in-depth and stimulating studies, which have underlined certain characteristics and problems. See in particular Rau, *Paratragodia* 53–65; R. Kannicht, *Euripides Helena* (Heidelberg 1969) I 79–82; M. G. Bonanno, *L'allusione necessaria* (Rome 1990) 241–276 ("Metateatro in parodia [Sulle 'Tesmoforiazuse' di Aristofane]"); F. Babel, *Euripides, Andromeda* (Stuttgart 1991) 159–169 ("Appendix zur parodischen Technik des Aristophanes"); R. Klimek-Winter, *Andromedatragödien: Sophokles Euripides Livius Andronicus Ennius Accius* (Stuttgart 1993) 120–125; Prato, *Le donne* 297–304.

¹⁹τὴν καινὴν Ἑλένην μιμήσομαι (850) is in fact exclaimed by the Relative while announcing the new expedient after the failure of the previous ploy. On the not simply temporal but especially qualitative values of καινή see Kannicht, *Helena* I 21–22; F. I. Zeitlin, "Travesties of Gender and Genre in Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazousae*," in H. P. Foley, ed., *Reflections of Women in Antiquity* (New York 1981) 169–217, at 186; Babel, *Andromeda* 160 n.5.

Menelaus to bring the Relative (in the role of Helen) to safety, after the latter has been arrested by the women for infiltrating their feast in women's clothing. Aristophanes' "re-writing" of the tragic model totals 44 lines, some reproduced exactly, others partly modified or summarised, and quite deliberately alternated with impertinent interruptions by Critylla, the old woman who keeps watch over the Relative (her interventions make up about 20 lines). He draws from five parts: the prologue, the scenes where Teucer and Menelaus make their entrances, the dialogue between Menelaus and the old gatekeeper, the meeting and reciprocal recognition between Helen and her legitimate spouse. Through an appropriate selection of the material from these scenes, Aristophanes represents "his own" *Helen*, which contains the principal elements of the Euripidean plot: Menelaus' arrival in the land of Egypt, the meeting between the married couple who are still unaware of each other's identity, the impending wedding between Helen and Proteus' son, the moment of recognition. But the expected happy ending does not arrive for the two protagonists of the comic scene: the action is brusquely interrupted by the guard's intervention and their plan to escape comes to nothing.

It should be emphasised first that the comic re-composition is produced from the original materials, which are freely cut and cleverly juxtaposed, and integrated only now and then with verses created ad hoc for the comic scene. Thus Aristophanes, rather differently from what he does on other occasions, does not limit himself to recalling a few episodes or the plot of the tragedy punctuated now and then with precise textual references; on the contrary, he works in complete dependence on the model, resorting to it with extreme precision, not only in the evocation of the dramatic action but also by repeating, whenever possible, the exact words pronounced by the characters. If we set aside the interruptions of the astounded guard, the lines of the two protagonists in the comic adventure which attempt to recreate the tragic situation can be thus classified:

the Euripidean prologue, which first continued (4–15) with a genealogical section dedicated to Proteus, ignored by Aristophanes as being irrelevant to the economy of his scene: *Thesm.* 859–860 (= *Hel.* 16–17), 862a (= *Hel.* 22), 864–865a (= *Hel.* 52–53), 866 (= *Hel.* 49), 868a (= *Hel.* 56).

- KH. “ἐμοὶ δὲ γῆ μὲν πατρὶς οὐκ ἀνώνυμος,
Σπάρτη, πατὴρ δὲ Τυνδάρεως.”
- ΓΥ. σοὶ γ’, ὦλεθρε, 860
πατὴρ ἐκεῖνός ἐστι; Φρυγῶνδας μὲν οὖν.
- KH. “Ἐλένη δ’ ἐκλήθην.”
- ΓΥ. αὐθις αὖ γίγναι γυνή,
πρὶν τῆς ἐτέρας δοῦναι γυναικίσεως δίκην;
- KH. “ψυχὰὶ δὲ πολλὰὶ δι’ ἔμ’ ἐπὶ Σκαμανδρίοις
ῥοαῖσιν ἔθανον.”
- ΓΥ.B ὄφελος δὲ καὶ σύ γε. 865
- KH. “κἀγὼ μὲν ἐνθάδ’ εἴμ’· ὁ δ’ ἄθλιος πόσις”
οὐμὸς Μενέλαος οὐδέπω προσέρχεται.
“τί οὖν ἔτι ζῶ;”
- ΓΥ.B τῶν κοράκων πονηρία.

These lines conform almost completely to the parodied original. Aristophanes has substantially respected the sequence of lines in the model in his selection of the key elements which make a sort of reduced epitome. The exception is line 49 (= *Thesm.* 866), κἀγὼ μὲν ἐνθάδ’ εἴμ’· ὁ δ’ ἄθλιος πόσις, which he postpones to the end of the brief monologue, to underline the eagerness with which the Relative/Helen awaits the arrival of “her Menelaus,” who is to free “her” from “her” unfortunate position as a prisoner. The comic text is extemporaneously turned towards an expression of expectation (867, οὐμὸς Μενέλαος οὐδέπω προσέρχεται), which the tragic heroine would not have

124, comments, “est omnino insolita dictio ... nihil tamen in Euripide mutandum esse docet Aristophanes, qui non modo πέδον legit sed consulto difficultatem auxit verbo γύας substituendo λέων.” Cf. also B. B. Rogers, *The Thesmophoriazusae of Aristophanes* (London 1904) 91; Rau, *Paratragodia* 58 n.99.

been able to say since she could not have been waiting for her bridegroom at this particular point in the story.²³

In the reproduction of the lines from the prologue, apart from the initial ἀπροσδόκητον, there are only two points of departure from the model and these are in fact quite limited: (a) *Thesm.* 859, where in place of the emphatic plural ἡμῖν (*Hel.* 16) we find the singular ἐμοί, “una *diminutio* dello stile aulico,” without any comic *pointe*, and not relevant enough to warrant the hypothesis of quotation from memory,²⁴ but rather introduced (if we do not wish to consider it a copyist’s error) “forse per consentire l’ironica ripresa del successivo σοι.”²⁵ (b) *Thesm.* 868, where in place of δῆτ(α) (*Hel.* 56, even though Euripides gives his heroine this tragic interrogative in an identical form again in 293), we find οὖν, an alteration which is apparently not intentional—unless we in fact see in it an indication of an error in the tradition of *Helen* as suggested by Handley/Rea and Kannicht.²⁶

Bubel’s assertion,²⁷ “man hat also damit zu rechnen, daß Aristophanes keinen allzu großen Wert auf wortgetreue Wieder-

²³The completion of the phrase in *Helen* (50–51) is: στράτευμ’ ἀθροίσας τὰς ἐμὰς ἀναρπαγὰς | θηρῶ πορευθεὶς Ἴλιου πυργώματα. As Paduano points out (*La festa* 167 n.120), “il verso euripideo aveva un referente temporale precedente alla guerra di Troia ... qui viene spostato alla contemporaneità immediata e piegato alla successiva impetuosa richiesta dell’arrivo di Menelao.” Cf. Rau, *Paratragodia* 58, “von ihrer unglücklichen Trennung vom Gatten spricht ‘Helena’ zunächst im Zitat, kürzt dann aber mit der bloßen Feststellung seiner Abwesenheit ab, und zwar in der komischen Handlung voraussetzend, was sie als Helena eigentlich nicht weiß: οὐδέπω προσέρχεται.”

²⁴As suggested by A. C. Schlesinger, “Identification of Parodies in Aristophanes,” *AJP* 57 (1937) 294–305, at 295 n.3 (“a slip of Aristophanes’ memory”) and Paduano, *La festa* 165 n.116 (“una *diminutio* dello stile aulico, ma dovuta senz’altro alla citazione a memoria”).

²⁵Prato, *Le donne* 298.

²⁶Handley/Rea, *Telephus* 23; Kannicht, *Helena* I 82 (“da der Kontext des Originals ersichtlich οὖν, nicht δῆτ(α) erfordert, der Kontext der Parodie dagegen eher δῆτ(α) als οὖν erwarten ließe, ist damit zu rechnen, daß die Parodie die genuine Lesart bewahrt hat”; also II 33–34). In fact Kannicht and also J. Diggle, *Euripidis fabulae* III (Oxford 1994) *ad loc.*, accept οὖν. Bubel, *Andromeda* 163 n.12, has reservations, as he sees the risk of “Überinterpretation” in Kannicht’s type of argument.

²⁷*Andromeda* 162.

gabe legt, sondern den tragischen Text mit einer gewissen Souveränität handhabt," appears, at least regarding this section, to be clearly proved wrong. On the contrary what immediately stands out is the complete exactitude of the quotations, an exactness we can see as somewhat unnecessary, given the difficulty for a theatrical audience to conduct an accurate comparison for the correctness of the quotations. However even in the procedures for the construction of the scene, Aristophanes seems to work starting from a text which he can handle with a certain ease: he chooses key-verses, singles out pieces he wants to introduce in new comic situations, and makes a suitable synthesis or as Paduano puts it "un rifacimento comico *abrégé*,"²⁸ centred on the re-use of several essential themes (the exotic setting in Egypt, the identification of Helen, the admission of the "fault" for which she carries the burden, the expectation of the liberator). We can follow Aristophanes' procedure step by step, and in some cases identify the reasoning that was the basis of his selection: ἐμοὶ δὲ γῆ μὲν πατρὶς οὐκ ἀνώυμος, | Σπάρτη, πατὴρ δὲ Τυνδάρεως (859–860) and the short phrase Ἑλένη δ' ἐκλήθη (862a), taken from the mythological excursus on the divine origins of Helen (*Hel.* 16–17, 22), allow the rapid identification of the role that the Relative is gradually assuming; ψυχὰ δὲ πολλὰ δι' ἔμ' ἐπὶ Σκαμανδρίοις | ῥοαῖσιν ἔθανον (864–865 = *Hel.* 52–53)²⁹ and the desperate exclamation τί οὖν ἔτι ζῶ; (868a = 56), in their strong pathos, make an irresistible invitation for the deflating comments of the female guard.³⁰ The break in the "linear sequence of the quotations,"³¹ which had been respected until now, introduces at this point the wait for

²⁸Paduano, *La festa* 167 n.121.

²⁹The quotation is chosen as a synthesis of the whole story dedicated to the narration of the misadventures linked to Helen's "name" (*Hel.* 22b–55).

³⁰Lines 865b (ἄφελος δὲ καὶ σύ γε), 869b (τῶν κοράκων πονηρία).

³¹Paduano, *La festa* 167 n.120; cf. Babel, *Andromeda* 163. The inversion, clearly suited for the economy of the new context, means that the liberation is postponed (*Thesm.* 866 = *Hel.* 49) to after the expression of guilt (*Thesm.* 864–865 = *Hel.* 52–53).

the liberator, thus pointing to the connection with the figure of Euripides/Menelaus who is about to make his appearance.

2. *The arrival of Menelaus*

In this second part Aristophanes summarizes a sequence of three episodes which in the original span more than 500 lines and whose discursiveness clearly shows Euripides' clever desire to prolong the wait by delaying the meeting between the protagonists: the dialogues between Teucer and Helen (a subtle preparation for the recognition scene), between Menelaus and an ill-tempered old gatekeeper, and finally the crucial one between Menelaus and Helen. The comic poet reduces these three scenes to their functional unity, making a bold abridgement³² which to an extent forces upon him greater liberty towards the original text; but even though he reduces the speaking characters from four to two, he does not refrain from inserting exact quotations into the new scene, alternated with linking verses in which the Euripidean manner is evoked and at times exaggerated through words and phrases which he favoured or by simply using ostentatiously paratragic language.³³

When our Menelaus enters on stage, instead of using the analogous somewhat colourless lines reflecting his character,³⁴ he uses the far more emphatic and high-sounding words of Teucer, τίς τῶνδ' ἐρυμνῶν δωμάτων ἔχει κράτος; (*Thesm.* 871 =

³²Many scholars have pointed out this operation, though in rather generic terms. Cf. Paduano, *La festa* 167 n.123 ("i due versi successivi [872–873] costituiscono una transizione, sempre in stile tragico, che comprime l'azione del modello; in risposta infatti Mnesiloco/Elena fornisce le informazioni che nella tragedia vengono date a Menelao dalla scortesissima vecchia portinaia"); Babel, *Andromeda* 165 ("bietet sich die Gelegenheit, die euripideischen Szenen Helena/Teukros und Menelaos/γρᾶνς zu verknüpfen, ohne daß eine 'Nahtstelle' sichtbar wird").

³³An example is the invocation of Zeus in the words of the Relative/Helen (870: μὴ ψεύσον, ὦ Ζεῦ, τῆς ἐπιούσης ἐλπίδος), which announces the entrance of the saviour and inserts a hemistich from Sophocles' *Peleus* (schol. *ad loc.*, fr.493 Radt) into the web of quotations from *Helen*.

³⁴*Hel.* 459, τίς δ' ἦδε χάρα; τοῦ δὲ βασιλείοι δόμοι;

Hel. 68). The continuation of his question³⁵ is on the contrary woven with lexical elements that remind us of the story that the Achaean hero will tell of his labours, both in the monologue with which he introduces himself on stage (in particular *Hel.* 408–410) and also during the dialogue with the old gatekeeper (449).³⁶ In fact, the answer to the rather solemn question “Who is the lord of this mighty palace?” is a partial alteration of the one the ill-tempered Old Woman gives to Menelaus in *Helena*: Πρωτέως τάδ’ ἐστὶ μέλαθρα (*Thesm.* 874a ≈ *Hel.* 460). This line has perhaps been deliberately altered in both syntax and lexicon (the Euripidean tradition has Πρωτεὺς τάδ’ οἰκεῖ δώματ’) to favour the pun between the two names Proteus/Proteas,³⁷ while the alteration of δώματα into μέλαθρα, metrically necessary in Aristophanes’ adaptation to avoid a “split” anapaest in *antilabe*, finishes with an exaggeration of the Euripidean phrase in an even more tragic manner.³⁸

³⁵Lines 872–873, ὅστις ξένους δέξαιτο ποντίῳ σάλῳ | κάμνοντα ἐν χεῖμῶνι καὶ ναυαγίαις;

³⁶Precise stylistic details in Rau, *Paratragodia* 59 (ad 872–873); cf. Kannicht, *Helena* I 80 (“871–73 = *Hel.* 68 + Resümé von 386–434”). But other scholars, e.g. Nauck, do not exclude the possibility that the lines make up a quotation from an unperformed tragedy (fr. adesp. 64).

³⁷In Kannicht’s opinion (*Helena* I 82, II 136, ad 460), “ist deutlich ... daß Aristophanes den originalen Wortlaut in eine Formulierung mit possessivem Genitiv verwandeln mußte, um das kalauernde Wortspiel Πρωτέως: Πρωτέας phonetisch zu ermöglichen.” Doubts and reservations are expressed by Babel, *Andromeda* 166 and 167 n.21. According to a conjecture already proposed by Kirchhoff, H. Grégoire, *Euripide, Hélène* (Paris 1950) 68 (but also cf. Rogers, *Thesmophoriazousae* XXVII n.1), suggests in his critical apparatus the possibility that Aristophanes nearly preserves the genuine Euripidean reading, only substituting μέλαθρα for δώματ’ (“nam quod anus dicit, secundum lectionem codicum Euripidis, non est uerum”). Diggle adopts this solution in his edition of the tragedy (Πρωτέως τάδ’ ἐστὶ δώματ’). We must also take into consideration that the “Euripidean” formulation with οἰκεῖ, which presupposes that Proteus is still alive, would have been (if Aristophanes had known it!) the most convenient expression providing the comedy in Critylla’s remark: τέθνηκε Πρωτέας ἔτη δέκα. However, according to Rau (*Paratragodia* 59) “‘Helena’ gibt frei nach den Worten der Alten Auskunft.” See also Paduano, *La festa* 167 n.124 (“citazione ad sensum”), and Prato, *Le donne* 298.

³⁸Babel, *Andromeda* 166 n.20, seems to favour a different conclusion and numbers our case among the “Verbesserungen’ tragischer Ausdrucksweisen durch den Komödiendichter” (169). According to Rau, *Paratragodia* 69, “μέλαθρα ist so gut tragisch wie δώματα”; still, it is undoubtedly of less frequent

In the continuation of the dialogue between the characters on stage (877–901), the literal or slightly altered quotations alternate and mingle with a freer rapid series of tragically-styled questions and answers which reproduce several essential passages of the *stichomythia* between Menelaus and the old Woman in *Helen*. An undeniable reminder of *Hel.* 459 (τίς δ' ἴδε χώρα;) is present in *Thesm.* 877 (ποίαν δὲ χώραν εἰσεκέλσαμεν σκάφει;), re-elaborated in a decidedly more elevated manner,³⁹ while a strict adherence to the original text is in *Thesm.* 878 (ὦ δύστηνος, οἱ πεπλώκαμεν), which is almost identical with *Hel.* 461 (ὦ δύστηνος, οἱ πέπλευκ' ἄρα)—thus it is not to be excluded that in the Euripidean text we should restore the form πέπλωκ' ἄρα on the basis of our passage.⁴⁰ A more elaborate stylistic re-writing is seen in the following line 881 (αὐτὸς δὲ Πρωτεύς ἔνδον ἔστ' ἢ ἕξωπιος;), which again contains a question modelled on *Hel.* 467 (πότερον ἐκτὸς ἢ ἔνδον δόμοις;),⁴¹ but has been formed by substituting ἔνδον for (ἐ)ν δόμοις and (ἐ)ξώπιος (a rather precious Euripidean neo-formation)⁴² for the more common ἐκτός.⁴³ Line 886 (τόδ' ἐστὶν αὐτοῦ σῆμα) almost exactly repeats the initial hemistich from *Hel.* 466 (τόδ' ἐστὶν

use (H. Perdicoyianni, "Le vocabulaire de l'habitation chez Euripide," *LEC* 64 [1996] 21–50, at 21–26 and 39–43).

³⁹To Babel, *Andromeda* 166, this appears "in tragischem Stil ohne bekannte Vorlage."

⁴⁰Kannicht, *Helena* II 136–137 (ad 461–463): "da Aristophanes in nicht-parodischem Zusammenhang die attische Form verwendet ... kann also mit der Möglichkeit gerechnet werden, daß er die ionische Form hier mit der Absicht verwendet hat, den pathetischen Ton des Ausrufs mit Hilfe eines euripideischen Stilmittels ... zu überbieten. Andererseits läßt sich natürlich die Möglichkeit nicht ausschließen, daß im Euripidestext πέπλευκ' aus πέπλωκ' ἄρα enstellt ist" (see also I 81 and II 135, ad 455, as well as Bakhuizen, *De parodia* 124–125; πέπλωκ' is in fact the form adopted by Grégoire, *Hélène* 69).

⁴¹The question, which in the original was about Theoclymenus, is now about Proteus himself and is evidently meant to prepare the ground for the final ingenious ploy, where a reluctant Critylla is integrated into the parodic game (cf. 885, 890–891, 895–897a).

⁴²Cf. *Alc.* 546, *Med.* 624, *Supp.* 1038.

⁴³Cf. Rau, *Paratragodia* 60; Prato, *Le donne* 300. Here we also have, as in the use of the unusual Ionic form πεπλώκαμεν, a demonstration of that tendency towards a stylistic hypercharacterisation of the Euripidean lexicon.

αὐτοῦ μνήμα), with σῆμα for μνήμα. Aristophanes' wish to prepare for the new, indignant intervention by the female guard (887–888) probably lies behind this substitution, introducing into the text a commonplace word, generally already felt as equivalent to τάφος (cf. *Hel.* 63–64), strengthening the effect of the blasphemous assimilation of an altar to a tomb.⁴⁴ The hemistich that completes 886 (ἐφ' ᾧ καθήμεθα) allows a recovery of the theme of seeking asylum at Proteus' tomb from the initial situation of *Helen*, present in the model from the very first scene (63–65)⁴⁵ and now evoked in a strictly tragic style with a few strokes of the pen (889–891):

EY. τί δαὶ σὺ θάσσεις τάσδε τυμβήρεις ἔδρας
 φάρει καλυπτός, ᾧ ξένη;
 KH. βιάζομαι 890
 γάμοισι Πρωτέως παιδὶ συμμειῖξαι λέχος.

Another central theme of the tragedy, the heroine's claim of faithfulness, is again taken from the prologue.⁴⁶ Here it is incongruously made to spite the poor Critylla, who tries to prevent the intrigue between the two and gets caught up against her will in the theatrical game, in the role of Theonoe, Proteus' daughter and Theoclymenus' sister:⁴⁷

EY. ξένη, τίς ἢ γραῦς ἢ κακορροθοῦσά σε;
 KH. αὐτὴ Θεονόη Πρωτέως.
 ΓΥ. μὰ τὸ θεῶ,

⁴⁴Cf. Kannicht, *Helena* I 82 and especially II 137 (ad 466); Babel, *Andromeda* 167; Prato, *Le donne* 300. Rau, *Paratragodia* 60, is of a different opinion: "die erste Vershälfte ist zitiert, nur daß Ar., vielleicht aus dem Gedächtnis zitierend, σῆμα statt μνήμα schreibt." Note that in *Hel.* 797–801 Euripides had also mentioned the anomaly of the tomb which serves as an altar, as a guarantee of inviolability.

⁴⁵(ΕΛ.) τὸν πάλαι δ' ἐγὼ πόσιν | τιμῶσα Πρωτέως μνήμα προσπίτνω τόδε | ἰκέτις, ἴν' ἀνδρὶ τάμα διασώσῃ λέχη.

⁴⁶*Hel.* 63–65, cf. 53–55, also 795, 927–931.

⁴⁷In Euripides, the prophetess Theonoe enters at 865 and has an air of benevolent complicity towards Helen and Menelaus: the role change to which Aristophanes has subjected the character is obvious.

εἰ μὴ Κρίτυλλά γ' Ἀντιθέου Γαργηττόθεν.
 σὺ δ' εἶ πανοῦργος.

ΚΗ. ὅποσα τοι βούλει λέγε.
 οὐ γὰρ γαμοῦμαι σῶ κασιγνήτῳ ποτὲ 900
 προδοῦσα Μενέλεων ἐμὸν ἐν Τροίᾳ πόσιν.

As can be seen, we are dealing with a construction which has been skillfully planned and worked out and which makes use of all the materials suitable for the new situation, recovering them from their original context and, as here, giving them a new collocation.

3. *The recognition*

The longest and most continuous quotation is part of the recognition scene (*Thesm.* 902–916a). The prefatory lines (902–905) are constructed with a combination of tragic elements that correspond for the most part with *Helen* itself:

ΕΥ. γύναι, τί εἶπας; στρέψον ἀνταυγεῖς κόρας.
 ΚΗ. αἰσχύνομαί σε τὰς γνάθους ὑβρισμένη.
 ΕΥ. τουτὶ τί ἐστίν; ἀφασία τίς τοί μ' ἔχει
 ὦ θεοί, τίν' ὄψιν εἰσορῶ; τίς εἶ, γύναι; 905

The “highly poetical expression” στρέψον ἀνταυγεῖς κόρας,⁴⁸ which may or may not have been taken from the Euripidean repertoire, probably accompanied the gesture with which Euripides/Menelaus tried to get his prim “Helen” to turn her face towards him. This provided the Relative with the opportunity of giving a reluctant answer, which departs from the scene within the scene⁴⁹ and recalls the painful shaving that had

⁴⁸Prato, *Le donne* 302; cf. Rau, *Paratragodia* 61 (“die Wendung ... könnte Tragödienexzerpt sein”).

⁴⁹On the “regressioni” dalla ‘seconda’ finzione (la paratragedia) alla ‘prima’ (la commedia),” typical of the Relative in his role as Helen and then as Andromeda, and more generally on the notion of metatheatricality which operates in Aristophanic comedy, see in particular Bonanno, *L’allusione* 241–262 (with bibliography).

been part of the disguise scene (215–235).⁵⁰

But from 906 to 912 Aristophanes limits himself to reproducing in a literal and continuous form a highly charged passage from the tragic *stichomythia*, where the married couple realise that they are both “very much like” Helen and Menelaus (*Hel.* 558 and 561–566):⁵¹

- KH. “σὺ δ’ εἰ τίς; αὐτὸς γὰρ σὲ κᾶμ’ ἔχει λόγος.”
 EY. “Ἐλληνίς εἰ τις ἢ ’πιχωρία γυνή;”
 KH. “Ἐλληνίς. ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ σὸν θέλω μαθεῖν.”
 EY. “Ἐλήνη σ’ ὁμοίαν δὴ μάλιστ’ εἶδον, γύναι.”
 KH. “ἔγὼ δὲ Μενελάω σ’,” ὅσα γ’ ἐκ τῶν ἀμφίων. 910
 EY. “ἔγνωσ ἄρ’ ὀρθῶς ἄνδρα δυστυχέστατον.”
 KH. “ὦ χρόνιος ἐλθὼν σῆς δάμαρτος” ἐσχάρας.

The only disparity is in the final part of 910,⁵² a comic break

⁵⁰For 904 cf. *Hel.* 548–549, ὡς δέμας δείξασα σὸν | ἔκκληξιν ἡμῖν ἀφασίαν τε προστίθης. However, following a procedure already noted, line 905 “contaminates” the parallel and almost identical expressions of surprise by Teucer and Menelaus when faced with the woman: ὦ θεοί, τιν’ εἶδον ὄψιν; (*Hel.* 72, Teucer’s entrance) and τίς εἶ; τίν’ ὄψιν σὴν, γύναι, προσδέρομαι; (*Hel.* 557, *stichomythia* between Helen and Menelaus). Cf. Handley/Rea, *Telephus* 24 (“line 905 is a conflation of Helen 72 and 557”). According to Rau, *Paratragodia* 62, it is an example of “freie Zitation: Ar. hätte gut *Hel.* 557 wörtlich übernehmen können, er hat aber auch ähnliche Wendungen aus in der Situation entprechenden Stellen im Kopf, die er dann bewußt oder unbewußt kontaminiert.” But also cf. Babel, *Andromeda* 168 n.26.

⁵¹The pair of lines 559–560 omitted here were uttered *a parte* and interrupted the dialogue, revealing to the audience the different levels of recognition reached by the two main characters in the process of reciprocal recognition: these lines are not pertinent to the new situation and are thus passed over by Aristophanes who takes up the dialogue again with line 561 (cf. Kannicht, *Helena* II 158). On the other hand it is on the basis of the Aristophanic text (907) that 561 of *Helen*, dropped in the Euripidean manuscript tradition, has been restored, remedying textual damage evidently due to the identical incipit Ἐλληνίς with the following line (A. M. Dale, *Euripides. Helen* [Oxford 1967] 102; Kannicht, *Helena* I 82). Dale’s observation on 558 is equally significant: “the unusual inversion [κᾶμ’ ἔχει λόγος] is protected by Ar. *Thesm.* 906, which also gives αὐτὸς for αὐτός [from the LP codices].”

⁵²A clear “surprise” ending, preserved in the form ὅσα γ’ ἐκ τῶν ἰφύων, which would recall the ancient malice towards Euripides’ mother (ἰφύων: vegetables). Cf. Kannicht, *Helena* I 81–82, II 159 (*ad* 565–567). ἀμφίων (rags) is a modern conjecture, proposed by Grégoire (*Hélène* 73) and V. Coulon-Tauber, “Beiträge zur Interpretation des Aristophanes,” *Philologus* 95 (1942) 31–54 at

which is probably linked to the substitution of the original γάρ with ἄρ(α) in 911, “adattato alla risposta del falso Menelao.”⁵³ More doubtful is the situation in 912 where, in place of the demure ἐς χέρας of the tragic model, several scholars regard perfectly plausible the reading ἐσχάρας of the *Ravennates*—hearth, but also γυναικεῖον μόριον—arrived at by a simple metaplasm which is not unusual in Aristophanes and which is not unworthy of the Relative. In any case this modification is clearly intentional, and with this and the clever attempt at liberation, the scene moves towards its unsuccessful conclusion, having reached a climax at the moment of the embrace. The almost pure reproduction of the affectionate outburst of the Relative/Helen is followed by a series of repeated and pathetic imperatives in frenzied dochmiacs (913–916a),⁵⁴ with which the Relative/Helen urges Euripides/Menelaus to take him away as soon as possible (even to remind us, in mocking contrast, of the very prolonged, almost interminable duet of the Euripidean tragedy):⁵⁵

λαβέ με, λαβέ με, πόσι, περίβαλε δὲ χέρας.
 φέρε σὲ κύσω. ἄπαγέ μ' ἄπαγ' ἄπαγ' ἄπαγέ με 914/5
 λαβὼν ταχὺ πάνυ.

Armed with a torch, the good Critylla decides to put an end to the suspicious αἰγυπτιάζειν of the two accomplices;⁵⁶ and Euripides, after trying once again to improvise a few “unscripted” phrases,⁵⁷ is obliged to flee.

45–48, preferable to an allusion to Euripides’ alleged lineage, which would be out of place here.

⁵³Prato, *Le donne* 303.

⁵⁴Cf. P. Pucci, *Aristofane ed Euripide: ricerche metriche e stilistiche* (Rome 1961) 346; Rau, *Paratragodia* 62.

⁵⁵*Hel.* 625–697. In particular Aristophanes seems to make use of lines 627–629, 634–635, and 694–695.

⁵⁶*Thesm.* 921–922, οὐκ ἐτὸς πάλαι | ἠγυπτιάζει'. ἀλλ' ὅδε μὲν δώσει δίκην.

⁵⁷*Thesm.* 918–919, σὺ τὴν ἐμὴν γυναῖκα κωλύεις ἐμέ, | τὴν Τυνδάρειον παῖδ', ἐπὶ Σπάρτην ἄγειν;

What clearly emerges from the framework that we have described is that Aristophanes does not limit himself to quoting verses in a more or less literal manner, but in parallel carries out a series of operations which redesign the model text: (1) he excises whatever he deems irrelevant and unnecessary⁵⁸ or perhaps even too complex;⁵⁹ (2) he summarises a lengthy account in a line;⁶⁰ (3) he inverts the sequence of the quotations;⁶¹ (4) he compresses distinct scenes and juxtaposes lines that in the original belong to different contexts.⁶² With indisputable efficacy the result of his work is bent to comic use and selectively altered to fit the parodic game.

It is not easy to evaluate the implications of this complex series of operations, behind which we can glimpse quite concretely an accurate and clever work of planning,⁶³ which involved the preliminary collection and selection of the poetic materials. In the case of the substitution of single words, without any comic *pointe* (ἔμοί for ἡμῖν, οὖν for δῆτα, σῆμα for μνήμα), there is a widespread tendency to consider these mod-

⁵⁸For example, the section on Proteus (4–15) or the mythological excursus on Helen's divine origins (17–21).

⁵⁹All the problems regarding the double identity are also left out of the parody, together with the opposition between reality and appearance, the theme of the false image or *Eidolonmotiv* (Rau, *Paratragodia* 65 and more generally 56–57, and "Das Tragödienspiel in den Thesmophoriazusen," in H.-J. Newiger, ed., *Aristophanes und die alte Komödie* [Darmstadt 1975] 339–356, at 350–351).

⁶⁰So 52–53, "extracted" as a summary of the entire narration of the misadventures linked to Helen's name (*Hel.* 21–55).

⁶¹So 864–865, which come earlier than in the model (52–53) and serve to summarize an entire mythological development; likewise 866, postponed (*cf. Hel.* 49) and put in a different temporal dimension, which is no longer mythical but rather opportunely correlated to the reality of the situation on stage.

⁶²So the dialogue between the Relative/Helen and Euripides/Menelaus which combines and mingles the two scenes Helen-Teucer and Menelaus-Old Woman with the insertion of the themes of seeking asylum and Helen's claim of faithfulness.

⁶³"Man hat also mit erheblichen Freiheiten in der Verwendung des Originals zu rechnen, darf aber andererseits einen bestimmten Plan des Komikers voraussetzen" (Rau, *Paratragodia* 65; also see Kannicht, *Helena* I 79).

ifications as quotation from memory.⁶⁴ The same can be said of the apparent transformation of Πρωτεὺς τάδ' οἰκεῖ δῶματ' (*Hel.* 460) into Πρωτέως τάδ' ἐστὶ μέλαθρα (*Thesm.* 874a) or the "contamination" in *Thesm.* 905 (= *Hel.* 72+557)—taken either as "free" quotations (Rau) or as *ad sensum* quotations (Paduano, Prato).⁶⁵ Yet it seems impossible that such a complex operation could be carried out without the support of a written text—"on the threads of one's thoughts," based exclusively on the oral skill of the poet, whom we must imagine recalling to memory entire sequences in relation to scenes which are certainly not short. Even if we need not think that Aristophanes had to look up every single word or quotation in *Helen*,⁶⁶ the availability and consultation of the work in a written form appear to be the necessary conditions for such a shrewdly exercised *ars excerptendi*.⁶⁷ Moreover, it is the selfsame comedy-writer who gives evidence of the possibility (if not the practice) of copying passages from dramatic texts for personal use, when in *Frogs* he condemns anyone who troubled to copy a *rhesis* from the tragedian Morsimus to lie in the perpetual mud of the damned in the hereafter.⁶⁸

⁶⁴This is explicitly stated by Schlesinger and Paduano (see n.24), Rau (see n.44).

⁶⁵See nn.37 and 50.

⁶⁶Aristophanes may have read or had the chosen text read to him, taking care to isolate and copy down the pertinent passages, as happens in e.g. *Xen. Mem.* 1.6.14 (see n.74).

⁶⁷C. F. Russo, *Aristofane autore di teatro*² (Florence 1984), follows this line when he asserts (318) that "naturalmente molti specialisti, per ragioni di lavoro, si procuravano versioni scritte delle opere del teatro ... Aristofane, per esempio, si sarà procurato subito un esemplare dell'*Elena* e dell'*Andromeda* per parodiarle puntualmente nelle *Tesmoforianti* dell'anno dopo." Cf. N. J. Lowe, "Aristophanes' Books," *Annals of Scholarship* 10 (1993) 63–83, at 72, and P. Demont and A. Lebeau, *Introduction au théâtre grec antique* (Paris 1996) 44.

⁶⁸*Ran.* 151 ἢ Μορσίμου τινος ῥῆσιν ἐξεγράψατο. This must have been the most likely method chosen for learning passages by heart, which were to be recited "in society," or rather to the symposium, one of the venues that was also employed for the "reuse" of dramatic texts (cf. R. Reitzenstein, *Epigramm und Skolion* [Giessen 1893] 34–39, and G. Avezzi, "Il teatro tragico," in I. Lana ed E. V. Maltese, edd., *Storia della civiltà letteraria greca e latina* I [Torino 1998] 236–295, 285–286).

The case of the parody in *Thesmophoriazusae* appears in many respects emblematic. Here it is not a matter of taking out tragic lines or parts of them, particularly “memorable” for their content or collocation, nor of quoting long, continuous sequences (this in fact could have easily been done mnemonically), and then simply jamming them into the texture of the comedy as often happens elsewhere. The far more complex and refined operation of undoing and re-making another theatrical piece certainly required a fair amount of reflection on the passage under consideration.⁶⁹ The methods themselves, as well as the abundance of the quotations, point towards an operation starting from a written text. This would have been carefully “skimmed” in order to single out and extract the serviceable elements for the parodic reuse.⁷⁰ Further and not negligible confirmation of this is that within the certainly fluid situation of a Greek dramatic text from the end of the fifth century—open to contributions, alterations, and the intrusion of stage practice—Aristophanes felt obliged to adhere to his model almost literally, apart from obvious comic and parodical constraints. He does this to the point of certainly preserving, as we have seen, a Euripidean verse dropped in the course of tradition, and perhaps even some quite precious authentic readings.⁷¹ Thus one can say that he in fact behaves according to ways and methods belonging to a civilisation with a written tradition. It is

⁶⁹As Russo (*Aristofane* 297–298) very well observes, though in rather general terms, “le *Tesmoforianti*, in pratica, decompongono e ricompongono parodicamente forme espressive e sceniche del teatro euripideo. Ma, naturalmente, solo la decomposizione e la ricomposizione della superstite *Elena* può essere bene apprezzata; e il trattamento così sottile e maliziosamente puntuale che quella tragedia subì, implica che Aristofane se ne procurò subito un manoscritto.”

⁷⁰According to Lowe, “Books” 73, the quotations are “diagnostic signs of book-quotation.” The cento with which *Frogs* 1266–1274 and 1285–1295 are constructed, is not so significant and probative evidence, and neither is the collage of *Wasps* 750–756 which echoes isolated themes and expressions from *Alcestis* (863, 866–867) and *Hippolytus* (215–216, 219, 230).

⁷¹See notes 26, 37, 40. For the evidentiary value in general of the parody in the constitution of the text of *Helen*, cf. Kannicht, *Helena* I 81 n.4.

clear that the text has reached a relative stability—even if not completely fixed or “closed”—and that above all, this stability is recognised and substantially respected:⁷² nothing could be further from a mechanism of oral re-utilisation.

Xenophon also bears witness that the practice of *legere et excerpere* (ἐκλέγειν), so amply documented in the writing activity of authors of the Greco-Roman age,⁷³ was in use in a period close to that of Aristophanes, when he describes an unattested “book-loving” Socrates, who liked to meet with his friends and pupils to scan the writings of the great men of the past and copy down those passages most worthy of interest.⁷⁴ On the

⁷²This is after all what the poet Philoxenus demanded of his public in the same period. In a rather colourful account by Diogenes Laertius (4.36), he brusquely intervenes against the deformations to which his compositions were sometimes submitted: “having once come across some brickmakers who were singing his verses so badly, he started to tread on their bricks saying ‘I’ll ruin your things just as you have ruined mine.’” This little story in some way offers the best evidence for the passage from an oral mentality to a written one, demanding respect for the text, which is to be reproduced unaltered. In the mediaeval age it will become a real topos (cf. G. Sanga, “Modi di produzione e forme di tradizione: dall’oralità feudale alla scrittura capitalistica,” in G. Cerina *et al.*, edd., *Oralità e scrittura nel sistema letterario* [Rome 1982] 31–48). As is well known, certain worries about the safeguarding of the authenticity of one’s own verses already emerged with Theognis in elegiac poetry. On this see W. Rösler, *Dichter und Gruppe. Eine Untersuchung zu den Bedingungen und zur historischen Funktion früher griechischer Lyrik* (Munich 1980) 79–88; G. Cerri, “Il significato di sphregghis in Teognide e la salvaguardia dell’autenticità testuale nel mondo antico,” in *Lirica greca e latina, Atti del convegno polacco-italiano, Poznan 1990* (Rome 1992) 25–43; P. Giannini, “Il proemio, il sigillo e il libro di Teognide,” in R. Pretagostini, ed., *Tradizione e innovazione nella cultura greca ... Scritti in onore di B. Gentili I* (Rome 1993) 377–391, at 382–384. Herodotus (7.6.3) bears witness to a similar attitude, which was particularly strict in defending the textual authenticity of a politically important tradition, when he relates that Onomacritus, who was responsible for the preparation (διαθέτης) of the collection of Musaeus oracles, was exiled by Hipparchus, with whom he had always been on very good terms, simply because he had been caught by Lasus of Hermione “interpolating” (ἐμποιεῖν) these oracles. The notion of respect for the text which is the main theme of the episode is also underlined by A. Schnapp-Gourbeillon, “Homère, Hipparque et la bonne parole,” *Annales (ÉSC)* 43 (1988) 805–821, at 816–817.

⁷³An adequate illustration can be found in Dorandi, *Le stylet* 27–50. We can recall Aulus Gellius’ testimony (praef. 2–3) and that of Pliny the Younger (*Ep.* 3.5.10) on his uncle.

⁷⁴Xen. *Mem.* 1.6.14, καὶ τοὺς θησαυροὺς τῶν πάλαι σοφῶν ἀνδρῶν, οὓς ἐκεῖνοι κατέλιπον ἐν βιβλίοις γράψαντες, ἀνελίττων κοινῇ σὺν τοῖς φίλοις διέρχομαι, καὶ ἄν τι ὀρώμεν ἀγαθὸν ἐκλεγόμεθα. Cf. also 1.2.56 and Pl. *Leg.*

other hand, in the final scene of *Phaedrus* Plato's description of the writer of his time—poet, speech-writer, lawmaker—is almost as surprising. The activity is described as a process in which the writer is busy “going through his ‘papers’ over and over again at length, cutting and pasting the different parts together.”⁷⁵ This testimony is not unique. In *Menexenus* (236b), Socrates tells of having listened to Aspasia, “a rhetoric teacher of no little importance,” deliver an entire commemorative speech, which she composed “partly by improvising and partly by putting together (συγκολλῶσα) a number of passages which she had elaborated beforehand.”⁷⁶

811A, οἱ δὲ ἐκ πάντων κεφάλαια ἐκλέξαντες καὶ τινὰς ὅλας ῥήσεις εἰς ταῦτον συνάγοντες, and Arist. *Top.* 105b12–13. See B. M. W. Knox, “Books and Readers in the Greek World,” in P. E. Easterling and B. M. W. Knox, edd., *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature I* (Cambridge 1985) 1–16, at 11, 13, 14–15 n.3, and especially B. Gentili, *Lo spettacolo nel mondo antico* (Roma/Bari 1977) 6–8. The work of selection (ἐκλέγειν) could in reality include that of “noting down” passages of particular interest, together with a subsequent transcription, as is explicitly affirmed by authors of later periods (Pliny the Younger etc., cf. Dorandi, *Le stilet* 27–50).

⁷⁵Pl. *Phdr.* 278DE, οὐκοῦν αὖ τὸν μὴ ἔχοντα τιμιώτερα ὧν συνέθηκεν ἢ ἔγραψεν ἄνω κάτω στρέφων ἐν χρόνῳ, πρὸς ἄλληλα κολλῶν τε καὶ ἀφαιρῶν, ἐν δίκῃ που ποιητὴν ἢ λόγων συγγραφέα ἢ νομογράφον προσερεῖς. With a clearly negative connotation Plato compares the writer, who spends all his time re-elaborating his compositions and writings which are his most precious possession, with that of the “philosopher,” who while aware of the fundamental inadequacy of every form of writing, continues to follow the dialectical method, which is deemed more suitable for the search and communication of truth: E. Heitsch, “ἄνω κάτω bei Platon,” *RhM* 134 (1991) 276–287, at 284–286, offers a careful discussion; also cf. G. F. Nieddu, *La scrittura ‘madre delle Muse’: agli esordi di un nuovo modello di comunicazione culturale* (Amsterdam 2004) 121; G. Reale, *Platone. Fedro* (Milan 1998) 271.

⁷⁶ἔπειτα τὰ μὲν ἐκ τοῦ παραχρημά μοι διήει, οἷα δέοι λέγειν, τὰ δὲ πρότερον ἔσκεμμένη, ὅτε μοι δοκεῖ συντίθει τὸν ἐπιτάφιον λόγον ὃν Περικλῆς εἶπεν, περιλείμματ’ ἄττα ἐξ ἐκείνου συγκολλῶσα: “and thereupon she rehearsed to me the speech in the form it should take, extemporizing in part, while other parts of it she had previously prepared, as I imagine, at the time when she was composing the funeral oration which Pericles delivered; and from this she patched together sundry fragments” (transl. R. G. Bury). Cf. N. Loraux, *L’invention d’Athènes. Histoire de l’oraison funèbre dans la “cité classique”*² (Paris 1993) 333. As we have seen, Agathon’s servant also uses the image of “pasting together,” to describe his master’s composition technique. It also recurs in the parabasis of *Wasps* (1037–1041) in a judicial context, where Aristophanes claims before the audience that he had never been afraid to attack “i brividi e le febbri,” i.e. the sycophants, “che ... chini sui letti riempiono fogli su fogli (συνεκόλλων) di giuramenti, di citazioni, di testimonianze” (transl.

We also know from Clement of Alexandria, citing evidence for his claim about the Greeks' tendency to plagiarism, that the sophist Hippias boasted of one of his speeches being a novel product composed (συνθείς) by choosing and combining passages from Orpheus, Musaeus, Hesiod, Homer, and other Greek and Barbarian poets and prose-writers.⁷⁷ A thorough task of selection (ἐκλεξάμενος) reportedly was also carried out by Hipparchus in preparing the sententious maxims which he had inscribed on the *hermai* along the roadsides of Attica, after first himself editing their writing up in verse.⁷⁸

Mastromarco). Cf. also *Nub.* 446 ψευδῶν συγκολλητής ("a sticker-together of lies").

⁷⁷86 B 6 D.-K. (*FGrHist* 6 F 4), τούτων ἴσως εἴρηται τὰ μὲν Ὀρφεῖ, τὰ δὲ Μουσαίῳ κατὰ βραχὺ ἄλλω ἀλλαχοῦ, τὰ δὲ Ἡσιόδῳ τὰ δὲ Ὀμήρῳ, τὰ δὲ τοῖς ἄλλοις τῶν ποιητῶν, τὰ δὲ ἐν συγγραφαῖς τὰ μὲν Ἑλληνιστὶ τὰ δὲ βαρβάροις· ἐγὼ δὲ ἐκ πάντων τούτων τὰ μέγιστα καὶ ὁμόφυλα συνθείς τοῦτον καινὸν καὶ πολυειδῆ τὸν λόγον ποιήσομαι. Gomperz's proposal to supply in the final phrase τὰ μέγιστα (ἐκλεξάμενος) καὶ (τὰ μάλιστα) ὁμόφυλα is perhaps unnecessary but not without interest. The criteria of importance and affinity which guided Hippias in his work of selecting and combination are no different from those we find expressed later; e.g., Plutarch and Cicero often used the technique of collecting "extracts" (see Dorandi, *Le stylet* 27ff). From a different point of view, Heraclitus had rather polemically branded Pythagoras' σοφίη as a mere operation of ἐκλέγειν, and immediately afterwards he gave it a negative connotation by calling it πολυμαθίη and κακοτεχνίη (22B129 D.-K., Πυθαγόρης Μνησάρχου ἱστορίην ἠσκησεν ἀνθρώπων μάλιστα πάντων καὶ ἐκλεξάμενος ταύτας τὰς συγγραφὰς ἐποίησατο ἑαυτοῦ σοφίην, πολυμαθίην, κακοτεχνίην). On the difficulties and doubts on authenticity raised by the fragment, see D.-K. *ad loc.* (I p.181). Recent historiography has been rather more inclined towards lending full credence to the received text. For detailed discussion see W. Burkert, *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism* (Cambridge [Mass.] 1972) 130–131, 161, 209–210; J. Lallot, "Une invective philosophique (Héraclite, Fragments 129 et 35 D.-K.)," *REA* 73 (1971) 15–23; Ch. H. Kahn, "Philosophy and the Written Word: Some Thoughts on Heraclitus and the Early Greek Uses of Prose," in K. Robb, ed., *Language and Thought in Early Greek Philosophy* (La Salle 1983) 110–124, at 111–114; J. Mansfeld, "Fiddling the Books (Heraclitus B 129)," in *Studies in the Historiography of Greek Philosophy* (Assen/Maastricht 1990) 443–448; Ch. Riedweg, "Pythagoras hinterliess keine einzige Schrift: ein Irrtum? Anmerkungen zu einer alten Streitfrage," *MusHelv* 54 (1997) 65–92, at 78–87; M. Gemelli-Marciano, "Le contexte culturel des Présocratiques: adversaires et destinataires," in A. Laks et Cl. Louguet, edd., *Qu'est-ce que la Philosophie Présocratique?* (Lille 2002) 83–114, at 97–103.

⁷⁸[Pl.] *Hipparch.* 228D, ἐπιβουλεύων αὐτὸς ἐν τοῖς ἀγροῖς παιδεῦσαι ἔστησεν αὐτοῖς Ἑρμᾶς κατὰ τὰς ὁδοὺς ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ ἄστεος καὶ τῶν δήμων ἐκάστων, κᾶπειτα τῆς σοφίας τῆς αὐτοῦ, ἦν τ' ἔμαθεν καὶ ἦν αὐτὸς ἐξεῦρεν,

Moreover, a number of “Hippocratic” writings are thought to date to around the time when Aristophanes was active; these works were the result of an intensive preliminary activity of collation of empirical data and of the successive elaboration and written fixing.⁷⁹ In particular we know of a (collective) work from Cnidus’ “school,” the so-called *Cnidian Sentences*, which underwent revision and was then made public in the revised form.⁸⁰

ἐκλεξάμενος ἃ ἡγεῖτο σοφώτατα εἶναι, τὰυτα αὐτὸς ἐντείνας εἰς ἐλεγεῖον αὐτοῦ ποιήματα καὶ ἐπιδείγματα τῆς σοφίας ἐπέγραψεν.

⁷⁹Many studies have clearly highlighted how this may constitute a rather more relevant methodological and epistemological novelty, characterising a new trend in medicine which was so consciously theorised and practised by the writer-doctors of the time. See J. Pigeaud, “Le style d’Hippocrate ou l’écriture fondatrice de la médecine,” in M. Detienne, ed., *Les savoirs de l’écriture* (Lille 1988) 305–329, at 305–306; Ph. J. van der Eijk, “Towards a Rhetoric of Ancient Scientific Discourse,” in E. J. Bakker, ed., *Grammar as Interpretation. Greek Literature in its Linguistic Contexts* (Leiden 1997) 77–129, at 97–99; R. Wittern, “Gattungen im Corpus Hippocraticum,” in W. Kullmann et al., *Gattungen wissenschaftlicher Literatur in der Antike* (Tübingen 1998) 17–36, at 29–31; J. Althoff, “Die aphoristisch stilisierten Schriften des Corpus Hippocraticum,” in *Gattungen* 38–41. See also Nieddu, *La scrittura* 125–128. A specific though rather meagre “insider” testimony of this working method in successive phases is at Hippoc. *Epid.* 6.7, where the much-discussed expression τὰ ἐκ τοῦ μικροῦ πινακιδίου, which opens the paragraph, seems to indicate the source from which all the immediately following material is taken: cf. D. Manetti and A. Roselli, *Epidemie. Libro sesto* (Florence 1982) 166–169. Historiographers’ working methods and the process which led to the formation of monumental works like those of Herodotus and Thucydides are also involved in this problem. Jacoby’s hypothesis is of particular relevance, since he imagines the final “editing” of the Herodotean work as essentially an operation of cutting and pasting, an “Arbeit mit der Schere” (F. Jacoby, “Herodotos,” *RE Suppl.* 2 [1913] 205–520, at 361), in other words a sort of collage of the various lectures (“Vorträge”) he gave over a period of time; but cf. R. Lattimore, “The Composition of the History of Herodotus,” *CP* 53 (1958) 9–21; W. Rösler, “Alte und neue Mündlichkeit. Über kulturellen Wandel im antiken Griechenland und heute,” *Der altsprachliche Unterricht* 28.4 (1985) 4–26, at 23–26, and “Die ‘Selbshistorisierung’ des Autors. Zur Stellung Herodots zwischen Mündlichkeit und Schriftlichkeit,” *Philologus* 135 (1991) 215–220, at 217. As regards Thucydides, Prentice’s pioneering criticism (W. K. Prentice, “How Thucydides Wrote His History,” *CP* 25 [1930] 117–127) provides a significant contribution, discussed by Dorandi, *Le stilet* 5–25.

⁸⁰Hippoc. *Acut.* 1.1–3. 1 Joly (II 224–228 L.), οἱ συγγράψαντες τὰς Κνιδίας καλεομένας γνώμας ... οἱ μέντοι ὕστερον ἐπιδιασκευάσαντες—a twofold operation of editing and correction which in its distinct phases can be dated to the initial and middle decades of the century. See J. Jouanna, *Hippocrate. Pour une archéologie de l’école de Cnide* (Paris 1974) 16 n.4, 24 nn.2–3, 132, 512, as

Again, Plato makes reference to a long and articulated process of elaboration in the opening scene of *Theaetetus* (143AC), a dialogue conceived as an account in a “mimetic” or direct form (*i.e.*, without the intervention of a narrating voice) of the conversations that Socrates had with the young Theaetetus shortly before his death. We are told that Euclid gradually transcribed them as accurately as possible, working at his ease (κατὰ σχολήν) at home on the notes (ὑπομνήματα) he had taken. These were then corrected and integrated with any new details that gradually came to his mind and about which, from time to time, he would take care to ask Socrates himself for confirmation.⁸¹

The cuts, the displacements, the connections, the editing of which these texts more or less explicitly attest, offer an idea of how far writing had become part of the ancient author’s “laboratory,” and they cast his activity into a new cultural dimension. If, as we have tried to demonstrate, the operation carried out by Aristophanes presupposes the availability and the careful consultation of the text of *Helen*, this does not prejudice the enjoyment of the public as a whole, nor does it imply, as has been emphasised on more than one occasion, equal access by the whole community to a written culture. Here, as in other cases, it would have been sufficient for many—the “naïve,” the people who followed the theatrical event on a

well as G. F. Nieddu, “Il ginnasio e la scuola: scrittura e mimesi del parlato,” in G. Cambiano *et al.*, edd., *Lo spazio letterario della Grecia antica* I (Rome 1992) 555–585, at 557 n.4; Wittern, *Gattungen* 24. The existence of “preparatory texts,” referred to by the ancient exegetic tradition (Galen), and the phenomenon of rewriting and re-elaboration within the corpus are addressed more generally by A. Roselli, “Sui generi degli scritti della collezione ippocratica,” *Lalies* 21 (2001) 63–78, at 70–73.

⁸¹(EY.) ἀλλ’ ἐγραψάμην μὲν τότε εὐθὺς οἴκαδ’ ἐλθὼν ὑπομνήματα, ὕστερον δὲ κατὰ σχολὴν ἀναμιμνησκόμενος ἔγραφον, καὶ ὅσάκις Ἀθήναζε ἀφικοίμην, ἐπανηρώτων τὸν Σωκράτη ὃ μὴ ἐμνήμην, καὶ δεῦρο ἐλθὼν ἐπνηρωθούμην· ὥστε μοι σχεδὸν τι πᾶς ὁ λόγος γέγραπται: “but I made notes at the time as soon as I reached home, then afterwards at my leisure, as I recalled things, I wrote them down, and whenever I went to Athens I used to ask Socrates about what I could not remember, and then I came here and made corrections; so that I have pretty much the whole talk written down” (transl. H. N. Fowler).

superficial level looking only for the spectacular⁸²—to enjoy the gratifying feelings of recognition and appreciation of the most apparent elements of the paratragic development of the piece, of the stage movements, of the theatrical gestures, of the stylistic deviations.⁸³ But in some way we have to presuppose a level of comprehension which was not totally adequate, which would have been incapable of giving the correct value to the often subtle and refined mechanisms used by the comic poet in the construction of his text.⁸⁴ The “literary” product, fruit of

⁸²That is to say, as W. Ludwig, in *Ménandre* (Entretiens Hardt 16 [1970]) 28, writes “mit Auge und Ohr.”

⁸³Especially for the more popular and familiar authors and genres, the audience’s memory and “literary” competence played a decisive part in perceiving the presence of parodies, textual allusions, and stylistic references even if they were not always completely decoded. G. Mastromarco, *Commedie di Aristofane* I (Turin 1983) 35–42; “Pubblico e memoria letteraria nell’Atene del quinto secolo,” *Quad. AICC Foggia* 4 (1984) 65–86; “Trame allusive e memoria del pubblico (*Acarn.* 300–301 ~ *Caval.* 314),” in *Filologia e forme letterarie. Studi offerti a Fr. Della Corte* I (Urbino 1987) 239–243; *Introduzione a Aristofane* (Rome/Bari 1994) 141–159; “Pubblico e memoria teatrale nell’Atene di Aristofane,” in P. Thiery et M. Menu, edd., *Aristophane: la langue, la scène, la cité* (Bari 1997) 529–548, provides a major reference point for the characteristics, the contents, the limits, and the working mechanisms of this fundamental element of the relationship between poet and public in fifth-century Athens. Also cf. Bonanno, *L’allusione* 267–270, and C. Franco, “La competenza del destinatario nella parodia tragica aristofanea,” in E. Corsini, ed., *La polis e il suo teatro*² (Padua 1988) 213–232, which give particular attention to the context of the performance in which the communicative function of the tragic parody is realised.

⁸⁴The kind of competence required here is clearly something more than the “sensitive ear” evoked by R. Harriott, “Aristophanes’ Audience and the Plays of Euripides,” *BICS* 9 (1962) 1–8, at 2, since it involves not simply identifying the nature and maybe the origin of a passage or a stylistic feature but the actual appreciation of the ingeniousness of the performed device, in other words the ways the model has been revived. Mastromarco (“Pubblico ... letteraria,” esp. 75; “Trame” 241–243; *Introduzione* 147–159) has given many compelling examples of the need to assume the presence of an audience within the audience, who could at the very least have been made up of other comic poets and their entourages. In his opinion, the more subtle references and allusions “saranno state colte da una cerchia molto esigua del pubblico; e, probabilmente, saranno state meglio apprezzate dopo lo spettacolo, in una discussione tra spettatori colti che avranno rivisitato ‘filologicamente’ il testo appena rappresentato” (“Pubblico ... letteraria” 74). Cf. P. Walcot, “Aristophanic and Other Audiences,” *G&R* N.S. 18 (1971) 35–50, at 45: “the latest productions would certainly have been discussed, and one place for such discussions would be the symposium. Perhaps the diners could rely on more than just personal recollection.” In not so very different terms we should imagine the relationship be-

skilfully written elaboration, would have had to confront a public (the majority of the listeners, the ἀμαθεῖς or σκαιοί) who would not always have been able to capture the signals sent to them by the author or to fully appreciate the comic play beyond quips, puns, or lines of immediate enjoyment.⁸⁵

Several painful and notorious rejections gave Aristophanes the chance to verify the strong disparity that had come to be created between himself, the author who was participant and user of a written culture, and the receiver who was largely excluded from it.⁸⁶ In *Wasps* 1043–1054 regret over the spectators' incapacity to properly and readily appreciate the novelty of his inventions and the superior quality of his lines (τοῦτο μὲν οὖν ἐσθ' ὑμῖν αἰσχρὸν τοῖς μὴ γινούσιν παραχρήμα,

tween the tragic poet and the public. At the end of his meticulous study of the very significant phenomenon of Aeschylean neoformations and their revival in the works of Sophocles and Euripides, V. Citti, *Eschilo e la lexis tragica* (Amsterdam 1994) 159–166, observes that for these kinds of phenomena we must presume that the communication came about “in un dialogo libresco, condotto in modo che per noi evoca quello della poetica alessandrina. Anzitutto tra poeta e poeta, e quindi per cerchi di competenza assai ristretti, in cui condizione prima e necessaria era il controllo testuale dell'opera del poeta antico, così puntuale da non poter essere fatta se non su testi scritti” (165–166). A stimulating theory on the complex nature of the “dramatic semiosis” operating in the Attic texts of the fifth century is St. Jedrkiewicz, “Teatro attico e comunicazione di massa: ipotesi di ricerca,” *QUCC* N.S. 42 (1992) 7–24.

⁸⁵Aristophanes himself is the first to bear witness to the different levels of competence that existed in his audience when, for example, in his final appeal to the judges in *Eccl.* 1154–1156, he addresses “da una parte agli spettatori ‘dotti’ (perché, nell'esprimere il loro voto, tengano conto delle parti ‘dotte’ della commedia) e, dall'altra, ai meno colti, a ‘coloro che ridono volentieri’ (perché tengano a mente le sue facezie)” (Mastromarco, “Pubblico ... teatrale” 65). Likewise M. Vetta, *Aristofane, Le donne all'assemblea*² (Milan 1994) 274, observes: “tra i σοφοί vanno messi coloro che, per gusto e formazione, oltre alle battute farsesche, valutavano lo εὔρημα ... e la δῖονοια ... di una commedia; essi erano in grado di cogliere tutte le allusioni letterarie.”

⁸⁶In the parabasis of the second *Clouds* (518–562), in the depths of disappointment for the resented defeat, he also manages to include in his rebuke the σοφοί, the “cultured people,” for whom he had gone to so much trouble (525–526). The diversity referred to here is not just the difference that is quite normally found between the author and his often quite extensive and far less educated audience, but rather has roots and a *raison d'être* of a structural order, originating in the different conditions of those who were able, when necessary, to use written texts freely and competently compared with those who had limited or almost no access to them.

1048) are associated with the wish that in the future they will know how to render greater honour to those poets who try to think up and say something new. When in *Frogs*, flattering the public in an obviously interested way⁸⁷ and using the Chorus as his mouthpiece, he urges the two competing protagonists to boldly tackle even the most subtle and refined subjects, he evokes cultural conditions which have already changed and in which the “gap” has been closed or is no longer such an important handicap:

εἰ δὲ τοῦτο καταφοβείσθον, μή τις ἀμαθία προσῆ
 τοῖς θεωμένοισιν, ὡς τὰ
 λεπτὰ μὴ γνῶναι λεγόντοιν,
 μηδὲν ὀρρωδεῖτε τοῦθ'· ὡς οὐκέθ' οὕτω ταῦτ' ἔχει.
 ἐστρατευμένοι γάρ εἰσι,
 βιβλίον τ' ἔχων ἕκαστος μανθάνει τὰ δεξιά·
 αἱ φύσεις τ' ἄλλως κράτισται,
 νῦν δὲ καὶ παρηκόνηνται.
 μηδὲν οὖν δείσητον, ἀλλὰ
 πάντ' ἐπέξιτον, θεατῶν γ' οὔνεχ', ὡς ὄντων σοφῶν.⁸⁸

Whatever the precise value we attribute to the enigmatic βιβλίον,⁸⁹ it is nonetheless highly significant that the new instrument of communication appears as the protagonist of a twofold

⁸⁷The words with which Socrates (Pl. *Ap.* 26D) replies to Meletus when denying the charges brought against him are inspired by a similar attitude and are an attempt to envelope the members of the jury in a subtle net of flattery: “Do you think you are accusing Anaxagoras, my dear Meletus, and do you so despise these gentlemen and think they are so unversed in letters (ἀπείρους γραμμάτων) as not to know, that the books of Anaxagoras the Clazomenian are full of such utterances?” (transl. Fowler).

⁸⁸*Ran.* 1109–1118: “If what you’re frightened of is that there may be some slow-wittedness in the audience, so that they may not understand the subtle things you say, don’t be apprehensive, because things aren’t like that any more. They’re old campaigners, and every one of them has a book and understands intellectual ideas; and being already well endowed by nature, they have now been honed to the utmost acuteness. So have no fear, but explore everything, so far as the audience are concerned; they’re smart!” (transl. Sommerstein).

⁸⁹A review of the various interpretative possibilities is to be found in K. Dover, *Aristophanes Frogs* (Oxford 1993) 34 n.68.

cultural and semantic turning point (“Things aren’t like that any more!”),⁹⁰ founded on a new conception of σοφία: a σοφία no longer just oral but also written, “bookish and literary.”⁹¹

June, 2004

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⁹⁰It is difficult to give a detailed account of the varied opinions about this. See J. D. Denniston, “Technical Terms in Aristophanes,” *CQ* 21 (1927) 113–121, at 118; W. B. Sedgwick, “The Frogs and the Audience,” *ClMed* 9 (1947) 1–9; E. Fraenkel, *Beobachtungen zu Aristophanes* (Rome 1962) 179 n.1; R. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship* (Oxford 1968) 28 n.6; E. Schmalzriedt, *Peri physeos. Zur Frühgeschichte der Buchtitel* (Munich 1970) 57–58 n.21; L. Woodbury, “Aristophanes’ Frogs and Athenian Literacy: *Ran.* 52–53, 1114,” *TAPA* 106 (1976) 349–357; Knox, “Books” 9; G. Cortassa, “Il poeta, la tradizione e il pubblico. Per una poetica di Aristofane,” in E. Corsini, *La polis e il suo teatro* (Padua 1986) 185–204, at 199–201; Avezzi, “Il teatro” 286. But the general belief is that, over and above the comic hyperbole (“things aren’t like that any more; ... everyone has his own book”), the irony and the opportunistic flattery—voiced by the poet about the audience’s comprehension skills before passing on to rather more subtle and refined forms of humour—must have had a concrete reflection in a situation where, as much evidence suggests, “the dissemination of books was increasing rapidly” (Dover, *Frogs* 35), and at least in certain circles the βιβλίον was establishing itself as the symbolic object of a new cultural fashion characterised by refinement and ingenious perspicacity.

⁹¹On this semantic turning point (from the oral *sophia* to the bookish and literary *sophia*) which occurred in a key word from Greek culture and brought it ever more frequently to a close association with the βιβλίον, the new instrument of knowledge and cultural communication, see Th. Cole, “Le metamorfosi della saggezza: sophia fra oralità e scrittura,” in Pretagostini, *Tradizione* 753–763.