

# The Odd Thesmophoria of Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae*

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AS EXPECTED FROM THE TITLE, Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae* does in fact concern the Thesmophoria, that annual, secret women's festival of Demeter and Kore held throughout the Greek world. From line 277 the play is set at a Thesmophoria, but a very odd Thesmophoria, in which the poet demonstrates his bold, inventive, and creative genius at work in reshaping this 'festival'.<sup>1</sup> Aristophanes employs sufficient elements of the real Thesmophoria to make the proceedings recognizable, but he also adds as major components several non-Thesmophoric elements, introduced in part for sheer comic effect, and in part, I shall argue, to shape his Thesmophoria and his play into a form more appropriate to the civic and religious purposes and atmosphere of the festival in which it was presented, the City Dionysia.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For studies of the poet's presentation of genuine Thesmophoric elements and themes, see H. Hansen, "Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae*: Theme, Structure, and Production," *Philologus* 120 (1976) 165-85; A. Bowie, *Aristophanes: Myth, Ritual and Comedy* (Cambridge 1993); the rôle of *mimesis* in this play: F. Zeitlin, "Travesties of Gender and Genre in Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae*," in H. Foley, ed., *Reflections of Women in Antiquity* (New York 1981) 169-217; M. DETIENNE, "The Violence of Wellborn Ladies: Women in the Thesmophoria," in M. Detienne and J.-P. Vernant, edd., *The Cuisine of Sacrifice among the Greeks*, tr. P. Wissing (Chicago 1989: hereafter 'Detienne') 129-47, details the women's participation in various blood sacrifices throughout Greece and discusses at length their activities at the Thesmophoria in particular.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. B. ROGERS, *The Thesmophoriazusae of Aristophanes* (London 1904: hereafter 'Rogers') xxviii-xxxviii, and A. Sommerstein, "Aristophanes and the Events of 411," *JHS* 97 (1977) 112-26, for discussion of the play's date. Sommerstein and T. Hubbard, *The Mask of Comedy* (Ithaca 1991) 187-99, argue convincingly that *Lys.* was produced at the Lenaea and *Thesm.* at the City Dionysia in the year 411.

## I

Let us begin with a review of what is known about the Thesmophoria in Athens.<sup>3</sup> This ancient rite, celebrated exclusively by women to promote human and agricultural fertility, was one of the most widespread festivals in the Greek world. At Athens, the *deme*<sup>4</sup> that appointed the priestess and her assistants (*archousai*) oversaw the expenses<sup>5</sup> of this three-day festival at various sites in Attica on 11–13 Pyanopsion,<sup>6</sup> soon after another festival of Demeter, the Stenia, on 9 Pyanopsion.<sup>7</sup>

The first day of the Thesmophoria was called *anodos* from the procession of women to the Thesmophorion, probably located on high ground in Athens.<sup>8</sup> Tents<sup>9</sup> erected in the temenos of De-

<sup>3</sup> Cf. U. Kron, "Frauenfeste in Demeterheiligümern: das Thesmophorion von Bitalemi, eine archäologische Fallstudie," *AA* (1992) 611–50, and P. BRUNEAU, *Recherches sur les Cultes de Délos à l'époque hellénistique et à l'époque impériale* (Paris 1970: hereafter 'Bruneau'); more recently, N. Robertson, "The Festival Proerosia," *GRBS* 37 (1996) 319–79, esp. 333f, 358ff, 377ff.

<sup>4</sup> At Eleusis, the one Attic exemption, the state administered the sanctuary. Cf. K. Clinton, "The Thesmophorion in Central Athens and the Celebration of the Thesmophoria in Attica," in R. Hägg, ed., *The Role of Religion in the Early Greek Polis* (=Proceedings of the Third International Seminar on Ancient Greek Cult [Stockholm 1996]) 114f.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1184; O. Broneer, "The Thesmophoria in Athens," *Hesperia* 11 (1942) 250–74.

<sup>6</sup> ΣAr. *Thesm.* 80. The Thesmophoria in Halimus, however, began on 10 Pyanopsion: cf. ΣAr. *Thesm.* 80; Clem. Al. *Protr.* 2.34.2.1f Mondésert.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. ΣAr. *Thesm.* 834. Clinton (*supra* n.4: 115ff) argues convincingly against the popular belief that the Stenia, held on 9–10 Pyanopsion, were joined to the Athenian Thesmophoria to form a five-day celebration. He bases his argument on exposure of a misinterpretation of ΣAr. *Thesm.* 80 that connected the celebration of the Thesmophoria in Halimus, which began 10 Pyanopsion, to that held in Athens beginning 11 Pyanopsion. The problem seems to have arisen from a very early corruption of *Thesm.* 80: ἐπεὶ τρίτη ἴσθι Θεσμοφορίων ἢ μέση. τρίτη makes no sense, as the middle day is the Nesteia, held on the second day of the festival. Clinton argues that an Alexandrian scholar probably solved this textual problem by connecting the festival in Halimus, beginning 10 Pyanopsion, with the Athenian, thereby making the third day from 10 Pyanopsion, the Nesteia.

<sup>8</sup> The exact location remains uncertain. Broneer (*supra* n.5: 250–74) argues against a location near the Pnyx. A sanctuary of Demeter may have been located on the northwest slope of the Acropolis: A. SOMMERSTEIN, ed., *Aristophanes, Thesmophoriazusae* (Warminster 1994: hereafter 'Sommerstein') n.658. Clinton (*supra* n.4: 119f), however, suggests that the audience of the *Thesm.* might have identified the poet's Thesmophorion with that located in the deme Melite, just west of the Agora.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Ar. *Thesm.* 658. H. Thompson, "Pnyx and Thesmophorion," *Hesperia* 5 (1936) 189, finds other evidence for setting up temporary shelters in the sanc-

meter indicate that the women remained there for the length of the festival. The procession may have begun at night, and torches were carried.<sup>10</sup> The women sacrificed to the two Thesmophoric goddesses on the first and third days of the festival proper.<sup>11</sup> In addition, the ritual involved dancing on one or all three days.<sup>12</sup>

The fasting on 12 Pyanopsion gave this day its name, *nesteia*.<sup>13</sup> The women sat on the earth during the fast,<sup>14</sup> a posture that may have been related to the legend of Demeter<sup>15</sup> and her choice of a simple stool over an illustrious couch in the palace of Eleusis (*Hymn. Hom. Cer.* 193–99). Pine or willow fronds may have cushioned the hard ground.<sup>16</sup>

On 13 Pyanopsion, called *kalligeneia*, the women sacrificed (*cf.* Alciphron 3.39) and perhaps prayed for blameless children.<sup>17</sup> Because of the character of the *kalligeneia*, the women attending were probably married.<sup>18</sup> Children, except infants, were apparently excluded, and the status of prostitutes and slaves is unclear.<sup>19</sup> Isaeus (3.80) indicates that a three-talent fortune made it

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tuaries for festivals of some length; *cf.* IG V.1 1390. *Cf.* also Bruneau (269–75) for numerous epigraphical references to “poles” and “couches” at Thesmophoria.

<sup>10</sup> Many votive offerings at the sanctuary of Demeter in Corinth, for example, show women carrying torches.

<sup>11</sup> Σ Ar. *Thesm.* 376. Bruneau (286–90) demonstrates that blood sacrifices were offered: numerous references in the Delian inscriptions mention charcoal, pigs, and expiatory victims.

<sup>12</sup> *Cf.* Polyaeus, *Strat.* 1.20: men disguised as women and wearing garlands dance and play in imitation of women celebrating a festival of Demeter at Koliai—presumably the Thesmophoria.

<sup>13</sup> *Cf.* Ath. 6.307F; Ar. *Av.* 1519; Plut. *Dem.* 30.5 dates the day of fasting to 16 Pyanopsion, but J. Mikalson, *The Sacred and Civil Calendar of the Athenian Year* (Princeton 1975) 72f, rejects his date on the basis of Σ Ar. *Thesm.* 80, Phot. *s.v.* Θεσμοφορίων, and Alciphron 3.39.1f for 12 Pyanopsion.

<sup>14</sup> *Cf.* Plut. *Mor.* 378D–E, who at 166A records that sitting on the ground is itself a purification ritual.

<sup>15</sup> H. Parke, *Festivals of the Athenians* (Ithaca 1977) 86.

<sup>16</sup> Steph. Byz. *s.v.* Μίλητος; E. Fehrle, *Die kultische Keuschheit im Altertum* (Giessen 1910) 139.

<sup>17</sup> L. DEUBNER, *Attische Feste* (Berlin 1932: hereafter ‘Deubner’) 57.

<sup>18</sup> *Cf.* Isae. 3.80; Callim. fr. 63 Pfeiffer. By Lucian’s time (*Dial. Meret.* 2.1) young, unmarried girls attended this festival with their mothers.

<sup>19</sup> Detienne (137) cites Lys. 1.19 as evidence that courtesans could not attend the Thesmophoria. This passage, however, is inconclusive: a slave merely mentions that her mistress attended the festival with her lover’s mother. Detienne cites Isae. 6.49f as evidence that slaves were barred from attending, but here a

obligatory for husbands to provide a feast for their wives at the Thesmophoria,<sup>20</sup> which was probably held on this day to break their fast.

The best account of the secret rites of this festival is at *Lucian* 275.23–76.28 Rabe:

In honor of Eubouleus pigs are thrown into the chasms of Demeter and Kore.<sup>21</sup> Women called “fetchers” ... bring up the decayed remains of what was thrown into the pits below ... and having brought up (the remains) lay them on the altars.<sup>22</sup> They think that whoever takes hold of these remains and throws them in with his sowing will have a good harvest. And also here they bring up secret, holy objects prepared from the tallow of grain, imitations of snakes and of male forms. And they take the branches of the pine-tree because this tree is prolific. And these things are tossed into the pits, as these innermost sanctuaries are called, and piglets too ... because their fertility is a symbol of the reproductive generation of produce and of men.

Here, the secret rites are performed to promote the fertility of both human and plant life, and involve handling objects associated with fertility: snakes, male ‘forms’, pine branches, and pig-

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woman who should not have participated in the rites is described as being both a slave and one who lives shamefully. Therefore, it is unclear which of the two conditions or both made the woman unfit for celebrating the rites of Demeter. Some attendant slaves are present at Aristophanes’ festival: a wet-nurse (609) and a servant Mania (728, 739, 754). As for courtesans, Aristophanes has Euripides bring in a dancer from outside the festival for the Scythian policeman (1177ff).

<sup>20</sup> Cf. also *Men. Epit.* 749f Sandbach, where Smicrines warns his daughter, Pamphila, of becoming the wife of a man who has to contribute to the Thesmophoria and Skira on behalf of both his wife and mistress.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. *ΣAr. Eccl.* 18, who claims that the Thesmophoria was united with another festival of Demeter, the Skira, held on 12 Skirophorion, some three and a half months before the Thesmophoria. The scholiast maintains that piglets, pine branches, and models of phalloi and snakes were thrown into pits at the Skira. W. Burkert, *Greek Religion*, tr. J. Raffan (Cambridge [Mass.] 1985) 243, does not think, however, that the remains of the pigs fetched up during the Thesmophoria had to be the remains of pigs thrown into the *megaron* during the Skira.

<sup>22</sup> Deubner 50; Parke (*supra* n.15) 159f. For a brief summary of the archaeological remains of these hollow chambers (*megara*) into which the piglets were thrown, see Burkert (*supra* n.21) 243. *SEG* XXIII 80 line 27 col. 1 refers to “wood for altar” at the Thesmophoria; cf. Bruneau 269–75 for numerous epigraphical references on Delos to wood and altars.

lets. Models of female genitalia may also have been worshiped.<sup>23</sup> In addition, another activity to promote fertility, the use of *aischrologia*,<sup>24</sup> was a characteristic feature of the Thesmophoria: Cleomedes (*De motu, circul. corp. cael.* 2.1. 166.5ff Todd) compares the women's language at this festival to that of whores; Apollodorus (1.5.1: σκώπτειν) and Diodorus (5.4.6f: αἰσχρολογεῖν) both record that taunting and raillery were part of the Thesmophoria.<sup>25</sup>

## II

Aristophanes' Thesmophoria features non-Thesmophoric elements that reshape the 'festival', though maintaining the Thesmophoric atmosphere. The Thesmophoria has been anticipated since line 76, when Euripides reveals to his Relative that "this day" will determine whether he lives or dies. The Relative informs Euripides and the audience that this is unlikely because neither the *dikasteria* nor the *boule* is meeting, due to the celebration of the middle day of the Thesmophoria (78ff).<sup>26</sup> Euripides, in turn, responds that the *women* will hold an *ecclesia* in the Thesmophoria to decide his fate for slandering women in his tragedies (81–85). After failing to convince the effeminate poet, Agathon, to enter the festival and to speak on the poet's behalf, Euripides sends off the Relative, disguised as a woman, and pledges to help him should he encounter trouble in his endeavors.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Theodoret *Graecorum Affectionum curatio* 3.84 Raeder: women at the Thesmophoria deemed representations of the female genitalia appropriate; Heraclides of Syracuse (Ath. 14.647A) said that women at the Thesmophoria made cakes shaped like the pubis and carried them around for the goddesses. Also, the women may have slept on κνέωρον plants, which according to Hesychius (*s.v.*) represent the female genitalia.

<sup>24</sup> *Aischrologia* was a common feature of cults of Demeter and seems to be reflected in Demeter's encounter with Iambe (*Hymn. Hom. Cer.* 200–205), where *aischrologia* is employed to relieve Demeter's mourning. Cf. N. Richardson, *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (Oxford 1974) 216ff, for the connection between jesting and mourning, and mourning and fertility festivals.

<sup>25</sup> Parke (*supra* n.15: 86f) thinks that the women may have used *aischrologia* at the end of the day of fasting, possibly as a way to satisfy the release of irritation from hunger. Callim. fr. 21.8ff Pfeiffer perhaps demonstrates a link between fasting and *aischrologia* at a festival of Demeter.

<sup>26</sup> Mikalson (*supra* n.13) 193–97. See Sommerstein n.78 for a discussion of the Council's ability to pass a death sentence.

Although the Chorus of female celebrants naturally gives the best possible account of the activities of the poet's 'festival', the Relative, even as an outsider, is equally important, for he easily blends in with the women and shows a familiarity with the rites. Further, his presence among the women provides comic tension, as stories of an illicit intrusion of a male into this festival demonstrate the fierceness of the women in guarding the secret rites of Demeter. Aelian (fr. 44 Hercher) records that in Cyrene celebrants at this festival once killed a male spy, who happened to be King Battus. Similarly, Pausanias (4.17.1) writes that Aristomenes of Messenia approached the celebration of this festival too closely, was assaulted with knives, spits, and torches, and was seized.<sup>27</sup> These accounts of violence parallel Herodotus' assertion (2.171) that the man-slaughtering Danaids brought this festival from Egypt and taught the rites to the Pelasgian women in Thessaly.<sup>28</sup>

The nature of Aristophanes' 'festival' will become clearer by focusing on the actions of both the Chorus and the Relative in the following passages: (1) Procession, and the Relative's prayer and sacrifice (277-91); (2) the opening prayers in the *ecclesia* (292-371); (3) speakers at the *ecclesia* (372-573); and (4) singing and dancing (655-88; 947-1000; 1136-59).

(1) *Procession, the Relative's Prayer and Sacrifice* (277-91). When the scene shifts to the Thesmophorion, it is already the middle of the three-day festival proper (80, 375f), the day on which the Athenian women will have the leisure to hold an *ecclesia* (375).<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, the poet conflates the time of his festival to include many activities on one day. As he nears the Thesmophorion, the male intruder sees lighted torches and a great crowd moving under their flames (280f). Here, the apparent initial procession of the festival is transposed to the middle

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Detienne (129f) for discussion of the sacrificial activity that the tales of Battus and Aristomenes involve.

<sup>28</sup> Similarly, Clem. Al. (*Protr.* 2.19) notes that the women at this festival ate pomegranate seeds, whose red juice is associated with blood.

<sup>29</sup> In some respects the Thesmophoria's organization and practices resembled a civic institution, e.g. *archousai* presided over the festival (cf. *LSCG* Suppl. 124.3) and implemented the "programmatic features sanctioned by custom" (cf. Isae. 8.19) "as it seemed good to the women" (ὡς ἔδοξε ταῖς γυναιξί, *LSAM* 61.5); more specifically here, the assembly during the Thesmophoria is clearly modelled on the secular *ecclesia*, and is described so in several places (cf. 84, 301, 329). Cf. Detienne (138f) for more examples of the political vocabulary in various sources used to describe the Thesmophoria.

day. Upon entering the Thesmophorion, the Relative prays to the two goddesses (282f) and sacrifices a cake (285),<sup>30</sup> which his servant<sup>31</sup> carries in a basket. Next he prays that *he* be received and returned with good fortune (ἀγαθῆ τυχῆ, 283)—an appropriate prayer for those in processions. The male celebrant beseeches the goddesses that he be able to keep sacrificing many things often to them, a conventional enough prayer, and then if he is denied this, that he be allowed to escape notice now (287f), *i.e.*, remain undetected as a man in the all-female festival. The remainder of the Relative's prayer to the two goddesses (289ff) is on behalf of his imaginary children.<sup>32</sup> He prays that his daughter, Choirion ("Little Pussy"), be married to a wealthy and stupid man (289f), and that his son, Posthaliskon ("Little Pecker"),<sup>33</sup> be smart (291). The Relative's prayer as a whole probably reflects the initial prayers of the female celebrants of the actual festival: a safe trip to and from the festival, ability to keep making sacrifices (*i.e.*, financial prosperity),<sup>34</sup> marriages for daughters, and prosperity for sons (here, intelligence is equated with success).<sup>35</sup>

(2) *The Opening Prayers of the Ecclesia* (292–371). Although an *ecclesia* within the Thesmophoria is an Aristophanic invention, the poet nevertheless fits it into the festival by incorporating features pertinent both to the actual festival and to the wo-

<sup>30</sup> πόπανα are common sacrifices: Ar. *Plut.* 660, 680; Men. fr. 129.4 Kock; *Plut. Mor.* 362f.

<sup>31</sup> As he enters the festival, the Relative dismisses his servant (293), perhaps because slaves were not allowed to hear the secret rites (294), or more likely because he either had no slave or borrowed one. P. Kershenbaum (cited in Hansen [*supra* n.1] 175 n.47) cleverly suggests that the Relative borrows someone else's slave in the confusion of the crowd.

<sup>32</sup> Because this festival is concerned with fertility and the Relative prays for his "children," it seems that on the *Kalligeneia* the women were concerned with both the offspring of the earth as well as, perhaps, their own.

<sup>33</sup> Following Dindorf's emendation of ποσθαλίσκον: *Aristophanis Comoediae* (Paris 1877) *ad loc.*

<sup>34</sup> Cf. J. Mikalson, *Honor Thy Gods* (Chapel Hill 1991: hereafter 'Mikalson') 59ff, n.209, for a list of dedications offered by fifth-century Athenians either for the fulfilment of a vow or in the hope that more success would be the result of more dedications.

<sup>35</sup> Mikalson (*supra* n.34: 59) observes that women in tragedies generally pray to female deities for children and successful births, and that their children live long and happy lives, which include good marriages: cf. Eur. *Alc.* 163–66.

men's purpose in holding the meeting.<sup>36</sup> Aristophanes apparently included the *ecclesia* because the idea of women deliberating 'men's issues' is inherently funny (*cf. Eccl., Lys.*), a court is necessary for the trial of Euripides, and it allows the introduction of 'civic' elements, which are characteristic of Old Comedy.

Following the ritual call for silence (εὐφημία, 295f) the heraldess (κηρύκαινα)<sup>37</sup> orders the women to pray to Demeter and Pherrephatta; Plutus, god of agricultural plenty; Calligenea, for whom the third day of the Thesmophoria is named;<sup>38</sup> Curotrophus Ge, who shared a sanctuary with Demeter on the Acropolis (Paus. 1.22.3); Hermes, who most likely escorted Pherrephatta back from the underworld; and the Graces, connected with Demeter and Kore in both legend and cult (297-300; *cf. IG I<sup>3</sup> 5; Hymn. Orph. 43.7*). Here, Thesmophoric deities replace those probably invoked at the real Athenian assemblies: Zeus, Apollo,<sup>39</sup> Gaia,<sup>40</sup> and Athena.<sup>41</sup>

Civic and religious elements are paired in the heraldess' bid to pray to these deities that they favor and grant success to this

<sup>36</sup> For the parodic elements in and unity of the *ecclesia*, see H. Kleinknecht, *Die Gebetsparodie in der Antike* (Stuttgart 1937) 33ff; J. HALDANE, "A Scene in the *Thesmophoriazusae* (295-371)," *Philologus* 109 (1965: hereafter 'Haldane') 39-46; W. Horn, *Gebet und Gebetsparodie in den Komödien des Aristophanes* (Nürnberg 1970) 106ff.

<sup>37</sup> The priestess at the actual Thesmophoria would have initiated prayers. See Sommerstein (n.295) for the identity of the character in this play.

<sup>38</sup> *Cf.* Deubner 57. Calligenea is the name of Demeter's nursemaid at Nonnus *Dion.* 6.140, but at Hsch. *s.v.* Καλλιγένεια she is also Demeter's priestess or attendant.

<sup>39</sup> Evidence is lacking for which gods were invoked in the *ecclesia*. P. Rhodes, *The Athenian Boule* (Oxford 1972) 36f, regards the ceremonial proceedings of the *boule* and the *ecclesia* as essentially the same, so the evidence for gods invoked at the *boule* should also apply to the *ecclesia*. Pausanias (1.3.5) saw the sanctuary of the Mother of the Gods near the Athenian *bouleuterion*, and within the *bouleuterion* he saw statues of Zeus Boulaios, Apollo, and Demos, which may suggest that these deities were invoked at civic meetings.

<sup>40</sup> Rhodes (*supra* n.39: 31) thinks that the *boule* had ties with the cult of the Mother of the Gods from very early on, citing H. Thompson, "Buildings on the West Side of the Agora," *Hesperia* 6 (1937) 135-40, who considers a temple north of the old *bouleuterion* as belonging to the Mother of the Gods.

<sup>41</sup> *SIG*<sup>3</sup> 181 includes a prayer of the *boule* to Olympian Zeus, Athena Polias, Demeter and Kore, the twelve gods, and the Furies. Further, Antiphon (6.45) mentions that a shrine of Zeus Boulaios and Athena Boulaia stood in the *bouleuterion*.



*ecclesia* and ritual assembly (σύνοδος, 302),<sup>42</sup> that the meeting be very beneficial to Athens and successful for the women, and that the woman who is most helpful to—and speaks the best things about—the Athenian *demos*<sup>43</sup> and women, may be the victorious speaker (302–305). The *kerykaina* closes this customary prayer in formulaic manner by ordering the women to pray for these things (ταῦτ' εὐχεσθε, 310)<sup>44</sup> and for good things for themselves, by crying ἰη παιῶν,<sup>45</sup> and by bidding the assembly of women to “fare well” (310f). The heraldess’ prayer thus addresses the Thesmophoric goddesses and those related to them, and asks the deities to favor them and their meeting as well as Athens. The format and language of this prayer resemble a civic prayer: the opening calls for εὐφημία, the proposal of the names of the deities to be addressed, the subject of the prayer, and the conclusion with a paean were the “regular procedure in public ritual.”<sup>46</sup> But Aristophanes has modified this ‘civic prayer’ to include elements relating to Demeter: the Chorus, while parodying civic formulae for humor also blends civic and religious terms and issues, and thereby underlines the women’s perception of themselves as both Athenian civic leaders and celebrants of Demeter and Kore.

In response to the heraldess’ order, the Chorus prays for music, various gods’ attendance and favor, and the holding of an *ecclesia*. The women then beseech (313) the all-inclusive “race of gods” to appear and then to rejoice in these prayers (ταῖσδ’ ἐπ’ εὐχαίς φανέντας ἐπιχαρῆναι, 312f),<sup>47</sup> inviting the divinities to become fellow celebrants in their festival.<sup>48</sup> The Chorus hymns

<sup>42</sup> Haldane (40) notes that this word is commonly used of ritual gatherings; cf. Thuc. 3.104.3; Pl. *Leg.* 6.771 D; Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 1160a25ff.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. M. Hansen, *The Athenian Ecclesia* (Copenhagen 1983) 141–48, for the various meetings of δῆμος in preserved decrees.

<sup>44</sup> Kleinknecht (*supra* n.36: 38) detected this formula.

<sup>45</sup> The paean regularly ended religious services: cf. Thuc. 6.32. The paean at Ar. *Pax* 454f similarly concludes Trygaeus’ prayer and introduces a joyous celebration.

<sup>46</sup> Haldane 39; see also Rhodes (*supra* n.39) 36f.

<sup>47</sup> Mikalson (188) observes that “in life and in literature, gods ‘rejoice’ in being worshiped. The *vox propria* is χαίρειν.”

<sup>48</sup> This is an unusual request. Deities are often invited to attend festivals, but not to participate in them. Two exceptions are Dicaeopolis’ invitation (*Ach.* 263–79) to Phales to drink with him as a fellow traveler and the Chorus’ invitation (*Thesm.* 987) to Bacchus to lead the dance. Although Phales and Bacchus make suitable companions at a festival (sex and wine), the ‘race of gods’ is vague and too inclusive. Would Ares be welcome at a festival? Surely

and invites to the festival a new set of deities, some of whom may have been customarily addressed at the *ecclesia*, among them Zeus,<sup>49</sup> Poseidon, Apollo, and Athena—who is prominent in this invocation, receiving four epithets, two focusing on her martial aspects and two emphasizing her rôle as patron of Athens (παγκρατές, κόρα, γλαυκῶπις, χρυσόλογχος).<sup>50</sup> Demeter, addressed by the Chorus earlier (298), also may have been addressed at the *ecclesia*. Artemis, the maidens of Nereus, and mountain nymphs are also invoked and demonstrate the women's focus on female deities, especially those customarily associated with this Demetrian festival.<sup>51</sup> The Chorus closes by asking that they, "well-born women of Athens,"<sup>52</sup> hold an *ecclesia* (329f). The heraldess has invoked deities associated with Demeter and Kore; the Chorus addresses a wider range of divinities that include males—probably not part of the Thesmophoric milieu but included because they are important civic deities. In other words, the heraldess, acting more like the priestess of Demeter than a heraldess, focuses on Demeter and Kore; and the Chorus, acting as 'good citizens', expands the celebration to include important civic deities, Athena in particular.

Lines 331–51 parody the ritual curse pronounced before a real meeting of the *ecclesia* (Dem. 8.130; Deinarch. 2.16; Isoc. 4.157).<sup>53</sup> The *kerykaina* asks the women to pray to the Olym-

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not. Cf. Ar. *Ach.* 979–87, where War's destruction of his host's symposium is lamented.

<sup>49</sup> Haldane (41) observes that in Athens when gods were addressed in a body it was customary to mention one or more deities from the following three groups: (a) Hestia and Zeus, (b) Athena and Poseidon, (c) Apollo, Artemis, and Leto. Zeus may have been customarily invoked at the Thesmophoria, for an altar to him was found in the Thesmophorion on Thasos (C. Rolley, "Le sanctuaire de Dieux Patrôoi et le Thesmophorion de Thasos," *BCH* 89 [1965] 441–83), and Zeus Eubouleus is repeatedly mentioned in inscriptions concerning the Thesmophoria on Delos: cf. Bruneau.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. C. Anderson, *Athena's Epithets: Their Structural Significance in Plays of Aristophanes* (Stuttgart 1995) 57–62: an excellent discussion of the epithets in this play.

<sup>51</sup> On Thasos the Thesmophorion contained the altars of Zeus, Artemis, Athena, and the Nymphs: cf. Rolley (*supra* n. 49). Haldane (41) views the invocation of the Nereids and Nymphs as due to their association with Poseidon and Artemis, respectively. Sommerstein (n.326) suggests that the Nymphs may have played a special rôle in "women's cult and religious affections."

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Plut. *Sol.* 8.4, where the "first women of Athens" sacrifice to Demeter at Colias.

<sup>53</sup> Haldane 43; Kleinknecht (*supra* n.36) 34f; Horn (*supra* n.36) 106–15.

pian, Pythian, and Delian gods and goddesses; the comic addition of "goddesses" to the call for prayer renders it suitable to this festival and its participants.<sup>54</sup> Next the heraldess parodies the opening statement of the attendants of the Heliaeia (cf. Dem. 24.149): just as the heliasts took an oath to abide by the laws and votes of the Athenian *demos* and *boule* (Dem. 24.149.1f), the women refer to the *demos* of women (335f); and as the heliasts vowed not to vote for a tyrant or oligarchy (Dem. 24.149.3), the women pray that harm may come to those who plot to be tyrant or bring one back (337f). The similarities between the heliasts' and the women's oaths then disappear as the women abandon civic issues and threaten personal enemies, in particular those who harm women and thwart their crafty schemes (339–51). The women's reference to themselves as "*demos* of women" reveals both their belief in the all-inclusive nature of the Demetrian festival, for they have removed all reference to civic status implicit in the men's oaths ("*demos* of Athenians," *boule*), and also their commitment to their self-imposed civic powers. In addition, by viewing the enemies of women as equivalent to the enemies of the state, the celebrants demonstrate their perception of themselves as important civic leaders who have the authority to protect the *demos* of women. The Chorus here establishes its authority to punish Euripides, whose plays have harmed women.

In lines 352–71, the Chorus prays for the city and the *demos* of women (352–57), issues new warnings (357–68), and prays to Zeus to be its overseer so that the gods will favor the suppliants who are "mere women" (369f). Like the heraldess' prayer, this one resembles a public prayer but is suited to the *ecclesia*: may the best speaker win (355f), and may those come to some harm who trespass oaths, votes, and laws, or who help the Persians or hurt the city (356–68). And like the heraldess previously, the Chorus expresses both civic and gender-oriented sentiments. But though the heraldess was particularly concerned with women's problems, the Chorus sings of public and religious issues. The Chorus' tone is apparently mock somber and moralizing, as it introduces the theme of retribution against those who divulge secret rites (τάπóρρητα, 363f) and dishonor the gods (ἀσεβούσαι, 367). This theme sets up the next

<sup>54</sup> Similar parodies of an invitation to the gods, which includes 'goddesses': Ar. Av. 866f; Men. Kol. fr. 1.2f Sandbach.

scene in which the violator of the secret rites is discovered and Euripides is accused of a religious crime.

(3) *Speakers at the Ecclesia* (372–573). The heraldess begins the meeting in imitation of a *probouleuma* (372–79)<sup>55</sup> and employs the political language of civic meetings, e.g., ἔδοξε τῇ βουλῇ ... τίς ἀγορεύειν βούλεται. A chairwoman and secretary are named, the proposer of the motion is given, and the first item of business is given: that concerning Euripides.

The first speaker (380–432), Woman A, relates against Euripides a civic charge of slander (διαβάλλειν 390, 411),<sup>56</sup> then lists the repercussions of his crime. She criticizes him for portraying *inter alia* the adulterous disposition of women (392) and their fondness for men (392) and wine (393), and proposes death for Euripides (428–31). But Woman A's objections to Euripides' portrayal of women are as unflattering as the tragedian's image of women. Not only does Euripides lampoon (*iambos*) and speak shamelessly and insultingly (*aischrologia*)<sup>57</sup> about the women, but in the course of their attack on him, the women also lampoon and insult each other, and thereby undermine their case. Here, the Chorus' dual rôles is combined, as it employs *aischrologia* during a proper civic meeting.

The second speaker, Woman B, a widow with five children who makes wreathes for religious rituals, tells how she has been hurt financially because Euripides has persuaded men that the gods do not exist (443–58).<sup>58</sup> The Chorus, acting as a civic leader, determines the necessity of punishing Euripides for his *hybris* (465), and thereby confirms Woman B's religious charge.

The Relative, the third speaker (466–570), defends Euripides by telling incriminating stories about women that even the playwright dared not portray. The Chorus reacts by scolding the Relative for railing at it (λοιδορεῖν, 571, 650) and being hybriistic

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Sommerstein (nn.372–79) on the typical prescript of a *probouleuma*.

<sup>56</sup> Aristophanes uses similar expressions in his defense against Cleon's earlier civic charge against him. The poet, in the guise of Dicaeopolis, states that Cleon will not slander him now (διαβαλεῖ, *Ach.* 502) for maligning (κακῶς λέγει, 503) Athens.

<sup>57</sup> J. Henderson, *The Maculate Muse*<sup>2</sup> (Oxford 1991) 5f, defines αἰσχρολογεῖν: "to speak anything out of place was to speak shamelessly or insultingly (*aischrologein*)."

<sup>58</sup> C. Moulton, *Aristophanic Poetry* (Göttingen 1981) 126, thinks that after Woman B's objections to Euripides' atheism, she "undercuts her own argument by suddenly departing to prepare an order for twenty crowns (457–458)."

(περιβρίζειν, 535), and threatens to pluck out the hair from 'her' *choiron* (genitalia, 538). Comically, the disguised male is threatened with depilation, which he has already suffered to 'become' a women. The Relative and the Chorus here return to their rôles as Demeter's worshippers, as the impostor employs *aischrologia* and the women demonstrate an interest in the handling of genitalia.

The *ecclesia* is broken up when Cleisthenes, a 'proxenos' for women,<sup>59</sup> arrives and informs the women that Euripides has sent a male spy into this festival (576-88). The Chorus reacts quickly by becoming 'hunters' of this 'spy' (599). The Relative's precarious position is suddenly seriously threatened as the women 'hunt' him out, and the comic situation of a male secretly entering an all-female festival has the potential of becoming a tragedy à la Pentheus. The Chorus now abandons its civic rôle and instead returns to its primary rôle as a celebrant and defends the rites of Demeter against male intruders.

In the opening scene of Aristophanes' Thesmophoria both the Relative and the Chorus act at times as celebrants of Demeter and as good citizens participating in one of the most democratic institutions in Athens. The Relative joins the procession to the Thesmophorion, offers a sacrifice and prayers to the two goddesses, and employs *aischrologia* while participating in the *ecclesia*'s debate concerning Euripides. The Chorus, on the other hand, alternates between its rôles as a participant in a religious festival and in a democratic institution. Its prayers address not only the Thesmophoric deities but also the "race of gods," and in particular those who seem to have been addressed at the *ecclesia*. The Chorus carefully balances its prayers for women with prayers for Athens. And finally, the two female speakers at the *ecclesia* introduce both a religious and a civic charge against Euripides. The Chorus skillfully presents itself as both proper participants in a religious rite and as citizens concerned with the welfare of Athens. Hence, by cleverly and comically introducing Thesmophoric deities and concerns into his *ecclesia*, Aristophanes is able to make a fundamentally secular institution appear as an almost natural, organic component of his festival.

<sup>59</sup> Cleisthenes for twenty years was frequently the butt of Aristophanes' jokes and is commonly ridiculed for his effeminacy: *Ach.* 117ff, *Lys.* 1092, *Nub.* 355, *Av.* 829f, *Ran.* 426f; cf. K. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (Cambridge [Mass.] 1978) 145; *proxenos*: Sommerstein (n.576) discusses the responsibilities of this office and why the women treat Cleisthenes so well.

(4) *Singing and Dancing*. After the Relative's discovery, the Chorus returns to its primary rôle as a worshipper of Demeter and Kore and performs a customary rite at this festival, the celebration of the Thesmophoric deities in song. These songs demonstrate the earlier trend of celebrating non-Thesmophoric deities and, in particular, civic deities and Dionysus. From the time of Cleisthenes' arrival to the end of the play the Chorus sings three songs: (a) the search for more male intruders (655–88), (b) hymn to the Olympians (947–1000), and (c) hymn to Athena and the Thesmophoric goddesses (1136–59).

(a) *The Search for More Male Intruders* (655–88). After the intruder is discovered, the Chorus appears with torches and frantically dances around the orchestra in search of more men on the premises (655–88). The Chorus takes off its mantles and girds itself in a 'manly' fashion to search, to run around, and to examine closely every closed space, tent, and passage where a man could hide (656f). The Chorus, as 'hunters' of men (ἵχνευε ... μάτευε ... πανταχῆ ῥίγνον ὄμμα ... ἀνασκόπει καλῶς, 660–67), runs hurriedly and silently in a circle in its search (659–62). Here the Chorus acts as cultic members: circular dancing in a manly fashion is characteristic of the celebrants of Demeter's cults (the Chorus of Eleusinian initiates at *Ar. Ran* 372 bids each other "everyone now move heroically" [χώρει νῦν πᾶς ἀνδρείως] and "advance now in a holy circle of the goddess" [χωρεῖτε νῦν ἱερὸν ἀνὰ κύκλον θεᾶς, *Ran.* 440f]). The Demetrian celebrants celebrate Demeter in a typical manner while defending the secrets of her rites.

During this dance the Chorus threatens and warns impious men. The Chorus views the man who would enter this festival as most loathsome: δράσας ἀνόσια ... παραδείγμ' ὕβρεως ἀδίκων τ' ἔργον ἀθέων τε τρόπων (668–72). Because of the spy's religious crimes, the women view themselves as instruments of the gods. By capturing him and making him an example to all, they can show that the gods exist, that men should reverence them, and that men should justly follow holy and lawful ordinances and do what is right (672–77, φήσει δ' εἶναι τε θεοῦς φανερώς. δείξει τ' ἤδη πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις σεβίζειν δαίμονας δικαίως τ' ἐφέπειν ὅσια καὶ νόμιμα μηδομένους ποεῖν ὅ τι καλῶς ἔχει).<sup>60</sup> By its actions the Chorus intends to disprove Euripides' belief that

<sup>60</sup> "He will say openly that the gods exist, and he will now tell all men to respect the *daimones* and justly to pursue holy and lawful pursuits, while they contrive to do what is good."

the gods do not exist. The celebrants believe that only a mad or furious man (679ff) would commit lawless and unholy deeds (τὰ παράνομα τὰ τ' ἄνόσια, 685) and that a god would exact retribution immediately (685f). Here the Chorus furthers the possibility that Mnesilochus ("the Relative") will come to a 'tragic' end.

The tone of this choral song is apparently mock-serious, with its repeated religious warnings and threats against men. But Aristophanes maintains the sacred character of the festival through the Chorus' fervent belief that the gods will punish the impious. In particular, the Chorus' heightened religious tone highlights the increasingly dangerous situation for the Relative, whom the Chorus pursues for his religious crimes: committing unholy (668) and unjust deeds, being hybriotic, and having godless manners (670). The Relative's sacrilege of entering this secret festival warrants retribution from the gods,<sup>61</sup> and the women are their likely agents.

(b) *Hymn to the Olympians* (947–1000). Once the male spy has been bound and handed over to the Scythian policeman, the Chorus sings a long ode in celebration (947–1000). The Chorus returns to its festivities: ἄγε νῦν ἡμεῖς παίσωμεν ἄπερ νόμος (947f). "Playing" (947, 975, 983) seems to be an appropriate description of the customary activities of Demetrian festivals (cf. *supra* n.12), for "play" (παίζ- or a cognate) is used most often by and for the Eleusinian Initiates in the *Frogs* to describe their activities (319, 333f, 375, 388, 407, 415, 443, 452). The Chorus calls its festivities "holy rites" (ἄργια σεμνά, 948),<sup>62</sup> which are performed at the 'sacred seasons', and are especially dear to the goddess of crops. The celebrants' religious duties at this festival include revering the goddesses (σέβεται, 949)<sup>63</sup> and fasting (νηστεύει, 949, 984). Here the chorus acts strictly as Demetrian celebrants.

The Chorus next dances hand-in-hand in a circle and casts about its eyes (953–59), as it had earlier when searching for male intruders (663–67). But clearly here the tossing of the eyes is part of the dance and not a search for men. The *coryphaeus*

<sup>61</sup> For the Athenian popular belief in the retribution of the gods for impiety, see J. Mikalson, *Athenian Popular Religion* (Chapel Hill 1983) 25–38.

<sup>62</sup> The same term is used to describe the Eleusinian Mysteries: *Hymn. Hom. Cer.* 476ff).

<sup>63</sup> Cf. *Hymn. Hom. Cer.* 479: μέγα γὰρ τε θεῶν σέβας ισχάνει αὐδήν. According to Mikalson (*supra* n.34: 76) σεβείν is the *vox propria* for "showing pious respect."

calls upon the Chorus to sing and dance (μέλπε, 962)<sup>64</sup> and to honor with its voice (γέραιρε φωνῆ, 962)<sup>65</sup> in a dance-mad manner (χορομανεῖ τροπῶ, 961) the “race of Olympian gods” (961f). “Dance-mad” indicates dancing as if in a Bacchic frenzy and hints at the later invitation to Bacchus to lead the Chorus (985ff). The range of deities invoked is enlarged to include not only the Thesmophoric goddesses but now the Olympian divinities, and especially Bacchus.

After it has come to a standstill (958), the Chorus suddenly announces that the audience will be sorely disappointed if it expects lampooning (κακῶς ἐρεῖν, 963ff) of men.<sup>66</sup> Songs, jokes, light bantering, and play were part of Demetrian festivals (καὶ πολλὰ μὲν γέλοιά μ’ εἰπεῖν πολλὰ δὲ σπουδαῖα. καὶ τῆς σῆς ἐορτῆς ἀξίως παίσαντα καὶ σκώψαντα νικήσαντα ταινιοῦσθαι *Ar. Ran.* 389–93),<sup>67</sup> and thus the audience probably expected some jesting. But instead, the *coryphaeus* bids the Chorus to step forward and celebrate (μέλπε, 970) Apollo of the beautiful lyre, and holy, august Artemis, the bow-carrier (969ff). Apollo’s epithet is standard and descriptive, but two of Artemis’ epithets demonstrate the Chorus’ respect for her (ἄνασσα ἄγνη, 971). After the Chorus leader asks Apollo to grant the Chorus victory (971), she bids the Chorus to celebrate Hera Teleia, who both plays with choruses and guards the keys of marriage (975f). The Chorus emphasizes Apollo’s and Hera’s association with music and the Chorus while it reveres Apollo’s sister. Hera and Artemis are particularly appropriate to Aristophanes’ festival: Artemis is invoked by young virgins and assists in childbirth, and Hera Teleia is the goddess of marriage.

The Chorus then addresses another triad of deities, all closely associated with rural areas.<sup>68</sup> It entreats pastoral Hermes, Pan,

<sup>64</sup> μέλπ-, generally to “sing” or “celebrate,” also seems on occasion to include to “dance”: cf. *Il.* 16.182; Pind. *Pyth.* 3.90.

<sup>65</sup> γέραιρ- often means to “honor with song” (e.g. *Hymn. Hom. Herm.* 60, 429, 432). Euthyphro (15A–B) says that γέρας, τιμή, and χάρις are brought to the gods by human gifts.

<sup>66</sup> Similarly, the Chorus at *Ar. Lys.* 1043–49 explicitly denies the audience the expected maligning of men after it has set up a joke that should include the duping of men. See Sommerstein (nn.962–65), who thinks that these two choruses, which are all-female and half-female rôles, respectively, might not satirize individuals because of their own gender.

<sup>67</sup> “[Demeter, grant us] to say many funny and serious things and to be crowned in victory after playing and joking worthily of your festival.”

<sup>68</sup> Sommerstein (n.977) interprets the address of rural deities as nostalgia for the countryside, which had been off limits to the Athenians since the Spartans occupied Decelea two years earlier.



and the dear Nymphs to smile favorably upon it (977–82). The joy of choral dancing is emphasized as the Chorus first asks these gods to smile upon it and then bids itself to begin the double “joy” of the Chorus. The Chorus moves from invoking the Thesmophoric goddesses, to the Olympians, and then to the rural deities; with each new addition of divinities the festival becomes broader-based to include, finally, most of the major deities of Athens.

The choral dance apparently grows more frenzied after the *coryphaeus* bids the Chorus to change the step and to sing a piercing song in honor of Bacchus, who is called upon to “lead the song” (985ff). Addressed respectfully as “master” (988), Bacchus is described as “ivy-bearing.”<sup>69</sup> The *coryphaeus* vows to celebrate him (μέλπω, 988) with dance-loving revels (φιλοχόροισι κώμοις), the dance (κώμος) especially associated with Dionysus. Crying “Euion” like Bacchantes (990, 994f) and hymning Bacchus, the Chorus now abandons the celebration of the rites of Demeter and Kore for a Bacchic revelry. Dionysus’ delight in the Chorus (χωρεῖς τερπόμενος, 992) amid the beloved hymns of the nymphs (993f) is emphasized. The Chorus appeals to Dionysus’ love of choruses, hymns, and female followers when it invites him to lead their Chorus, for he is the suitable leader of dances and, in particular, of its Bacchic *komos*.

The Chorus concludes the hymn to Bacchus by describing his favorite haunt (995–1000): the noise of the celebrants echoes around Mt Cithaeron, and the black-leaved, bushy mountains and rocky glens roar. The Chorus focuses on sounds typically associated with this god (βρέμονται [998] for Bromius [991]), and his love for the wilderness. The hymn closes with a description of one of Dionysus’ attributes—the ivy, symbol of victory in Dionysian contests.

In this choral ode (947–1000) the Chorus celebrates the Thesmophoric goddesses; the Olympian deities Apollo, Artemis, and Hera; the rural divinities Hermes, Pan, and the Nymphs; and Bacchus, who is presented as both an Olympian deity and a rural god.<sup>70</sup> The Chorus and the *coryphaeus* throughout this song emphasize the deities’ love for the Chorus: Hera who plays with all choruses (975); Hermes, Pan, and the Nymphs

<sup>69</sup> Rogers (n.999) views this epithet as alluding to the victory of the poet, who would then become κισσοφόρος.

<sup>70</sup> Bacchus also is a combination of the Demetrian (female, fertility) and the Olympian (political).

who favor the choruses (981); and Bacchus, who delights in the choruses (992) and who is hymned with dance-loving revels (989). Although Hera, Hermes, Pan, and the Nymphs may love the Chorus, only Bacchus is invited to lead it.

This hymn demonstrates a movement from Demetrian to pan-Olympian, and finally to specifically Dionysiac elements. The Chorus begins its song as celebrants of Demeter, but ends it as Bacchantes celebrating Dionysus. This final shift leaves the Chorus and audience in a Dionysiac mood that befits a Dionysiac, not Demetrian, festival.

(c) *Hymn to Athena and the Thesmophoric Goddesses* (1136–59). After the Relative's fourth attempt at escape fails, the Chorus sings its last choral song (1136–59) before the *exodos*. Here, the Chorus returns to a mixture of civic and religious elements as it addresses the deities, Athena, Demeter, and Kore. As the Chorus earlier introduced the Thesmophoric goddesses into the civic meeting, so here the Chorus includes Athena in its final prayers as Demetrian celebrants.

Athena's prominence in this play was demonstrated earlier in the opening prayers of the *ecclesia* by her large number of epithets. The Chorus now addresses her, employing five epithets.<sup>71</sup> It invites Athena to the Chorus, as is customary (1138), mentioning her status as an unmarried maiden (παρθένον ἄζυγα κούρην, 1139)<sup>72</sup> and as patroness of Athens (κληδοῦχος, 1142), thereby indicating her suitability to both the Demetrian and Dionysiac festivals. Returning to its civic rôle in this comedy, the Chorus refers to itself again as the "*demos*" of women (1145f), and its invitation to Athena emphasizes her rôle as guardian of the city (ἢ πόλιν ἡμετέραν ἔχει καὶ κράτος φανερόν μόνη κληδοῦχος τε καλεῖται, 1140–43), protector against tyrants (ὦ τυράννους στυγοῦσ', 1143f), lover of the chorus (φιλόχορον, 1136), and deliverer of "festival-loving peace" (ἔχουσα ... εἰρήνην φιλέορον, 1146f). The Chorus emphasizes Athena's power in Athens as martial protector, and in particular, guardian against tyrants. This address of Athena recalls the Chorus' opening prayers of the *ecclesia* (331–51), and for us is

<sup>71</sup> Anderson (*supra* n.50: 58), noting Athena's prominence in this play, observes that no other deity in the comedy receives so many epithets (nine) as Athena, not even Demeter and Kore, for whom the festival was celebrated.

<sup>72</sup> Athena Parthenos is the maiden of the Parthenon; Athena Poliouchos is associated with the Erechtheum. Although Athena's third common epithet, Promachus (protector of the city) is absent, this function is conveyed in lines 1136–44.

particularly striking, in view of the imminent oligarchic coup of the Four Hundred in 411. The special attention to Athena's power and rôle as patroness of Athens as well as the parody of the heliasts' oath earlier, which includes a curse on those who help a tyrant or bring one back (337f), underline the political instability of Athens in the year that this play was presented.<sup>73</sup> Athena's rôle as lover of the chorus links her to Dionysus, addressed similarly at line 992, and as preserver of festival-loving peace she is credited with the production of this City Dionysia.

Finally the Chorus invites the "kindly, propitious, august, much-revered" (εὐφρονες, ἕλαοι, πότνιαι, πολυποτνία, 1148f, 1156)<sup>74</sup> Thesmophoric goddesses into the grove (of the Thesmophorion), where no man can watch the "holy rites" of the goddesses. The Chorus sings of the setting suitable for the two goddesses: the place is void of men (1150); the "holy rites" are being performed (1151); the torches are lit (1151f); and proper respect is offered. As it had invited Athena earlier to appear, so the Chorus now beseeches the two goddesses to come to them (1148, 1154f, 1157). With the invocation of Demeter and Kore, Aristophanes re-establishes the original Thesmophoric setting of the festival.

The Chorus' last ode is appropriately addressed to Athena and the Thesmophoric goddesses. The chorus bids Athena to join them and celebrates her civic functions as protector of the city and peace-holder, two τιμαί important to these celebrants, for only when Athens is safe and at peace can these festivals be properly celebrated. In contrast, it also bids the Thesmophoric goddesses to join the Chorus and reveres them without mentioning their functions. Instead, the Chorus invites the two goddesses to their festival that is ready and awaiting them. The Chorus must furnish reasons why Athena is invited because her presence at this festival is odd.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Sommerstein (*supra* n.2: 122–25) and Anderson (*supra* n.50: 62–68) for Aristophanes' democratic concerns in the anti-Mede, anti-oligarch sentiments of these lines.

<sup>74</sup> It is noteworthy that none of these epithets indicate their function as agricultural goddesses.

## III

After the third choral song (1136–59), the Chorus again shifts from Athenian worshippers of Demeter to Dionysiac celebrants. The conclusion of the comedy completes the progression from a strictly Demetrian to a general celebration of the major Athenian gods, and finally to a specific celebration of Dionysus, god of comedy. By the end, Euripides is reconciled with the women by promising no longer to slander their sex (1160–71). The women accept Euripides' terms but inform him that he must negotiate with the Scythian policeman for the Relative's release.<sup>75</sup> Euripides thereupon leads in a female dancer (1173),<sup>76</sup> who performs (1178) and distracts the Scythian. The policeman then makes sexual comments to and advances on the dancer before she runs off, leading him in pursuit (1183–1202). This tryst allows the Relative and Euripides to escape Demeter's festival unharmed (1209).

The Scythian-dancer scene contains the only male-female sexual relationship in the play. Here the female dancer's sexual charm serves to release the Relative from his bonds (1173–1209). The women's abstention from sexual relations during the Thesmophoria is vicariously released and, in turn, frees the oppressed male and symbolically restores fertility. The release of the Relative is a suitable comic ending in which Dionysus "loosens" the male captive's bonds, much as the prisoners were freed on the *Kalligeneia* (cf. Deubner [*supra* n.17] 58 n.8). When the Relative's parodies of tragedies fail to secure his release, Euripides introduces a comic device, a symbolic 'marriage', which customarily concludes comedies. This comic device not only secures the Relative's release but also restores the Dionysiac mood that has been introduced rather late in the comedy but ultimately dominates. Aristophanes' Thesmophoric celebrants fittingly depart in Dionysiac revelry and beseech the

<sup>75</sup> T. de Wit-tak, "The Function of Obscenity in Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae* and *Ecclesiazusae*," *Mnemosyne* SER. 4 21 (1968) 363f, notes that the policeman is characterized by his obscenities (1119f, 1123f, 1185, 1187f, 1215) as a "primitive, uncultured, rather bestially reacting being."

<sup>76</sup> Hansen (*supra* n.1: 179) thinks that Euripides dresses as a female procuress in this scene and that "we have returned at last to 'normal' sex, but it is sex of the commercial sort and not productive." Zeitlin (*supra* n.1: 193) also agrees that Euripides was dressed as procuress and that Euripides here "turns finally and fully to the comic stage."

Thesmophoric goddesses for a good reward, *i.e.*, victory in the theatrical contest.<sup>77</sup>

In his "Thesmophoria" Aristophanes has the Thesmophoric goddesses ritually honored in dance (and song), in a procession, in the carrying of torches, in fasting, in prayer, in play, and in the use of *iambos* and *aischrologia*. In addition, such typical themes of the real festival as a concern for children and fertility, and the protection of Demetrian rites from males, are reflected in the celebrants' activities and words. The Relative's procession, prayer, and sacrifice portray events of an actual Thesmophoria and set the appropriate tone for a religious festival. The opening prayers of the speakers at the *ecclesia* demonstrate two more reasons why the *ecclesia* is an appropriate intrusion into this festival: it allows the poet to widen the scope of deities celebrated at the Thesmophoria to include civic deities and to praise subtly what was perhaps the most democratic of Athenian civic institutions, at a time when the oligarchic coup of the Four Hundred was imminent. The Chorus' songs at the Thesmophoria celebrate the Thesmophoric goddesses but also further the expansion of this festival to include the worship of deities who were not customarily celebrated at the Thesmophoria, *i.e.*, civic deities and Dionysus in particular. The first two choral songs demonstrate a progression from Demetrian to Olympian to Dionysiac, a characteristic feature throughout the comedy and important for the impact and mood of the play, which, presented in the City Dionysia, fittingly culminates with the Dionysiac. And in fact, the Demetrian celebrants ultimately exchange the celebration of Demeter and Kore for the celebration of the patron god of comedy.

Hence, Aristophanes' Thesmophoria includes civic and Dionysiac elements. Just as the City Dionysia, in part, publicly celebrated and honored its own public institutions and policies with the display of the Delian League tribute, the honoring of deserving citizens, and the parade of orphans of military heroes before an audience that was all-inclusive (Hellenes, resident aliens, citizens, and foreigners), so Aristophanes' Thesmophoria pays tribute to a very democratic, civic institution by incorporating it into an all-female festival that included women from various social classes. In addition, the poet makes his festival more suitable to the City Dionysia by taking a secret, all-female, solemn celebration of the planting of the crops and expanding

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Rogers n.1231. The *Pax* concludes with a similar prayer.

this festival to incorporate Dionysiac elements, which by the end of the play dominate. The joyous celebration of Dionysus and the symbolic return of fertility at the end of the play remind the audience of the City Dionysia's celebration of the vitality of the crops as demonstrated through the display of *phalloi*. By adding civic and Dionysiac elements to his Thesmophoria, and hence, making it more like the City Dionysia, the poet not only pays homage to this Athenian institution but also creates much humor through the presentation of women assuming men's civic rôles, expands a gender-limited, secret festival to broaden its appeal to the audience, extols democracy by subtly praising the *ecclesia*, and celebrates the god in whose honor the play is being presented.<sup>78</sup>

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June, 1998

<sup>78</sup> I should like to thank the anonymous reader of this journal as well as Jon Mikalson and Carl Anderson for their comments and criticisms, which greatly improved this paper.