

# Sources for the Athenian Amphidromia

*Richard Hamilton*

CONCERNING THE RITUAL of the Amphidromia, S. Eitrem remarked in 1915 that “die Notizen der Glossographen und Scholiasten lassen sich aber in allen Einzelheiten und den verschiedenen Zeitbestimmungen zu keiner sicheren und einheitlichen Überlieferung vereinigen.”<sup>1</sup> R. Parker in 1983 came to much the same conclusion: “the details . . . are an unhappy tangle of conflicting and deficient lexicographical evidence.”<sup>2</sup> If, however, one looks not at the lexicographers, removed many centuries from the practices they gloss and themselves subject to repeated abbreviation, but at the contemporary literary evidence, a rather different, fuller, and more unified picture of the ritual emerges.

The lexical references to the Amphidromia describe basically the same ceremony: on the fifth day (*Suda* s.v. ἀμφιδρόμια, schol. Pl. *Tht.* 160E) or the seventh after the birth of a child (Hesych. s.v. δρομάμφιον ἡμαρ) they run around the hearth holding the child (or run around the child lying on the ground, schol. Ar. *Lys.* 757). The scholiast to *Theaetetus* says the midwives wash their hands and then run around (τρέχουσαι) and that friends and relatives send gifts, mostly octopus; the *Suda* and Harpocration (s.v. ἀμφιδρόμια) add squid to the list of gifts and have masculine runners (τρέχοντες); Hesychius says the runners, again masculine, are naked (γυμνοί).<sup>3</sup> It is this simple account that most scholars now discuss, emphasizing one detail or another to decide whether the purpose of the ceremony was purification, testing, or initiation.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> S. Eitrem, *Opferritus und Voropfer der Griechen und Römer* (Kristiania 1915) 173. So already C. Petersen, *Über die Geburtstagsfeier bei den Griechen* (*JahrbClassPhil* Suppl. 1.2 [1856]) 288: “da die Berichte, die wir meistens den alten Lexikographen verdanken, einander zu widersprechen scheinen, so sind auch die neueren nicht einig darüber.”

<sup>2</sup> R. Parker, *Miasma* (Oxford 1983) 51.

<sup>3</sup> G. S. Kirk, “Pitfalls in the Study of Greek Sacrifices,” in *Le sacrifice dans l’antiquité* (Entretiens Hardt 27 [1981]) 58, emends the text so that it is the baby who is naked.

<sup>4</sup> Kirk (*supra* n.3) 57 adds “‘cooking’ or maturation,” to reflect Vernant’s polarity of placement on the ground and placement in the fire. To Parker’s list of critics expressing each position (*supra* n.2: 51 n.71) add: Eitrem (*supra* n.1) (purification, secondarily presentation); A. Preuner, *Hestia-Vesta* (Tübingen 1864) 58f (purification); P. Stengel, *RE* 1 (1894) 1901 s.v. “Amphidromia” (purification); J. Vürtheim, “Amphidromia,” *Mnemosyne* n.s. 34 (1906) 75, who follows Rohde (purification); H. J. Rose, “The

The discrepancy in date between the fifth and seventh is complicated in several sources by conflation with the well-attested naming day on the tenth<sup>5</sup> or on the seventh.<sup>6</sup> Thus the *Etym.Magn.* (s.v. *ἑβδομενομένου*) states that some say the Amphidromia was on the seventh and some on the tenth. The scholiast to *Lys.* 757 dates the Amphidromia to the tenth, “when they give the children names, having run around them as they lie” (on the ground?). The scholiast to *Tht.* and Hesychius (s.v. *ἀμφιδρόμα*) also combine running around and naming, the former dating it to the fifth and the latter (s.v. *δρομάμφιον ἡμαρ*) “within seven days.”

Most scholars follow the majority of sources and date the Amphidromia to the fifth day and the naming ceremony to the tenth, dismissing the contrary evidence.<sup>7</sup> Others conclude either that the Amphidromia could be on the fifth, seventh, or tenth and often coincided with the naming day<sup>8</sup> or that there was really only one ceremony, which could be on any of these dates.<sup>9</sup>

Beyond dating discrepancies and the dubious position of the naming ceremony, there are several further difficulties with the simple account of the lexicographers. (a) Who does the running? The only source to specify (schol. *Tht.*) says it was the midwives. This was accepted by early critics but now is usually dismissed because of the masculine participles in other sources.<sup>10</sup> Several scholars think the

---

Religion of a Greek Household,” *Euphrosyne* 1 (1957) 110 (purification/presentation); R. Hunter, *Eubulus* (Cambridge 1983) 88 (purification/presentation); L. and P. Brind’Amour, “*Le dies lustricus*,” *Latomus* 34 (1975) 46, who explain the lustral function of running around on the basis of the Roman *dies lustricus*, for which they, in a neatly circular pattern, have posited a running around by analogy with the Amphidromia (22). L. Deubner, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* 2 (1910) 648 s.v. “Birth,” rejects purification, ordeal, and initiation for Reinach’s idea that the running was “to ensure fleet-footedness for the child.”

<sup>5</sup> Isae. 3.30, 70; Dem. 39.20, 22–24; 40.28; Ar. *Av.* 922; Eur. fr.2 N.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Arist. *Hist.An.* 588a8; thence Harp. s.v. *ἑβδομενομένου*.

<sup>7</sup> Stengel (*supra* n.4); Rose (*supra* n.4) 110 n.40; Parker (*supra* n.2); I. von Müller, *Die griechischen Privataltertümer*<sup>2</sup> (Munich 1893) 160f; L. Deubner, “Die Gebräuche der Griechen nach der Geburt,” *RhM* 95 (1952) 376; J. Mikalson, *Athenian Popular Religion* (Chapel Hill 1983) 84. Kirk (*supra* n.3) 56 dismisses the whole issue.

<sup>8</sup> Hunter (*supra* n.4) 88; M. P. Nilsson, *Griechische Feste von religiöser Bedeutung* (Leipzig 1906) 115f; J. P. Vernant, *Mythe et pensée chez les Grecs* (Paris 1971) 158, although in n.142 he says that at Athens they were distinct. Von Müller (*supra* n.7) 162 says that the less wealthy united the two celebrations and that later there was only the naming celebration, on the seventh, tenth (or ninth!).

<sup>9</sup> Petersen (*supra* n.1) 288; Preuner (*supra* n.4) 54 n.1; Eitrem (*supra* n.1) 175; B. B. Rogers, *The Lysistrata of Aristophanes* (London 1911) ad 757, “on the tenth day.” Rose (*supra* n.4) 111 adds, “it may be that practice varied in different families.”

<sup>10</sup> Accepted by Petersen (*supra* n.1) 291; von Müller (*supra* n.7) 161; Stengel (*supra* n.4); Brind’Amour (*supra* n.4); E. Saglio, *DarSag* 3.238, “deux d’entre elles.” Rejected

father did the running; the rest are vague.<sup>11</sup> Since only one person can comfortably hold a child while running around an altar,<sup>12</sup> we must assume either that the child is lying on the ground or that he is held by a single person and the sources are using a generalizing plural here as they do with ‘children’ (and ‘midwives’?).<sup>13</sup> (b) Why are the gifts ‘sent’ (*Suda* and Hesych. s.v. ἀμφιδρόμια, schol. *Tht.*) rather than ‘brought’? Presumably because there is no feast. (c) Where is the child, in someone’s hands or on the ground (schol. *Lys.*)?<sup>14</sup> (d) Is there a sacrifice to the gods (*Anecd.Bekk.* I 207.13 and Phot. s.v. ἀμφιδρόμια)? (e) Is there a feast (*Anecd.Bekk.*)?

In fact, the lexical sources agree on very little: when a child was born, someone ran around something on some day somewhere (*Anecd.Bekk.*: πανταχοῦ). This is precisely what can be deduced from the name ἀμφιδρόμια, and, if this is what has happened, we can learn nothing from the lexica except that the ritual was concerned with birth. Conversely, this scant information forms the irreducible minimum gloss on the term and for that reason is safe from corruption, abbreviation, or elimination. If this is the case, we are free to choose what additional information we wish on the assumption that various sources will have retained various additional material and need not all derive from one ‘archetype’.<sup>15</sup>

If we turn from the lexicographers to the classical evidence for the Amphidromia, the picture is considerably fuller. Plato (*Tht.* 160E) describes the usual action (without hearth) but now with a purpose: Socrates and Theaetetus have given birth to an argument, and now in accord with the Amphidromia one must run around examining lest the child not be worth raising (ἄξιον τροφῆς).<sup>16</sup> Presumably it is Theaetetus (mother) and Socrates (midwife, cf. μαίευμα E3) who do

by Preuner (*supra* n.4) 54 n.2; Deubner (*supra* n.4); Parker (*supra* n.2) 51 n.72; Vürtheim (*supra* n.4); C. Gruppe, *BPW* 26 (1906) 1137; S. Reinach, *Cultes, Mythes et Religions*<sup>2</sup> (Paris 1908) 138, “probablement son père.”

<sup>11</sup> Father: Deubner (*supra* n.4); Eitrem (*supra* n.1) 175; Vürtheim (*supra* n.4) 76; Reinach (*supra* n.10) 140, arguing that the absence of any indication shows it must be the father. Mikalson (*supra* n.7) says “parents” but allows the possibility of midwives (plural), 135 n.12.

<sup>12</sup> So Reinach (*supra* n.10) rejects Saglio’s two-woman reconstruction as “bien incommode pour elles et pour lui.”

<sup>13</sup> Vürtheim (*supra* n.4) 73, “morem ut indicet generalem.”

<sup>14</sup> On ground: Vernant (*supra* n.8) 161. In hands: Vürtheim (*supra* n.4). Either: Gruppe (*supra* n.10) 1138. Both: Petersen (*supra* n.1) 291.

<sup>15</sup> The search for an archetype is implicit in many studies, explicit in Gruppe (*supra* n.10).

<sup>16</sup> This passage, called “ein wichtige Aufklärung” by Gruppe (*supra* n.10) 1138, is dismissed by Deubner (*supra* n.4) and Kirk (*supra* n.3) 59 among others.

the running and it is the ‘baby’ that they run around.<sup>17</sup> Participants and, to a degree, phrasing are echoed in Euripides’ *Electra* (651ff).<sup>18</sup> Electra orders the messenger to tell Clytaemestra that she just gave birth so that her mother will come and “bewail the [low] worth of my child” (ἀξίωμ’ ἐμῶν τόκων, 658).<sup>19</sup> The connection with the Amphidromia is strengthened when, later in the play, Electra asks her mother to make the appropriate sacrifice on behalf of her giving birth, to which Clytaemestra responds that this is properly the job of the midwife (1125–28). Many critics strengthen the connection even further by assuming that when Electra dates the customary sacrifice to “the child’s tenth moon” (1126) she means the tenth day after birth,<sup>20</sup> but ‘moon’ (σελήνη) elsewhere means ‘month’ and probably means that here (so LSJ). Electra, then, is asking Clytaemestra to sacrifice in the tenth month, *i.e.*, the birth month of the child, and so we have no specific day mentioned, although we still have a feminine sacrifice that should be in the hands of the midwife. It seems, then, that the scholiast to *Tht.* 160E was correct to give the midwives a prominent rôle<sup>21</sup> and that Photius and *Anecd.Bekk.* were correct to talk of sacrifice. Aristotle, too, talks of the child’s worth, saying that the child is named on the seventh because by then weak children will have died (*Hist.An.* 588a8), although we cannot be certain he is referring to the Amphidromia.

Two other classical passages have some claim to being references to the Amphidromia, although they have not been so interpreted.

<sup>17</sup> Contrast *e.g.* Parker (*supra* n.2) 51 n.72, “by implication the runners are male.” One *could* translate the passage “the λόγος must run around the Amphidromia,” but no one does. L. Campbell, *The Theaetetus of Plato*<sup>2</sup> (Oxford 1883), translates, “and now to celebrate its birth in due form, we must really in our argument ‘run round about’ with it”; but ‘with it’ is not in the text. Vernant (*supra* n.8) 163 translates, “faire courir en cercle tout autour notre raisonnement,” although we do not expect a dative object with περιτρέχω.

<sup>18</sup> Deubner (*supra* n.7) dismisses the passage, in opposition to Preuner and Roscher.

<sup>19</sup> When the messenger asks how long ago she is supposed to have given birth, Electra responds, according to the MSS., “say the suns in which a new mother is [im?]pure (ἀγνεύει).” Elmsley emended λέγ’ to δέχ’, “ten suns [after] which a new mother becomes pure,” and editors in this century have followed him (Murray, Méridier, Denniston, Diggle), although Deubner (*supra* n.7: 376 n.5) objects. J. Denniston, *Euripides’ Electra* (Oxford 1939) 131, gives three reasons, none wholly convincing: (1) “ἡλίους, without numeral, meaning ‘the days’, ‘the period of time’, is surely impossible” (yet he notes “something of a parallel” at 1132); (2) the precise date of ten days given at 1126 would then be “an afterthought” (but the text says “ten moons,” see *infra*); (3) 654 “would add nothing to λεχώ” in 652.

<sup>20</sup> *E.g.* Preuner (*supra* n.4) 58; Denniston (*supra* n.19).

<sup>21</sup> Contra Deubner, Reinach, and others (*supra* n.10). The masculine forms are to be explained either as generalizing plurals, or, more likely, as attracted to the person naming (presumably the job of one man, the father).

Hesiod describes the fifth day as the one on which “they say the Erinyes were busying themselves around (ἀμφιπολεύειν) Oath, after he had been born” (*Op.* 803). If ἀμφιπολεύειν could be equated with ἀμφιδρομῆν, the connection with the Amphidromia would be obvious<sup>22</sup> and would have been remarked by the critics; but the connection is extremely tenuous, and the passage can be, and often is, translated “they say that the Erinyes were tending Oath, born on the fifth day.”<sup>23</sup> The curious story in Herodotus (5.92) about Labda, mother of Cypselus, may reflect, although it certainly does not attest, the Amphidromia. Warned by oracles that crippled Labda’s child would be a bloodthirsty lion, ten of the ruling Bacchiads came as soon as she had given birth and asked for the child. Labda, thinking they had come φιλοφροσύνης τοῦ πατρὸς εἶνεκα, put it in the hands of one of them. The child laughed (θείη τύχη) and the man could not bear to throw it to the ground (προσονδίσαι) as planned: he handed it to another, and so forth until the last person handed it back to the mother. With slight adjustments this could be transformed into an Amphidromia: there is the matter of deformity; the child is examined; and the child is handed around in what sounds like a circle, with the plan to place the child on the ground to kill it.<sup>24</sup>

A further classical passage, in Euripides’ *Ion*, probably should not be included among references to the Amphidromia, although it often is. In their discussions of the Amphidromia, Petersen and von Müller include Xuthus’ sacrifice of γενέθλια for the newly ‘born’ Ion (*Ion* 653), who has just been named and will soon be the host of an elaborate feast; while Owen comments that Xuthus is “adding the proceedings which were usually on the tenth day.”<sup>25</sup> There are, however, several reasons for thinking that a different sacrifice, a birthday celebration, is being proposed: the term γενέθλια is not elsewhere used of either Amphidromia or naming celebration; this is the first day of ‘life’ for Ion, not the fifth, seventh, or tenth; a male is doing the sacrifice; the child is already named. On the other hand, we often hear of birthday celebrations (γενέθλια) and birthday presents in the

<sup>22</sup> And would offer yet another bit of evidence for midwives participating in the ceremony.

<sup>23</sup> So e.g. M. L. West, *Hesiod, Works and Days* (Oxford 1978) 359; W. Schmidt, *Geburtstag in Alterum* (RGVV 7.1 [Giessen 1908]) 6. Word order and the tenses of the infinitive and participle favor the former.

<sup>24</sup> Contrast the superficially similar story about Cyrus (Hdt. 1.107).

<sup>25</sup> Petersen (*supra* n.1) 290; von Müller (*supra* n.7); A. S. Owen, *Euripides’ Ion* (Oxford 1939) 115.

sources,<sup>26</sup> and Xuthus' sacrifice is said to be in place of *ὀπτήρια* (1127), a term elsewhere used of the birthday present.<sup>27</sup>

If we turn to the incontrovertible testimony of the comic poets, we find that the feast, which is hardly mentioned by the lexical sources, is the center of the celebration. A fourth-century comic poet, Ephippos, lists the customary activities (Ath. 370c–d = fr.3 Koch):

ἔπειτα πῶς  
οὐ στέφανος οὐδείς ἐστι πρόσθε τῶν θυρῶν;  
οὐ κνῖσα κρούει ῥινὸς ὑπεροχὰς ἄκρας,  
Ἄμφιδρομίων ὄντων, ἐν οἷς νομίζεται  
ὀπτᾶν τε τυροῦ Χερρονησίτου τόμους,  
ἔψειν τ' ἐλαίῳ ράφανον ἡγλαϊσμένην,  
πνίγειν τε παχέων ἀρνίων στηθύνια,  
τίλλειν τε φάττας καὶ κίχλας ὁμοῦ σπίνους,  
κοινῇ τε χναύειν τευθίσιν σηπίδια,  
πιλεῖν τε πολλὰς πλεκτάνας ἐπιστρόφως,  
πίνειν τε πολλὰς κύλικας εὐζωρεστέρας.

Then how is it that there is no wreath before the doors, no savor strikes the upturned nose tips, though it's an [the?] Amphidromia, in which it is customary to roast slices of Chersonnese cheese and to boil cabbage gleaming in oil and to bake fat breasts of lamb and to pluck ringdoves and thrushes together with finches and to nibble squid along with sprats and to pound many tentacles energetically and to drink many potent cups of wine.

The same text, without the first two lines, is found in Ephippos' contemporary Euboulos (Ath. 65c–d = fr.150 Hunter). Students of the ritual have occasionally noted the presence of crowns on the door,<sup>28</sup> but they have paid little or no attention to the feast.<sup>29</sup> There are several important points: the feast will be elaborate and not just a

<sup>26</sup> To the references in LSJ s.v. *γενέθλιος* and W. Schmidt, *RE* 7 (1910) 1135–49 s.v. *Γενέθλιος ἡμέρα*, add: Callim. *Hymn.* 3.74 and fr.202.22 Pf., Hdt. 1.133, Xen. *Cyr.* 1.3.10. See also Plaut. *Persa* 769 and *Pseud.* 165, Ter. *Phorm.* 48. In general see Schmidt (*supra* n.23). For a list of birthday poems see R. Pfeiffer, *Die neuen Dιηγήσεις zu Kallimachosgedichten* (SitzMunich 10 [1934]) 34; none of them is “einer Geburtsfeier selber gilt.”

<sup>27</sup> Schol. Aesch. *Eum.* 7; Nonnus 5.139. Owen (*supra* n.25) 144 wrongly dates the party to five days after the child's birth, citing Callim. *Hymn.* 3.74, apparently not noting that the child in Callimachus is in fact three years old.

<sup>28</sup> We learn from Hesych. s.v. *στέφανον ἐκφέρειν* that at the birth of a boy an olive wreath was put on the door, at the birth of a girl a wreath with (of?) wool. Deubner (*supra* n.4) says the wreath is not purificatory (so Rohde, Samter) but apotropaic, citing *Ion* 1433.

<sup>29</sup> Stengel (*supra* n.4) 1902 and Nilsson (*supra* n.8) are two who do recognize that the feast shows a connection between Amphidromia and naming celebration.

family meal;<sup>30</sup> what is described is preparation for a feast, not the feast itself;<sup>31</sup> and the last two food items, squid and octopus, are precisely the gifts sent by the relatives according to both the *Theaetetus* scholiast and the *Suda*. Perhaps now we can understand why the gifts are sent, not brought: they need to be prepared for the feast. Also the mention of drinking fits neatly with Pisthetairos' statement in the *Birds* (494f) that he was invited to a tenth-day feast and had some drinks and fell asleep before the dinner.

The fragments of Ehippos and Euboulos and to a lesser degree *Birds* confirm our interpretation of Aristotle in considering the naming (and subsequent feast) part of the Amphidromia. If we return to the lexical sources, we will realize that most of them do too: the scholiast to *Tht.* and *Anecd.Bekk.* both list naming under Amphidromia; and in the *Suda*, even though naming on the tenth is differentiated from the running on the fifth, clearly the two of them were thought of together. These are the fullest accounts and therefore should reflect most accurately the original entries. Conversely, the numerous references to the naming ceremony on the tenth say nothing that contradicts the details given about the Amphidromia. In most cases we hear only that the child is named (Isae. 3.30 *etc.*) and that there is a nighttime feast (*Av.* 494, *Suda* s.v. δεκάτην ἐστίασαι). Euboulos (fr.3 Hunter) speaks of a choral contest for girls, and we hear of special bread being baked and a sacrifice to the gods (*Suda*; Euboulos fr.2, if connected with fr.3; Poll. *Onom.* 6.73). These last two details are attested for the Amphidromia as well: the *Etym.Magn.* s.v. ἀμφιδρόμια speaks of "hidden bread," and both Photius and *Anecd.Bekk.* speak of a sacrifice.<sup>32</sup> Deubner, then, was wrong to argue that the elements of the Amphidromia "fehlen in den Berichten über die Tage der Namengebung."<sup>33</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Athenaeus introduces the fragment by saying that in Athens cabbage (κράμβη) was prepared for new mothers as a "potion for nurture," ἀντιφάρμακον εἰς τροφήν, translated as "antidote in the food" by C. B. Gulick (Loeb). This suggests that the banquet was primarily for the mother, but that must be wrong and Athenaeus seems a bit hesitant about this conclusion: "at any rate (γούνη) Ehippus says . . ." One should note that the term κράμβη does not appear in the fragment.

<sup>31</sup> Petersen (*supra* n.1) 289 remarks that two feasts within a few days was "kaum denkbar" and Nilsson (*supra* n.8) 115f concludes: "Gewiss sind beide Feierlichkeiten der Einfachheit halber oft verbunden worden."

<sup>32</sup> The *Etym.Magn.* speaks of running around the bread, which sounds suspiciously like the subsequently described running around the child, but this does not make the whole reference suspect, contrary to Preuner (*supra* n.4: 55 n.4), who takes pains (61) to dismiss the reference to Hestia as κούροτρόφος despite the *Etym.Magn.* reference to previous scholars ("some say").

<sup>33</sup> Deubner (*supra* n.7) 375.

We may conclude, then, that the Amphidromia began with a private celebration, probably restricted to women, which involved examination of the child by running around (it?) (*Tht.*), sacrifice to the gods (Eur. *El.*, *Anecd.Bekk.*, *Suda s.v. δεκάτην ἐστίασαι*, Phot.), preparation for a feast (Ephippos/Euboulos) which included some drinking (Ephippos/Euboulos; *Av.*) and which culminated in a more public feast during the night (*Av.*, *Suda*) at which the child was named and presented to the larger group of relatives. The feast itself is what most people would care about and remember; the private family ritual in the hands of women would not attract much attention or many references in literature.<sup>34</sup>

The problem of the date remains. There are several possibilities, none totally convincing. First, as the only dates given by the classical sources are the seventh or the tenth, we might dismiss the fifth as a later invention, conflation, or misunderstanding. Plautus, however, speaks of sacrificing on the fifth day after birth (*Truc.* 423f), and this probably reflects genuine ritual, although it may be Roman ritual. In any case, one should not assume that the fifth is the oldest form simply because it is the date most often given by the lexica.<sup>35</sup> Another possibility is that the different days reflect different localities. Callimachus attests the sending of presents on the seventh (fr.202.22 Pf. with Dieg. 9.25–31), not referring to Athenian practice.<sup>36</sup> A further possibility, offered by Deubner, is that the date was different for boys and for girls.<sup>37</sup> Finally, one can imagine the whole ritual complex—the running around, sacrifice, preparation for feast, feast—could take several days. If one takes Plato’s alternative of exposure seriously, there will be even more time needed for notification of relatives after the test and the sending of gifts.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Or many representations on pots (*pace* Saglio, *supra* n.10). E. S. Hartland noted in a general discussion of birth (*EncRelEth* 2.640): “Prior to the ceremony of reception, however, the relatives and especially the female friends of the mother, despite her tabu, often pay her a formal visit to offer their congratulations, and inspect the baby.” The obscurity of these days is marked by Plato’s Alcibiades, who quotes the comic poet’s saying that not even the neighbors know when a child is born (*Alc.* 121D).

<sup>35</sup> As do Petersen (*supra* n.1) 290, Deubner (*supra* n.7), and Gruppe (*supra* n.10).

<sup>36</sup> Pfeiffer (*supra* n.26) 32f connects this with the Amphidromia, for which he is attacked by Deubner (*supra* n.7).

<sup>37</sup> As it was in Rome; see Deubner (*supra* n.4) 649.

<sup>38</sup> Then the octopus and the squid would have had ample time to become tender, which might solve the problem, raised by this journal’s referee, that Pisthetairos should not be present at the actual ritual if it involves only women. One wonders, finally, to what degree the cooking and drinking, conjoined in Ephippos, would have been segregated by gender.



The great majority of sources, classical and later, date the naming to the tenth, and that must have been the normal time for the feast, at least for classical Athens. It is important not to let the precision of the dates in the lexica, the “decisive data of antiquarian literature,” in Deubner’s phrase,<sup>39</sup> eclipse the oblique but contemporary literary material. Nor should confusion over date obscure the basic harmony of the classical sources, for it is surely to these that one should look first in trying to understand the classical ritual.<sup>40</sup>

BRYN MAWR COLLEGE

*September, 1984*

<sup>39</sup> Deubner (*supra* n.4) 648.

<sup>40</sup> I am indebted to Professors Mabel Lang, Julia Haig Gaisser, and Gloria Pinney for helpful suggestions.