

# The Manipulation of Theme and Action in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*

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THE LOOSE plot-structure of Athenian Old Comedy has often baffled, perplexed and irritated historians of Greek literature. Measured against an Aristotelian ideal of unified plot, the unfortunate comic dramatist is pictured as struggling in the darkness with only limited success towards the light of Menandrian perfection. *Lysistrata*, however, has received a better press: qualified praise for a generally consistent and logically developed plot. But even here voices deploring certain inconsistencies of dramatic logic are raised in criticism. One could set aside such lapses in Old Comedy merely as characteristic of the genre. But by asking why they are admitted the critic may better understand Aristophanes' technique in this play, especially as regards the manipulation of its central themes.

We begin with the prologue. *Lysistrata* announces the women's sex strike at lines 120–24. Wives will refuse to sleep with their husbands, and the latter in extreme desperation will agree to anything, even peace. The strike (Plan A) is to be carried out at home and presupposes the presence there of both husband and wife for its success.<sup>1</sup> But some thirty lines earlier we were told with considerable emphasis that husbands and wives have long been separated by the war (99–104). The Spartan Lampito's husband, for example, is almost never home (105f).

It is not merely that the exposition of Plan A conflicts with the historical reality of 411 B.C., nor that an Aristophanic comedy based on that plan occasionally alludes to a reality in conflict with its own dramatic scheme.<sup>2</sup> Rather the poet goes out of his way to depict a sad

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 149–66. For an improved reading at 153 see A. Henrichs and L. Koenen, *ZPE* 1 (1967) 118f. Unless otherwise noted, the text cited in this paper is that of V. Coulon, *Aristophane III*<sup>5</sup> (Paris 1958) 119ff.

<sup>2</sup> This is the case with prostitution, pederasty and masturbation, all possible substitutes for connubial coition: see K. J. Dover, *Aristophanic Comedy* (Berkeley / Los Angeles 1972) 160 (henceforth: DOVER). References to these matters in *Lys.* are at 109f, 620ff, 725, 956ff, 1092, 1105, 1148 with Blaydes *ad loc.*, 1174 with V. Ehrenberg, *The People of Aristophanes*<sup>3</sup> (New York 1962) 180 n.7. See also T. Gelzer, "Aristophanes (12)," *RE* suppl. 12 (1970) 1479.10–18 (henceforth: GELZER).

consequence of the war, wholly inconsistent with the plan developed by his heroine in the same passage.<sup>3</sup> Why then does he do so, when he could easily have omitted any reference to the separation of husband and wife? By sacrificing dramatic logic Aristophanes establishes a major theme at the start of the play: the disruptive effect of war on family life. It is partly to cure this ill that the women's action is directed, and the success of this action at the end of the play enables husband and wife to return home together in an atmosphere of peace and reconciliation.<sup>4</sup>

The next inconsistency concerns implementing Plan A: the sex strike on the home front. The plan is announced by Lysistrata at line 124 and absolutely rejected by the Athenian women to her utter disgust. They simply cannot do without sex. Only the Spartan Lampito, though reluctant to give it up, realizes the importance of peace and supports the plan (142–44). Here one may note that the passage in which Myrrhina and Calonice<sup>5</sup> reject utterly the possibility of abstinence (129–36)<sup>6</sup> is not included merely to satirize women as lewd and wanton but to establish Lysistrata, the Athenian, and Lampito, the Spartan, as the two women responsible for the success of the strike. The Panhellenic feminist liaison forecasts the Panhellenic reconciliation of the final scenes.

Lysistrata then explains the details of her plan: refusal and total lack of coöperation in the bedroom (149ff). Calonice, speaking for the rest of the women, says that if Lysistrata and Lampito think the plan viable, they will join. But here Lampito objects that though she can handle the Spartan men, nothing will stop the Athenians so long as their navy is afloat and they have money in the treasury on the

<sup>3</sup> Cf. W. Süss, "Scheinbare und wirkliche Inkongruenzen in den Dramen des Aristophanes," *RhM* 97 (1954) 152, 237f; Gelzer 1479.23ff. Van Leeuwen (*ad* 124ff) and C. F. Russo, *Aristofane, autore di teatro* (Florence 1962) 260, consider the incongruity of little importance, in spite of the proximity of the two emphatically contradictory statements. And the suggestion of P. Händel, *Formen und Darstellungsweisen in der aristophanischen Komödie* (Heidelberg 1963) 222f, that the passage of time during the play mitigates the discrepancy (cf. K. J. Dover, *Lustrum* 2 [1957] 60), fails to explain how men who have done without their wives for five or seven months can be brought to their knees in five or six days. On the passage of time in *Lys.* see O. J. Todd, *HSCP* 26 (1915) 14–16.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. 1186f, 1275–78.

<sup>5</sup> Pace U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (ed.), *Aristophanes, Lysistrata* (Berlin 1927) on 6 (henceforth: WILAMOWITZ), the attested spelling of the name may be retained: cf. Gelzer 1480.8–15.

<sup>6</sup> On the assignment of rôles in this passage, see Süss, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.3) 248f.

Acropolis (168–74). Lysistrata, however, has an answer. While she and her associates are working out their plan, the oldest women are to seize the Acropolis by pretending to offer sacrifice (176–79). This is the first we hear of the second plan (Plan B): seizure of the state treasury. The sex strike is domestic; Plan B, civic: to cripple the men's political power by taking over the public finances.

The women now take an oath to guarantee their participation in the sex strike, an oath which rehearses Plan A in vivid and ribald detail (212–36). Again it is clear that the sex strike is to be on the home front.<sup>7</sup> A cry is heard. "That's what I was talking about," explains Lysistrata. "The women have already taken the Acropolis. Now, Lampito, you go and take care of things in Sparta . . . As for us [*sc.* the Athenian women], let's go and help the others on the Acropolis to bar the gates (240–43, 245f)." So Lysistrata and her Athenian friends, who have just taken an oath to go home and tantalize their husbands, enter the Propylaea. The sex strike is forgotten, and the conspirators join the rebellion on the Acropolis. Thus Plan A, set forth at length in the prologue, is dropped; and Plan B becomes the dramatic basis of the scenes that follow (254–705). Not until after the parabasis (706ff) is Plan A developed.<sup>8</sup>

Again we may ask why the poet does not introduce Plan A in a way more consistent with the action of the next scenes. For example, the women plan to lock themselves up in the Acropolis, at the same time seizing the treasury and denying sex to their husbands, which is in fact what happens at 706ff. The answer lies in the thematic importance of women's domestic life.<sup>9</sup> The prologue clearly establishes the sexual

<sup>7</sup> Cf. 212–36, esp. 217f.

<sup>8</sup> The fact has not gone unnoticed nor uncriticized. See esp. G. Norwood, *Greek Comedy* (London 1931, repr. New York 1963) 249, for whom "the weakness of general effect" in *Lys.* is due partly "to basing the action upon two ideas." C. Whitman, *Aristophanes and the Comic Hero* (Cambridge [Mass.] 1964) 203 with n.9 (henceforth: WHITMAN), misquoting Norwood replies that "the two ideas seem organically unified in the imagery," in that the Acropolis symbolically expresses feminine sexual attitudes. The walls and the Propylaea become a giant marble and stone chastity belt! Against Whitman one should note that the citadel is not directly associated with the sex strike until 706ff. Russo and Händel, *loc.citt.* (*supra* n.3), overlook the sudden and unexplained shift from Plan A (212–36) to Plan B (245ff). For a thorough and sensible discussion of the problem, see A. O. Hulton, *G&R* n.s. 19 (1972) 32–36.

<sup>9</sup> The theme is first stated with some emphasis at 16–19. This passage like the statement of Plan A (124ff) is contradicted by 99–106: cf. Süß, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.3) 237. On the importance of the domestic theme see also Whitman 205–09.

motif in connection with that of women at home, and against this early statement Aristophanes will reintroduce and develop these subjects in the scenes to come. Thus for some 450 lines after the prologue the action is based on Plan B (the women's resistance at the city center), but with significant links back to the sexual and domestic motifs introduced in the prologue in connection with Plan A (the sex strike at home).

The shift in action from home to city is reflected in the staging of the prologue. At the start of the play the audience naturally assumes that the *scaenae frons* represents the houses of Lysistrata and Calonica, her neighbor.<sup>10</sup> But at line 253 all the women except Lampito *exeunt* through the central door of the *scaenae frons*, which has suddenly become the entrance of the Acropolis (250f).<sup>11</sup> The change is hardly surprising for Old Comedy,<sup>12</sup> but in this play the merging of home and Acropolis suggests something more. For in the scenes following the parodos the women turn public into domestic economy, city-center into private household.<sup>13</sup>

The parodos is devoted to the repercussions of Plan B with only brief reference to matters sexual or domestic.<sup>14</sup> But in the next scenes, the entrance of the *proboulos* and his confrontation with Lysistrata (387–613), these themes are emphatically restated. First by the *proboulos*, who blames everything, the revolt and even the disaster in Sicily, on female wantonness and lewdness (387ff). Still he does not

<sup>10</sup> I assume a wooden stage building with a large central door flanked by two smaller side doors, or with two side doors in the paraskenia: cf. A. W. Pickard-Cambridge, *The Theater of Dionysus in Athens* (Oxford 1946) 59. On the number of doors in the *skene*, see S. Srebrny, "Studia scaenica," *Archiwum Filol* 5 (Wrocław 1960) 62–63; Dover 21–24 and *Proc CambrPhilSoc* 192 (1966) 2–17; and H.–J. Newiger, *RhM* 108 (1965) 235f. I follow Srebrny 46–52 and P. Arnott, *Greek Scenic Conventions* (Oxford 1962) 91–106, in postulating a minimum of representational scenery for the fifth century B.C. comic theater. Thus Lysistrata (1) and Calonica (5) enter from the two side doors, and we naturally assume that the stage building represents their houses. Not until 251 is the center door identified as the Propylaea: cf. Wilamowitz on 5, 176, 199, 246. See also Gelzer 1479.39–53. Contrast Russo, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.3) 276–77; Pickard-Cambridge 65f; Dover, *Lustrum* 2 (1957) 58; and C. Fensterbusch, *Die Bühne des Aristophanes* (Diss. Leipzig 1912) 28–30.

<sup>11</sup> The extras who represent women from Athens (65f), Sparta (cf. 40, 75), Boeotia (86f) and Corinth (90f) *exeunt* into the stage building with Lysistrata, Myrrhina and Calonica (244–46).

<sup>12</sup> Consider, for example, the changes of scene in *Ach.*, *Av.* and *Ran.*

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *infra* pp.373f.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. 261, 327ff, 362f (with Blaydes *ad loc.* and on 162; cf. schol. on 162), 364 (with Dover, *Lustrum* 2 [1957] 94). The prodigious old age of the male semichorus probably renders them

give the women credit for independent action, but blames the men (404–06): “We join the women in depravity and teach them to behave wantonly. This is what is responsible for their rebellion.” For the *proboulos* the women’s revolt is a further expression of their immorality, and so a motif of the prologue—the women’s great reluctance to give up sex (125ff)—is resumed here. But ironically, and the irony is significant. Our male chauvinist woefully misunderstands both the women’s purpose and methods. Not revolution, but restoration. Not lewdness, but a rigid control of sexuality. The failure to understand this is part and parcel of the men’s inability to deal with political and military crises in this play.<sup>15</sup>

The domestic theme returns in the agon that follows. The *proboulos* begins the epirrhema by asking why the women have shut up the Acropolis (486f). “To keep the public money safe,” replies Lysistrata (488), “and to prevent you from using it to make war.” In this way, she claims, the motive for war, political confusion, and official corruption will be removed (489–92). How is this to be done? By putting the women in charge of the state treasury. The *proboulos* is aghast. “Why do you think this is strange?” asks Lysistrata. “Don’t we women serve as your treasurers at home as well?” (495). Formerly home economists, the women now turn their talents to safeguarding the city’s finances. Their domestic rôle is raised to a civic function, and the state treasury is to be treated like the family funds. Home and city merge in the language of the play, as they did in the staging of the prologue.

Especially important in this regard is the business of wool-working. Formerly the women stayed at home, silently observing male incompetence (507ff). For showing an interest in public affairs they were threatened with a beating, unless they went on spinning their thread

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*hors de combat* as far as eros is concerned: see 335 and 385 with J. Taillardat, *Les images d’Aristophane*<sup>2</sup> (Paris 1965) 49f, and Dover 157 with n.12. Thus the occasional sexual references of the men’s chorus should be interpreted as wishful thinking: cf. 661ff, 680f with Blaydes *ad loc.*, 799 with Blaydes *ad loc.*, 1025ff with Schmid-Stählin, *GLG* I.4.327 n.2, and 1053 with van Leeuwen *ad loc.* The phalli worn by the old men are probably small and limp, as compared to the more sturdy weapons of Cinesias and the Spartan herald. This would explain why the old women twice insist that these dotards look ridiculous without their chitons (1020, 1024) and manly only when dressed (1024): cf. Philocleon at *Vesp.* 1341ff, and *GRBS* 12 (1971) 344 n.41. J. F. Killeen’s attempt to eliminate the phallus at *Vesp.* 1342ff (*CQ* n.s. 21 [1971] 53) is not convincing (see esp. 1344, 1347).

<sup>15</sup> Cf. L. Strauss, *Socrates and Aristophanes* (New York / London 1966) 199f.

and left the war to the men (518–20). But now they have taken over the government, and wool-working assumes a new significance. For at 567–86 *Lysistrata* explains her plan to end the war and reform Athenian political life in an elaborate simile involving detailed reference to the entire process of weaving a cloak from the preparation of raw wool to the work at the loom.<sup>16</sup> Just as these domestic tasks are carried out, so the war will be ended (567–70) and good order restored in Athens' internal politics (574–81) and her relations with the cities of the empire (582–86).<sup>17</sup> The simile occupies some twenty lines and is the best example of the thematic variation noted above. Home and city merge again as household tasks become the recipe for civic reform: and domestic motifs introduced in the prologue<sup>18</sup> recur in the dramatic context of the women's *coup d'état*.<sup>19</sup>

Plan B continues as the mainspring of action in the parabasis, here an extended contest between the semichoruses of old men and women fighting for the Acropolis (614–705).<sup>20</sup> But again we find variations on the themes of home and eros stated in connection with Plan A. First, at 648–55 the leader of the women's chorus asks, "Then do I not owe (*προῦφείλω*<sup>21</sup>) it to the state to offer it some good advice? And if I am a woman, do not resent it if I contribute (*εἰσενέγκω*) something better than the present state of affairs. For I take part in making contributions (*τοῦράνου γάρ μοι μέτεστι*).<sup>22</sup> I contribute (*εἰσφέρω*) men. But you miserable old men take no part, for you make no contributions in return (*οὐκ ἀντεισφέρετε τὰς εἰσφοράς*),<sup>23</sup> in spite of having

<sup>16</sup> For details see Wilamowitz on 566, 567 and 574–86; Taillardat, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.14) 393–95; A. M. Komornicka, "Métaphore, personnifications et comparaisons dans l'œuvre d'Aristophane," *ArchiwumFilol* 10 (Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków 1964) 106f; H. Blümner, *Technologie und Terminologie der Gewerbe und Künste . . . I*<sup>3</sup> (Leipzig 1912) 106ff.

<sup>17</sup> On *Lysistrata*'s reforms see W. M. Hugill, *Panhellenism in Aristophanes* (Chicago 1936) 39–102.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. *supra* p.371 with n.9.

<sup>19</sup> Note that the antepirrhema containing this simile opens with an invocation of Eros and Aphrodite and an explicit reference to the sex strike (551–54). Moreover, the subject of wool-working is briefly anticipated in the *pnigos* (532–38), where the *proboulos*' partial defeat is signalled by his transformation into a woman (cf. *ξάινειν* 536).

<sup>20</sup> On the special form of the parabasis in *Lys.* see Gelzer 1483.59ff, Wilamowitz on 614, and P. Mazon, *Essai sur la composition des comédies d'Aristophane* (Paris 1904) 117f.

<sup>21</sup> As Wilamowitz (on 649) notes, the verb introduces the *ἔρανος*-metaphor.

<sup>22</sup> The commonwealth is metaphorically the recipient of a loan raised by contributions from the citizens: cf. LSJ *s.v.* *ἔρανος* II.1–2, and Wilamowitz on 649.

<sup>23</sup> Aristophanes puns on the two meanings of *εἰσφορά* 'contribution' and 'property-tax'. On the tax see Thuc. 3.19.1 with Gomme *ad loc.*

spent the fund (ἔρανος) from the Persian Wars, the one we call 'ancestral'."<sup>24</sup>

The passage recalls Lysistrata's justifiably angry reply to the *proboulos'* assertion that women have no part in war (588). Their very great part is the bearing and sending forth of sons as hoplites (589f). This manifest truth is declared immediately following Lysistrata's explanation of political reform in terms of a typical household task (567–86). And similarly at 648–55 women's fundamental rôle in home and family is made the basis of their claim to participate in public life, and by a pun on εἰσφορά is linked to the conduct of civic finance.<sup>25</sup>

The second example of thematic variation is at 676–78, where the coryphaeus, after commenting apprehensively on the new female militarism, says, "But if they [*sc.* the women] intend to join the cavalry, I remove the knights from the cavalry lists. For women are superb equestriennes and have a very good seat. They wouldn't slip off, when the horse gets going." The sexual double meaning is obvious,<sup>26</sup> and the lines recall the *proboulos'* words at 387–419.<sup>27</sup> Again female lewdness is satirized with ironic implications lost on the men, for it is their control of sexual desire that makes the women better warriors and leads to their eventual victory.<sup>28</sup>

The final passage that concerns us concludes the parabasis (700–05) and further develops the domestic theme stated in the prologue. At 696f the leader of the women's chorus refers to Lampito and "the dear Theban girl, noble Ismenia,"<sup>29</sup> thus recalling the Panhellenic nature of the feminist movement as well as the sex strike.<sup>30</sup> She then tells how she gave a feast at home in honor of Hecate and invited as a companion for her children a nice girl from the neighborhood whom they all like—an eel from Boeotia! The neighborhood (τῶν γειτόνων, 701) becomes the neighboring country (*Βοιωτῶν*, 702), and "the

<sup>24</sup> The translation is based on that of W. J. Hickie, *The Comedies of Aristophanes II* (London 1905) 420f.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. 493ff and *supra* p.373.

<sup>26</sup> The allusion is to the *figura Veneris* known as κελητίζειν: cf. MacDowell *ad Vesp.* 501, and in general F. C. Forberg, *Manual of Classical Erotology I* (New York 1966) 42–51, esp. 46f.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. *supra*, pp.372f.

<sup>28</sup> Note the reference to the Amazons at 678f, an important hint at female bellicosity in this context.

<sup>29</sup> Here we learn the name of the Theban girl (85ff) who entered the Acropolis as hostage at the end of the prologue (244). Note the common Theban potamophoric name: cf. Ismene, Ismenias.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Russo, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.3) 262f.

nice girl” a Boeotian eel, a delicacy much loved by Athenian gourmets. Thus a private celebration is suddenly an exercise in international diplomacy, and again domestic activities are linked to public affairs. But this amusing attempt at Panhellenic harmony was obstructed by Athenian decrees forbidding Boeotian imports, and the women are determined to end such harmful international policies of the men (703–05).

Before considering the scenes that follow it would be well to summarize the results of our discussion so far. At the end of the prologue the action of the play shifts suddenly from Plan A (the sex strike at home) to Plan B (the seizure of the public treasury at the city center), and from the parodos (254ff) to the end of the parabasis (705) the events on stage<sup>31</sup> and in the orchestra are based on Plan B. But sex and home are not forgotten, and the prologue is linked to the scenes that follow by the recapitulation of these motifs either by direct reference<sup>32</sup> or in the figurative language of the play.<sup>33</sup> Thus dramatic variety is balanced by thematic coherence, and the different settings of Plan A and B (home and city) find expression in the agon and the parabasis, where the Acropolis becomes the arena for the women’s conduct of public affairs in terms of household management.

This technique of linking motifs may also be observed in the post-parabolic scenes (706ff), where Plan B is forgotten and the action of the play returns to Plan A. Especially noteworthy is the ironic restatement of certain themes connected with implementing Plan B. The first example occurs at 726–41. Two women appear on stage, each making excuses to go home. The first complains that her wool is being eaten away by moths. She just wants to spread it out on the couch, and then will come right back. The second has left her flax home unhackled. She wants to skin it a little; then she’ll return. What these women want is clear enough:<sup>34</sup> sex disguised in the form of household tasks, tasks that were the basis of Lysistrata’s political program when combined with sexual abstinence. Here masking the breakdown of that abstinence, they ironically threaten a return to domestic servitude in a world badly mismanaged by men.

<sup>31</sup> I assume a low platform in front of the stage building. On this problem see the literature cited at *GRBS* 12 (1971) 349 n.60.

<sup>32</sup> 387–419 (sex), 493–96 (home), 510–20 (home), 551–54 (sex).

<sup>33</sup> 567–87 (home), 648–55 (home), 676–78 (sex), 700–02 (home).

<sup>34</sup> For the details see Blaydes on 732 and 739, Wilamowitz on 735, and schol. on 732, 735, 739.



A third would-be fugitive offers a second variation on a closely related theme (742–57). She falsely claims to be on the point of giving birth and insists on going home to the midwife as soon as possible. The reference to childbirth recalls 588ff and 648ff, where women asserted their right to participate in national affairs on the grounds of motherhood. Here maternity becomes an excuse cloaking a nymphomania that dangerously undermines feminist attempts at civic reform.<sup>35</sup>

In the next scene—the wild and ribald encounter between the desperate Cinesias and his unyielding wife, Myrrhina—Aristophanes further develops the subject of woman’s domestic rôle. For example, at 880–97 Cinesias complains that because of his wife’s absence the baby is unwashed and hungry, the household effects are in a sorry condition, and even the yarn is being pulled about by the chickens. The passage stresses woman’s importance at home and reminds us that home economy has been transferred to the state treasury. Not until their revolution has succeeded can the women resume their normal duties<sup>36</sup>

Again, the vivid presentation of the sex strike on stage (898–953) affords the opportunity to vary a related theme established in the agon, the transformation of the city center into a private household.<sup>37</sup> For in order to carry out Plan A according to the instructions of the prologue,<sup>38</sup> Myrrhina turns the environs of the Acropolis<sup>39</sup> into a make-shift bedroom.<sup>40</sup> Ideas of home and city merge in the

<sup>35</sup> Cf. 107–10, 125–43, where the women themselves, including our heroine, affirm the indispensability of the *πέοο* or its substitute. Contrary to the *proboulos*’ expostulations (387ff: cf. *supra* pp.372f), this nymphomania is a serious threat to, not the cause of, the women’s revolt (715ff).

<sup>36</sup> Cf. 20f, 900f, 902f, 950f.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. 493–95, 567ff, and *supra* pp.373f.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. 149ff, 212ff.

<sup>39</sup> The location is made emphatically clear at the start of Aphrodite’s service by reference to the Grotto of Pan (911) and the Clepsydra (913). *Pace* van Leeuwen (pp. xi f), the audience is not meant to imagine a change of scene to Cinesias’ house or to forget momentarily that the stage building represents the Propylaea. Russo, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.3) 278, and W. Jobst, “Die Höhle im griechischen Theater des 5. und 4. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.,” *SBWien* 268.2 (1970) 76, infer a naturalistic representation of the grotto, which is unlikely (cf. *supra* n.10), as is their view that the *Liebesszene* takes place there (contrast Gelzer 1479.43–46). The introduction of properties at 916ff suggests a location as near the central door as possible.

<sup>40</sup> Stage properties brought in by Myrrhina to prolong the torture of her wretched husband are a couch (916–20), a mattress (921–25), a pillow (926–29), a blanket (933–37; on 933 cf. J. C. B. Lowe, *Hermes* 95 [1967] 64–66), and two bottles of perfume (938ff). Here

staging,<sup>41</sup> and the center of the women's civil government (Plan B) becomes the domestic setting for Myrrhina's remorseless tantalization of her prodigiously ithyphallic husband.<sup>42</sup>

These examples of thematic restatement following the parabasis display a similar technique: explicit reference to woman's rôle in private life with allusion to its earlier significance for the public concerns of Plan B. But an important difference may be observed in the two choral odes (1043–71, 1189–1215), which concentrate on exclusively private matters. At first these odes appear to have little to do with the main subject of the play.<sup>43</sup> Their humor lies in the promise to share with others a rich supply of goods at home—money, food, clothes, jewelry—a promise surprisingly and suddenly withdrawn at the end of each stanza.<sup>44</sup> Yet there is more to these songs than merely a “primitive joke” monotonously repeated.<sup>45</sup> Since their entrance the semichoruses of old men and women have been bitter enemies fighting for possession of the Acropolis. But at 1040–42 they make peace and join together as friends. This reunion marks the beginning of the women's victory; and in the songs that precede and follow that victory, the civic and international problems of earlier passages can be forgotten.<sup>46</sup> As family life is restored in a new world of Panhellenic reconciliation, the united chorus returns to household concerns, from which the play took its start.

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Aristophanes uses both text and staging to emphasize the domestic nature of the action. “Natürlich fragen wir nicht, wie Myrrhine das Bett usw. von der Burg holen kann” (Wilamowitz on 918); contrast Pickard-Cambridge, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.10) 66.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. *supra* p.372 on the staging of the prologue.

<sup>42</sup> The scene vividly realizes line 17: ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἡμῶν [sc. γυναικῶν] περὶ τὸν ἄνδρ' ἐκύπτειν. Pace Wilamowitz on 17, the scholiast correctly notes the erotic connotation of the verb (cf. schol. and Blaydes on 17 and Sophron fr.41 Kaibel).

<sup>43</sup> “Mit der Handlung haben diese Lieder nichts zu tun” (Wilamowitz on 1043–57). So also Schmid-Stählin, *GLG* I.4.327 and P. Mazon, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.20) 120f.

<sup>44</sup> See Wilamowitz on 1043–57, Mazon 120f, Schmid-Stählin, *loc.cit.*, and Dover 154. On the important parallels at *Eccl.* 1144–48 and 1168–76, see Ussher on 1144–48, 1148, and 1175–76; and E. Fraenkel in *Greek Poetry and Life: Essays presented to Gilbert Murray* (Oxford 1936) 273f. On the text and interpretation of 1055, see Wilamowitz *ad loc.* Pace Mazon and van Leeuwen, all four stanzas are sung by the entire chorus (cf. 1042, *Hypoth.* I.27f, and K. Kunst, *Studien zur griechisch-römischen Komödie* [Vienna / Leipzig 1919] 41).

<sup>45</sup> Contrast Dover's strictures (154).

<sup>46</sup> The following correspondences are worth noting: private funds (1050ff) / public treasury (488ff); a private banquet for Athenian allies (1058ff) / a private banquet with international implications (700ff); fine coverlets and clothes (1189f) / the manufacture of cloth as political reform (567ff); food at home (1203ff) / food from abroad (702).

Finally, we may note an important passage that affirms Lysistrata's success and at the same time recalls an earlier variation on the domestic motif, women's hospitality at home with comic overtones of international diplomacy (700–05).<sup>47</sup> Lines 1108–88 present a major instance of such diplomacy conducted on stage by a woman with complete success, in contrast to the previous failure caused by male incompetence (703). Peace is made,<sup>48</sup> and Lysistrata invites the Spartan and Athenian ambassadors to a public banquet on the Acropolis, where the treaty will be ratified (1182–85). The invitation is explicitly in the name of all the women (αἱ γυναῖκες, 1183),<sup>49</sup> who in effect turn the Acropolis into a feminist Prytaneum,<sup>50</sup> feasting the men with food brought in picnic baskets (ὧν ἐν ταῖσι κίσταις εἴχομεν, 1184).<sup>51</sup> This act of official hospitality offered by Lysistrata and her comrades marks the diplomatic triumph of their revolution.<sup>52</sup> For the last time the

<sup>47</sup> Cf. *supra* pp.375f.

<sup>48</sup> Virtually in the erotic sense of the word (cf. 1158ff). On the skillful combination of political and sexual motifs in this scene, see H.-J. Newiger, "Metapher und Allegorie," *Zetemata* 16 (Munich 1957) 107f. Newiger (107 with n.3), E. Fraenkel, *Beobachtungen zu Aristophanes* (Roma 1962) 167 with n.3, and Pickard-Cambridge / Gould / Lewis, *DFA*<sup>3</sup> (Oxford 1968) 153 n.1 and 221, following Wilamowitz (on *Lys.* 1114), assume that Diallage (1114ff) was played by an hetaera totally naked except perhaps for a mantle on her shoulders: see also A. Willems, *Aristophane III* (Paris/Brussels 1919) 388ff, who urged the same view independently of Wilamowitz. The parade of authorities is impressive, but I am convinced by K. Holzinger, "Erklärungen umstrittener Stellen des Aristophanes," *SBWien* 208.5 (1928) 37ff, esp. 41, that such rôles were played by extras wearing female masks (cf. Hippocr. *Lex* 1) and exaggerated female *σωμάτια* with painted genitalia but without chitons. Holzinger argues cogently from the weather at the time of performance and the physical requirements of the theater: the spectators in the last rows should be able to see something of the described particulars. One might add the tendency of Old Comedy not to reflect reality but grotesquely to distort it.

<sup>49</sup> Including the Spartan wives played by the extras who entered the Propylaea as hostages at 253 (cf. 244 and *supra* n.11): see Russo 281 and Händel 165 n.10, *opp.citt.* (*supra* n.3). The girls from Thebes (86f) and Corinth (90f) are forgotten in the exodos.

<sup>50</sup> On this building see R. E. Wycherly, *The Athenian Agora III: Literary and Epigraphical Testimonia* (Princeton 1957) 166ff.

<sup>51</sup> The phrase, implying food prepared at home, hints at domestic arrangements in this public setting. On the erotic significance of the *κίσται*, see G. W. Elderkin, *CP* 35 (1940) 395, and W. Burkert, *Homo necans* (Berlin / New York 1972) 299. Coition, however, must wait until the play is over, since it is prohibited on sacred ground: see Dover 153 with n.5.

<sup>52</sup> The relevance of the final scene (1216–1320) deserves some comment in view of Dover's strictures (155). The banquet (1184, cf. 1224) leads to a symposium (1225ff), which in turn motivates the songs, music and dancing at 1247ff, 1279ff and 1296ff (cf. 1242–46, 1277, 1295): compare *Vesp.* 1474–1537, on which see GRBS 12 (1971) 345. Moreover, the emphasis on wine as the indispensable medium for diplomatic negotiations (1227–38) recalls the end of the prologue (195–239), where wine proved the perfect sacrifice for the women's oath of Panhellenic coöperation.

Acropolis (*ἐν πόλει*, 1183) functions as the setting for their political regime. Soon wives and husbands will return to their homes, now made safe by the women, who have succeeded in turning the conduct of public life into an expression of their own domestic wisdom.<sup>53</sup>

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