

FOUR DEADLY SINS? (ARIST. *WASPS* 74–84)

The two slaves, Xanthias and Sosias, posted by their master's son to guard his 'sick' father Philocleon, challenge the audience to guess the nature of the mysterious and strange disease (νόσον ἀλλόκοτον, 71) on account of which the father must be kept inside the house. When the correct answer to the riddle is finally disclosed, Philocleon is revealed to be φιληλιαστής (88), namely a man 'who loves to be a juror' and to spend his days in the law-courts passionately pursuing the infatuation of which his son tries to cure him by locking him up away from the law-courts and from his fellow jurors. The joke owes its comic effect to incongruity, termed the 'humour of inappropriateness' by MacDowell, who writes: 'It is funny when addiction to being a juror is called a disease (87–88), because "disease" is a word which is not generally applied to such conditions'.<sup>1</sup> It should, however, be stressed that in order to create this sense of incongruity the previously mentioned diseases must form a class with certain common characteristics fundamentally different from those of Philocleon's, thus gradually moulding the audience's expectations and channelling them in a completely different direction.

What diseases are enumerated by Aristophanes, and what kind of class do they form? As the text stands, their number is four: φιλόκυβος (75) 'lover of gambling', φιλοπότης (79) 'lover of drinking', φιλοθύτης and φιλόξενος (82) 'lover of sacrifices' and 'lover of strangers'. Some scholars, however, assume that originally the list was longer. Meineke, Bergk, and others who mark a lacuna after line 76, believe that after the first unsuccessful attempt to solve the riddle a guess of one or more lines (to which 77 is an answer) has been lost. The lacuna assumption is closely connected with the problem of line-division between the two speakers, and based on the belief that οὐκ, ἀλλ' 'no, but' in line 77 must be a beginning and not a continuation of an answer. Meineke, Bergk, and their followers view the passage as a fast-moving dialogue. Since they attribute lines 76 and 77 to the same speaker, they must assume a lacuna in between. Thus, e.g., Meineke, among others followed recently by MacDowell, has the following line-division: Xa. 54–73; So. 74–75a; Xa. 75b–76; So. lacuna; Xa. 77; So. 78–79a etc. Such line-division, however, is not the only one possible, neither is it obligatory. Unfortunately, in this matter, to use Starkie's phrase, the MSS 'are worthless guides',<sup>2</sup> for although changes of speaker in this passage are marked in all the MSS, they are not marked in the same places. Modern editors, therefore, distribute the lines according to their own arbitration. As is demonstrated by Hall-Geldart, who also view 74–82 as a dialogue, a line-division without a lacuna is possible if lines 76–77 are not attributed to the same speaker: Xa. 54–75; So. 76; Xa. 77.<sup>3</sup>

The passage, however, need not necessarily be construed as a dialogue. Schol. R prefers to assign it to one speaker (τινὲς ἀμοιβαῖα. χαριέστερον δὲ λέγεσθαι αὐτὰ συνεχῶς πρὸς ἑνός). As Wilamowitz already pointed out in 1911, such an assignment eliminates the necessity of assuming a lacuna, for in this case οὐκ, ἀλλ' need not be

<sup>1</sup> D. M. MacDowell, *Aristophanes: Wasps* (Oxford, 1971), 12.

<sup>2</sup> W. J. M. Starkie, *Aristophanes: The Wasps* (London, 1897), 406; but cf. MacDowell, op. cit. 38 n. 3; see also A. Pickard-Cambridge, *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens*<sup>2</sup> (Oxford, 1968), 149 n. 4; Starkie adopts Meineke's line-division, in deference to a theory of symmetry, which as he himself comments 'elsewhere can produce but little evidence in its favour' (p. 405).

<sup>3</sup> F. W. Hall-W. M. Geldart, *Aristophanis Comoediae*<sup>2</sup> (Oxford, 1906, repr. 1949); so also B. B. Rogers in his translation in the Loeb series (1924).

a beginning of a new answer. οὐκ could be a resumption of the previous negation (no, *philokybos* he is not), and ἀλλ' its limitation (but not everything about this guess is wrong, since the correct answer has the same beginning as the wrong guess).<sup>4</sup> In either case, whether the passage is a dialogue or a monologue, it is possible to distribute the lines satisfactorily without marking a lacuna.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, the recent attempt of MacDowell<sup>6</sup> to identify the guess lost in the lacuna, instead of supporting the lacuna hypothesis, actually disaffirms it. MacDowell proposes two suggestions: (a) φιλογύνης 'woman-lover' or φιλόπαις 'boy-lover', which fits the class of 'diseases', but has the liability of not being based on textual evidence (but see below the discussion of the term *philoxenos*), and (b) φιλόδικος a synonym of *phileiastes* or litigious, which appears in R, and which MacDowell considers to be not an anticipation of *phileiastes* in line 88, but the lost suggestion wrongly inserted in 77, to which 77 is the answer. It is, however, clear from V, which has *philodikos* written over φιλο- in 77, that it is meant to be an explanation of this discontinued combining element, and cannot, therefore, be considered the lost guess. Furthermore, *philodikos* cannot possibly qualify for the position of a second guess, whether it is a virtual synonym of *phileiastes* or has the slightly different meaning of 'litigious'. For even the latter meaning, while hardly a disease, is far too close to that of *phileiastes*. Had *philodikos* really been the second guess, not only would it interfere with the gradual build-up of a defined class of diseases, but it would also completely destroy the comic effect of incongruity created by the final correct answer *phileiastes* by undermining through anticipation its 'humour of inappropriateness'. Finally, the assumption of an additional guess creates the improbability of having the first two guesses begin quite incidentally with the combining element *philo*, while only after the second one is it commented that indeed such is the beginning of the correct answer. It is much more plausible to assume that no lacuna exists, and that immediately after the first guess it is stated that although the answer itself is wrong, it has, at least, the virtue of beginning with the same element as the correct answer. Following such a cue, all subsequent guesses naturally begin with the correct combining element.

Since the lacuna hypothesis seems insufficiently substantiated, it can be assumed that nothing has been lost and that the list contains, and contained, only those guesses which are now specified in the text. The first two of them, *philokybos* and *philopotes*, and the final correct fifth *phileiastes* are explicitly called diseases (*nosoi*, vv. 76, 80, 87). This indication repeated twice at the beginning and once at the end is sufficient to create the impression that the list means to be inclusive, and that also the other items in the middle of it, although not explicitly identified as *nosoi*, nevertheless belong to the same category. Indeed it would have been tiringly repetitive and artistically deficient had the specification *nosos* been appended to each item on the list. Paradoxically, however, these two items which are not so described are usually not considered 'pathological'. 'Lover of sacrifices' and 'lover of strangers', writes

<sup>4</sup> U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, 'Über die Wespen des Aristophanes', SB Preuss. Akad., Ph-hist. Kl. 23 (1911), 514-15 = *Kleine Schriften* 1 (Berlin, 1935), 333-4; Wilamowitz argues that a dialogue would have contained clear references of the speakers to one another, but the text contains references only to the audience; see also his discussion of the other instances of οὐκ, ἀλλ' in the *Wasps* (lines 9, 635, 1143, 1372).

<sup>5</sup> For what it may be worth, still another possibility of line-distribution and of staging may be advanced: Xa. 54-73; So. 74-76 reports to Xa. what Amynias says (that he is a dice-lover, 74-75a), and comments on it ('What he says is foolish, by Zeus, for he conjectures it from his own disease' 75b-76). Whereupon Xa. in line 77 addresses Amynias directly: 'No, but etc.'

<sup>6</sup> MacDowell, op. cit. 140, who quotes E. G. Turner, *CQ* 60 (1946), 5-7.

MacDowell, 'are generally terms of praise, not blame. Ar. introduces them here not because he seriously regards such activities as faults but simply to provide an opportunity for comic comment on Nikostratos and Philoxenos.'<sup>7</sup> Apparently Aristophanes missed this opportunity provided by himself, for he failed to make such a comic comment. Moreover, if these two activities are not *nosoi* but commendable virtues, they neither qualify as possible answers to the riddle 'What is the *nosos* of Philocleon?', nor do they fit into the class of *nosoi* which forms the background for the comic effect created by the final incongruous *phileliastes*. If they are virtues, they must belong to a new category and form another class. Following this line of reasoning, we have to assume two separate and disconnected classes, each composed of two items, the first of *nosoi* and the second of virtues, which are then quite unreasonably followed again by a final and solitary *nosos*-item. Such fragmenting interpretation runs counter to the general trend of the riddle-solving situation, in which all the guesses form an inclusive class of diseases with shared negative characteristics. It seems, therefore, necessary to assume that in addition to the meaning of praise, *philothytes* and *philoxenos* also have another, negative meaning which entitles them to belong to a class of 'diseases' such as gambling and drinking.

### Philothytes

As a term of praise, *philothytes* ('one who loves to sacrifice') is generally taken to mean 'religious' (cf. Antiph. 2. 2. 12 φιλοθύτην καὶ νόμιμον).<sup>8</sup> Considering, however, the nature of the Greek sacrifice to gods, it may also mean 'one who loves to eat meat', for the gods were offered only a small part of the sacrificial animal, a part consisting mainly of uneatables such as bones and fat wrapped in the adipose membrane. Burning of these parts consecrated to the gods was the religious part of the sacrifice. This being done, the rest of the animal was eaten as a regular meal.<sup>9</sup> The term *θύειν* came to mean simply 'to slaughter' an animal for a meal of meat, and to quote J.-P. Vernant: 'À l'époque classique... *θύω* prend une *valeur* précise et désigne alors le sacrifice où les participants consomment la victime.'<sup>10</sup> As Epicharmus says ἐκ μὲν θύσιας θοίνα 'straight after the sacrifice comes the feast',<sup>11</sup> and *vice versa*, if the feast is for some reason cancelled, so is the sacrifice. Cf. the complaint of the cook in Menander's *Aspis*:

ἂν καὶ λάβω ποτ' ἔργον, ἧ τέθνηκέ τις,  
εἴτ' ἀποτρέχειν δεῖ μισθὸν οὐκ ἔχοντά με,  
ἧ τέτοκε τῶν ἐνδον κυοῦσά τις λάθραι,  
εἴτ' οὐκέτι θύουσ' ἐξαπίνης, ἀλλ' οἴχομαι  
ἀπιὼν ἐγώ. τῆς δυσποτυίας. (216–20)

(If ever I do get a job, either someone has died and I've got to run off without my pay, or one of the girls has given birth after a secret pregnancy and all of a sudden

<sup>7</sup> Idem, op. cit. 141.

<sup>8</sup> Starkie, op. cit., *ad loc.* takes it to mean 'superstitious', quoting the schol. φιλοθύται εἰσὶν οἱ δεισιδαίμονες, καὶ θύουσιν αἱ τοῖς θεοῖς νομίζοντες ἐκ τούτων ἀβλαβεῖς ἔσεσθαι. Such interpretation, however, seems biased, for one's man superstition is another's religion.

<sup>9</sup> cf. Hes. *Theog.* 525 ff. for an aetiological explanation of the animal sacrifice which reserves for human consumption the best part of the victim; see also P. Stengel, *Die griechischen Kultusaltertümer*<sup>3</sup> (München, 1898), 95; J. E. Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*<sup>3</sup> (Cambridge, 1922, repr. 1955, Meridian Books, New York), 56 ff.; M. P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion*<sup>3</sup> 1 (München, 1967), 89, 143 ff.

<sup>10</sup> *Entretiens Hardt* 27 (1980), 30; and more succinctly, p. 26: 'sacrifier, c'est fondamentalement tuer pour manger'.

<sup>11</sup> Kaibel<sup>3</sup> fr. 148, apud Athen. II. 36C.

they are no longer sacrificing and I've had it. O my wretched luck!')<sup>12</sup> And compare the swaggering Cyclops Polyphemus, who boasts of not sacrificing to the gods, but only to himself and to his big capacious belly:

ἀγὰρ οὐτινι θύω πλὴν ἐμοί, θεοῖσι δ' οὐ,  
καὶ τῇ μεγίστῃ, γαστρὶ τῇδε, δαιμόνων. (Eur. *Cycl.* 334–5)

Thus, *philothytes*, 'the one who loves to sacrifice', slaughters animals for a meal of meat and actually is 'a lover of meat-eating'. It fits the context admirably. An addiction to excessive meat-eating is a 'disease' entirely appropriate to mention after the addiction to excessive drinking.

### Philoxenos

From the denial that Philoxenos cannot possibly be a *philoxenos* because he happens to be a *katapugon* (84) it may be inferred that being a *katapugon* excludes the possibility of being a *philoxenos*. Since the usual sense of *philoxenos* does not generate such an exclusion, it seems most probable that *philoxenos* also has a second meaning which does, and that we have here a case of a double entendre, in which this second meaning is hinted at. It would be best, therefore, to detect this meaning by an examination of the term *katapugon*, which excludes it.

*katapugon* in the strict sense means 'one who plays the passive role in the homosexual act',<sup>13</sup> but it is often used as a general term of abuse, for a submission to anal penetration is regarded as dishonourable and degrading and considered an act of male prostitution.<sup>14</sup> Why, then, can one who is a male prostitute not, at the same time, also be a *philoxenos*? Aeschines in his 'Against Timarchos' (1. 19) refers to a law attributed to Solon according to which any Athenian who prostitutes himself is debarred from a partial exercise of his civic rights.<sup>15</sup> Dover, who views Ar. *Knights* (876–80) as a clear reference to a successful prosecution under this law, thinks that it antedates 424 B.C. If so, it also antedates the *Wasps*, produced in 422 B.C. As Dover points out, once the law imposing political disqualification on male prostitution had been made, 'homosexual prostitution will naturally have become the special preserve of foreigners'.<sup>16</sup> In such circumstances *philoxenos* will have acquired the additional meaning of 'lover of male prostitutes', i.e. the one who performs the active role and cannot, of course, be at the same time also a *katapugon*, the one with the passive role who prostitutes himself. This is, then, the point of the joke on Philoxenos, whose name marks him as an active chaser of male prostitutes, but whose sexual practice proves him to be the opposite (cf. also Ar. *Clouds* 686 ff., where Philoxenos is enumerated among other males of doubtful claims to masculinity).<sup>17</sup> That it was a standing joke

<sup>12</sup> D. Bain's translation in his book *Actors and Audience* (Oxford, 1977), 220–1.

<sup>13</sup> cf. J. Henderson, *The Maculate Muse* (New Haven and London, 1975), 210; K. J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (Cambridge, Mass., 1978), 142 ff. This is the way that the schol. on Arist. *Wasps* 82 understands the term *katapugon*: ὁ Φιλόξενος ἐκωμωδεῖτο ὡς πόρνος 'Philoxenos was ridiculed as a male prostitute'.

<sup>14</sup> On the differences between the intercrural copulation of legitimate homosexual *eros* and the submissiveness of a *pornos* to anal penetration, cf. Dover, op. cit. 91 ff., esp. 106–7; on the widespread feeling that the passive role is despicable, cf. J. Bremmer, 'An Enigmatic Indo-European Rite: Paederasty', *Arethusa* 13 (1980), 279 ff.

<sup>15</sup> cf. E. Rusenbusch, *Σόλωνος Νόμοι*, *Historia Einzelschrift* 9 (1966) F. 103 = 325 Martina (Solon, *Testimonia Veterum*, 1968); for a discussion of Aeschines' 'Against Timarchos', cf. Dover, op. cit. 19 ff.

<sup>16</sup> cf. Dover, op. cit. 34.

<sup>17</sup> K. J. Dover, *Aristophanes: Clouds* (Oxford, 1969), 185.

on Philoxenos at that time is shown by Eupolis, who dresses it in the witty figure of an oxymoron: ἔστι δέ τις θήλεια φιλόξενος 'There is a female chaser of male prostitutes'.<sup>18</sup>

This sexual meaning of *philoxenos* fits nicely within the group of the other *nosoi*. Together they form a class of four rather well known human weaknesses: excessive gambling, drinking, eating and fornicating, a fifth-century catalogue of four 'deadly sins'. It is no wonder that Philocleon's 'disease' seems incongruous. But the comic impact of the classification of *phileliastes* with this defined class of 'diseases' has much more to it than a mechanical triggering of a sense of incongruity. Another comic effect of an opposite direction is activated when Philocleon's compulsive sitting in judgment, by being classified as one of the diseases, is suddenly perceived as having much more in common with the class than has at first appeared, and by being somehow absorbed into the class it becomes illuminated from a new and unexpected angle. This unanticipated revelation is a fine example of Aristophanes' subtle and versatile comic technique.

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<sup>18</sup> Eup. 235, quoted by the schol. on *Wasps* 82.