

following the chorus' and Mica's interruption (552–65) stresses the many crimes which *he* has not yet described, a striking parallel to the earlier, repeated reminder of what *Euripides* has not described, and one which underlines the capaciousness and efficacy of comedy's repertoire in contrast to tragedy's.³⁴ His allusion to a woman killing her husband with an axe cannot but make the audience think of Clytemnestra and perhaps specifically the Euripidean Clytemnestra. Both Sommerstein and Austin-Olson note the parallel but carefully emphasise that Mnesilochus is referring to 'contemporary' or 'actual' events, 'as [his] argument requires.'³⁵ Quite so, but the evocation of the tragic analogue is key to the emphasis on how much more real, relevant and effective the comic anecdote is.

In all these cases, with Phaedra and Clytemnestra, possibly Alcmena and others, the implicit allusion to an unsatisfactory tragic plot emphasises how much more satisfactory comedy is, just as the tragic escape plans fail and only the comic ruse with the dancing girl succeeds. Indeed, this comic analogue of *Iphigenia in Tauris*,³⁶ with the archer as an unwitting Thoas, stands in much the same relation to the more explicit tragic parodies of *Helen* and *Andromeda* as the adulterous γυνή does to Phaedra. As Bowie describes the situation at the end of the play, when Euripides has agreed no longer to tell the terrible truth about women, 'Though there will be no more help from Euripides,...a new champion has arisen, whose plays, as Mnesilochus the comic hero proceeds to demonstrate in his great speech, will give a much more accurate and fulsome picture of female villainy.'³⁷

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this extra detail might lead the audience not only, as they suggest, to sense the husband's foolishness, but to think of another, allusive explanation. The fragments of Euripides' *Alcmena* seem to point to a depiction of the long night of Heracles' conception rather than his birth, but Plautus' *Amphitruo* conflates the two events and may allude to a tragic version of Alcmena's extended labour by having Jupiter promise, in contrast, a painless birth (878–9). Outside tragedy, one might compare the labour of Leto, also extended by Hera, for nine days and nights (*Hymn. Hom. Ap.* 91).

³⁴ Austin and Olson (n. 1), ad 556–7, note the parallel but not its implications.

³⁵ Line 560, with Sommerstein (n. 5) and Austin and Olson (n. 1), ad loc. Cf. Eur. *El.* 160 (with Cropp ad loc.), 279, 1160.

³⁶ E. Bobrick, 'Iphigeneia revisited: *Thesmophoriazousae* 1160–1225', *Arethusa* 24 (1991), 67–76; M. Wright, *Euripides' Escape Tragedies* (Oxford, 2005), 50–2; cf. E. Hall, 'The archer scene in Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazousae*', *Philologus* 133 (1989) 38–54, at 41–3.

³⁷ Bowie (n. 27), 227. I am very grateful to Bill Allan, Gregory Hutchinson, Adrian Kelly, John Wilkins, Matthew Wright and *CQ*'s reader for their helpful comments.

THE ΠΥΡΡΙΧΗ OF KINESIAS, A PUN? ARISTOPHANES, *FROGS* 153

Kinesias, son of Meles, is no stranger to students of Old Comedy.¹ Pherecrates, Strattis (who based an entire play on Kinesias) and Plato Comicus, made him a target

¹ For handy summaries of references to Kinesias and his activities, see P. Maas, s.v. *Kinesias*,

in works now lost.² As far as preserved Attic drama is concerned, he is best featured in two, possibly three,³ of the surviving plays of Aristophanes, including *Frogs* and the well-known episode in *Birds* (1372–1409). There he is actually introduced as a character on the comic stage. Another contemporary, the orator Lysias, portrays Kinesias as an impious and controversial individual in a fragment of an oration that comes down to us under the title *In Defence of Phantias*.⁴ Aristophanes, however, dwells principally on his innovative contributions to choral poetry. The latter is the focus of this brief study, with emphasis on the reference to Kinesias at *Frogs* 153.

At this stage in the play Heracles describes in Dantesque fashion the slime-filled pool of sinners Dionysus will meet in the course of his underworld journey to bring back Euripides. As Heracles details the abusers, cheating pederasts, parent bashers and perjurers in the muck, he refers to ‘anyone who copies out one of Morsimus’ speeches’. Heracles’ naming of the tragic poet Morsimus, prompts Dionysus to lambast another class of poet: ‘Yeah, and also anyone who has learned the *Pyrrhiche* of Kinesias’.

Νῆ τοὺς θεοὺς ἐχρῆν γε πρὸς τοῦτοις κεί
τὴν πυρρίχην τις ἔμαθε τὴν Κινησίου. (*Frogs* 152–3)⁵

The nature of Kinesias’ ‘*Pyrrhiche*’ has exercised modern scholars as much as it did ancient commentators on this text. Obviously, there was something open to comic fun about this ‘*pyrrhiche*’, but what was it? Was Kinesias’ creation an actual *pyrrhiche*, the war dance performed in Athens at the *Panathenaea*? Or was it merely a work that had the features of this song-dance with its vigorous movements?⁶ And if a *pyrrhiche*, did Kinesias inject into it elements of the ‘New Music’ which the Old Comics loved to fasten on? Conversely, were elements of the *pyrrhiche* imported into the dithyrambic poetry for which Kinesias was famous? Or, was there something comical about Kinesias’ role as accompanist to the performances of his

in *RE* XI.I, 21 Halband (1921), 479–81, N. Dunbar, *Aristophanes’ Birds* (Oxford, 1995), 600–1, J.M. Edmonds *Lyra Graeca* III² (Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, London, 1952), 248–67.

² Kassel-Austin, *PCG* (Berlin, New York, 1983–), VII: Pherekrates F 155; Strattis FF 14–22; Plato F 200.

³ I say ‘possibly’ because some speculate he may also be the Kinesias of *Lysistrata* 845–997. I doubt this but, even if the Kinesias of *Lysistrata* is the poet, his role in that play has no bearing on this discussion. See J. Henderson, *Aristophanes, Lysistrata* (Oxford, 1991), 174.

⁴ *Apud* Athenaeus, *Deip.* 12.551 E–F (= Fr. 53 Thalheim). For Kinesias’ alleged ἀσέβεια see below.

⁵ A scholiast on this passage (Σve) notes that ‘some’ (τινες) deleted (ἀφαιρούσι) line 152 and began 153 with ἦ not τὴν, and that for this reason Aristophanes by Byzantium also applied the critical signs *antisigma* and *sigma* (διὸ καὶ Ἀριστοφάνης παρατίθησι τὸ ἀντίσιγμα καὶ τὸ σίγμα). Prompted by the scholiast, earlier editors (Kock in 1881 and Coulon in 1946, for instance) have made similar deletions and transpositions. It is unclear why Aristophanes applied these critical markings, and I am uncertain what their relationship may have been to the views of whoever τινες were. Dover in his commentary on *Frogs* (Oxford, 1994), 209 speculates on Aristophanes’ possible motives for marking the passage; but he and all recent editors, translators and commentators (see n. 8) retain the text as transmitted and I have followed them. Whether one chooses to follow the scholiast or to abide by the text we have makes no difference to my argument.

⁶ For the features of the *pyrrhiche* see L.B. Lawler, ‘“Limewood,” Cinesias and the Dithyramb dance’, *TAPhA* 81 (1950), 78–88, esp. 85–8, *The Dance in Ancient Greece* (Middletown, Conn., 1965), 106–8 and, especially, P. Ceccarelli’s monumental *La pirrica nell’ antichità greco romana, studi sulla danza armata* (Pisa, Rome, 1998), 165–82.

works?⁷ In any case, the one point of agreement, then and now, is that Aristophanes was spoofing an actual production or type of production by Kinesias.⁸

While I readily accept that Aristophanes had some aspect of Kinesias' musical productions in mind at *Frogs* 153, I should like to suggest that he was also having fun by engaging in one of his favourite pastimes: punning, in this case on the term *pyrrhiche*. This view is prompted by two other passages in Aristophanes bearing on Kinesias: *Frogs* 366 and *Ecclesiazusae* 327–30.

Aristophanists will readily recognise the former as a line in the litany of undesirables forbidden participation in their rites by the chorus of *mystae*.

Εὐφημεῖν χρὴ ἀξίστασθαι τοῖς ἡμετέροις χοροῖσιν, ὅστις — (*Frogs* 354)
ἢ κατατιλᾷ τῶν Ἑκαταίων κυκλίοισι χοροῖσιν ὑπάδων — (*Frogs* 366)

(The following) should maintain holy silence and keep away from our choruses—or anyone who shits on(?) the *Hekataea* while singing accompaniment for cyclic choruses.

The precise circumstances of this vague allusion will probably never be known.⁹ Whatever the details, the Aristophanic scholiasts readily identified Kinesias as the anonymous polluter of *Frogs* 366 and modern commentators have followed them in this respect.¹⁰ The scholiasts cited no specific evidence in support of their identification. However, as they offered several explanations for the meaning of τῶν Ἑκαταίων (images of Hecate? offerings to her?) and were vague on the occasion of the activity involved not to mention its type (ἐν δράματι, ποίημα γράφας, ὅτε πανηγυρίζει, ἐν τοῖς χοροῖς ἡγουν λυρικοῖς ποιήμασιν), one suspects that they were guessing in good measure. Even so, a number of considerations would have led them to Kinesias. For one thing they knew from *Birds* (1372–1409) that, like Kinesias, the polluter of *Frogs* had to do with choral music (κυκλίοισι χοροῖσιν ὑπάδων) and, for another, that Kinesias was associated with excrement in similar language in *Ecclesiazusae* 327–30 (κατατετιλήκέν — κατατιλᾷ), a passage to be explored more fully in a moment.

The scholiasts may also have drawn on other sources not available to us. In the fragment of *In Defence of Phantias* cited above Lysias' charged that Kinesias, as a member of a disreputable club (οἱ κακοδαιμονίσται), was impious and lawless (ἀσεβέστατον καὶ παρανομώτατον) toward the gods.¹¹ In support of his claim he

⁷ For the various proposals advanced, see Lawler, art. cit. (n. 6), 78–88 and Ceccarelli, (n. 6), 43–4.

⁸ See the commentaries on *Frogs* ad loc. by W.B. Stanford (Hampshire and London, 1958), K.J. Dover (Oxford, 1994), and A. Sommerstein (Warminster, Wilts, 1996). See also Henderson (n. 21), Dunbar (n. 1), 661 and Lawler art. cit. (n. 6).

⁹ For the various interpretations, see the selection of scholia to 366 in the following note as well as the commentaries on *Frogs* listed above in n. 8.

¹⁰ R.V. τοῦτο δὲ εἰς Κωνσταντίνον διθυραμβοποιόν οὗτος γὰρ ἄδων κατετίλησε τῆς Ἑκατῆς. R. Κωνσταντίνον τὸν διθυραμβοποιόν κωμῶδεῖ, ὃς εἰσήνεγκεν ἐν δράματι τὴν Ἑκατὴν καὶ κατετίλησεν αὐτῆς. ἢ ἐπειδὴ ἡρυνθίασε ποίημα γραφας εἰς Ἑκατὴν. V. Θ. M. ἡγουν ἀσεβῶς διακεῖται — ὅτε πανηγυρίζει — ἢ κατατιλᾷ τῶν Ἑκαταίων, ἧτοι κατὰ τῶν ἀγαλμάτων τῆς Ἑκατῆς κόπρον ἐκκρίνει διάρρυτον — ὑπάδων τοῖς κυκλικοῖς χοροῖς ἡγουν λυρικοῖς ποιήμασιν.

¹¹ Maas (n. 1), takes a very severe stand in coupling the κατατιλᾷ of *Frogs* 366 with the charges in Lysias: 'also ein dem Hermokopidenskandal verwandter Frevel'; see also Kassel-Austin, *PCG* III.2, 103. But it is unclear what this *katatilema* involved. An accident κυκλίοισι χοροῖσιν ὑπάδων, is hardly commensurate with the furtive and intentional defacement of herms carried out by the *Hermokopidai*. If behind ἀσεβέστατον Lysias is alluding

puts an interesting question to the jurymen: 'Doesn't he (Kinesias) commit such offences against the gods as are shameful even to mention to others, though you hear them annually from the comic poets?'¹² Surely there were additional details about Kinesias available in the works of Strattis, Pherecrates and Plato, if not in lost plays of Aristophanes himself.¹³ These may have included more explicit references about any bowel issues and/or the Hecate affair, whatever that entailed. Were this the case, the scholiasts may not have been guessing as to his identity but were simply stating from a source that Kinesias lay behind the *ᾠστis* involved with Hecate at *Frogs* 366, even if the circumstances were left vague.

As for bowel issues Lysias may again be relevant when he asserts that because of his impiety Kinesias was beset by the gods with such ill health as 'to be unable to die while dying daily' (*καθ' ἐκάστην ἡμέραν ἀποθνήσκοντα μὴ δύνασθαι τελευτῆσαι τὸν βίον*). This blends nicely with *Birds* (1377) and a fragment of the lost *Gerytades* (Kassel-Austin, *PCG*, III.2, 156) where Aristophanes takes pokes at the thinness of Kinesias.¹⁴ An individual with this health history might very well suffer from bowel emergencies and be known for such, whether in connection with a public scandal or no.

The position taken on *Frogs* 366 by the scholiasts has seldom been completely accepted by modern scholars. But all known to me accept the equation of *ᾠστis* and Kinesias, while not taking *κατατιλᾶ τῶν Ἑκαταίων κτλ.* literally.¹⁵ Either they interpret *κατατιλᾶ* metaphorically in the sense of 'insult', or they allow for a *κατατίλημα* of the *Heketaia* but have it laid at Kinesias' door as a joke and imagined the actual diarrhoea attack or attacks as taking place at another time, details unspecified.¹⁶ At least one authority allows that a/the diarrhoea incident occurred in public.¹⁷

Against this background I want to return to Aristophanes' brief allusion to Kinesias at *Ecclesiazusae* 327–30 and to the pun I propose lies behind his *Pyrrhiche*.

Aristophanists will readily recall this scene. Blepyros has come out of his house to relieve himself in the alley wearing his wife's saffron coloured robe (*τὸ κροκωτίδιον*). His own *himation* has been filched by the wife to disguise herself as a man, this in furtherance of the womens' plot to pack the Assembly and take over the state. Blepyros' neighbour appears and, noting the unusual colour of his apparel, cracks.

εἰπέ μοι, τί τοῦτό σοι τὸ πυρρόν ἐστιν; οὔτι που
Κινησίας σου κατατετίληκέν ποθεν (Eccl. 328–30)

to the incident in *Frogs* 366 and, if Kinesias' misfortune on that occasion(s) does somehow amount to or could have been construed as *ἀσέβεια*, it is surely *ἀσέβεια* in a minor key and hard to equate with the events of 415. See also Dunbar, (n. 1), 660–1.

¹² οὐχ οὗτος ἐστὶν ὁ τοιαῦτα πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς ἐξαμαρτάνων ἅ τοῖς μὲν ἄλλοις αἰσχρόν ἐστι καὶ λέγειν, τῶν καμψοδοδιδασκάλων δ' ἀκούετε καθ' ἑκάστον ἐνιαυτόν.

¹³ See n. 2 above.

¹⁴ Cf. also Plato Comicus, loc. cit., n. 2. For discussion of these passages and the relationship between the thinness of poets and philosophers and their work see A. Cameron, 'How thin was Philitas?', *CQ* 41.2 (1991), 524–38.

¹⁵ T. Kock, *Ausgewählte Komödien des Aristophanes, dritte Auflage, Die Frösche*, (Berlin, 1881), 91 ('Die Kapellen und Bildnesse der Hekate benutzte K. als Abtritt') and Maas (n. 1), 45, are exceptions.

¹⁶ Most recently Dover (1994), 241, Dunbar (1995), 660–1 and Sommerstein (1996), 189; all referenced in n. 8.

¹⁷ Dunbar (n. 1), 661.

Tell me, what's this yellowish business. I don't suppose Kinesias has had a bit of diarrhoea on you.

To which, Blepyros replies:

οὐκ, ἀλλὰ τῆς γυναικὸς ἐξελήλυθα
τὸ κροκωτίδιον ἀμπισχόμενος οὐνδύεται (Eccl. 331–2)

No, I've come out wearing my wife's saffron coloured robe.

What arrests attention here is the saffron colour of the robe taken as excrement smear by Blepyros' neighbour. To my ear the *πυρρ-* of *τοῦτο τὸ πυρρόν* echoes the *πυρρ-* of *πυρρίχην* at *Frogs* 153. There have been various conjectures about the origin and meaning of *πυρρίχη*, both in antiquity and in the modern era, and some have suspected reddish or saffron colour as basic to the term.¹⁸ Whether or not colour was originally involved, reddish or saffron colouring would suggest itself to an Athenian theatregoer were he/she prompted to make the association. Aristophanes' audiences were certainly used to hearing *πυρρός* and its verbal compounds associated with excrement. In this regard one can cite examples in *Knights* (900), *Frogs* (308) and, once again, *Ecclesiazousae* (1061).¹⁹ In the Doric dialect the diminutive adjective *πυρρίχος* was in fact the equivalent of *πυρρός*?²⁰ Though *πυρρίχος* does not occur in surviving Attic literature, its meaning would have been clear to Athenians who understood other Greek dialects, including Doric, at least well enough for Aristophanes to use elements/imitations of them in his plays. Against this background the coincidence of similar stem sounds and position of the acute accent immediately following *-ρρ*, not to mention the possibility of comically exaggerated rolling of the double rho's by a skillful actor, suggest that Aristophanes, who loves puns, was attempting an obscene pun on *πυρρόν* – *πυρρίχην* at *Frogs* 153.²¹ I am reminded here of *Knights* 894–901 where, years before, he had done something very similar. In the repartee before Demos between the Sausage Seller and Paphlagon/Kleon that characterises the latter part of the play, the Sausage Seller accuses Paphlagon/Kleon of finagling the cheap sale of silphium stalks with their laxative properties in a plot to have the jurymen of the Heliastic court fart each other to death. The Sausage Seller then addresses the audience:

Οὐ γὰρ τοθ' ὑμεῖς βδεόμενοι δήπου 'γένεσθε πυρροί; (Knights 900)

Didn't you fart yourselves saffronish then?

This prompts Demos to blurt out:

¹⁸ E.g., K. Latte, *De Saltationibus Graecorum*, in R. Wünsch, L. Deubner (edd.), *Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten* Band 13, Heft 3. (Geissen, 1913), 28.

¹⁹ *ὁδὶ – ὑπερπυρρίασέ σου* (*Frogs* 308); – *τι δρώντα πυρρόν ὄψει μ'* (*Eccl.* 1061). *Kn.* 900 quoted below.

²⁰ Theoc. 4.20, *ταῦρος ὁ πυρρίχος*. Diminutives in *-ιχος* occur in Attic, even if *πυρρίχος* does not: e.g. *ἀρυστίχους* at *Wasps* 855.

²¹ Jeffrey Henderson in *The Maculate Muse* (New Haven, 1975), 189, suggested in passing a connection between Kinesias' *Pyrrhiche* and defecation/*πυρρός*. He did not, however, develop an argument in support of the idea. He does not raise the issue again in the note to *Frogs* 153 in his subsequent Loeb translation (Cambridge, MA, London, 2002).

Καὶ νῆ Δί' ἦν γε τοῦτο Πυρράνδρου τὸ μηχανήμα. (Knights 901)

Yeah, this was the old Pyrrhander trick!

It is unclear whether Pyrrhander was an actual contemporary who was being slammed in this line or whether Aristophanes was simply referring to a proverb of some kind.²² For our purposes it does not matter. What does matter is that Aristophanes is clearly punning on *πυρροί* and the name Pyrrhander. One concedes that, given the proximity of *πυρροί* and *Πυρράνδρου*, it was easy for his audience to make the connection in 424. However, if Kinesias was associated with bowel incontinence, it is certainly conceivable that, as *Frogs* 153 occurs in the context of everflowing shit (*βόρβορον πολὺν καὶ σκῶρ ἀείνων*), he intended similar associations *re pyrrón* and Kinesias' *Pyrrhiche* in the late winter of 405.²³

Lillian Lawler long ago touched on the possibility of obscene double meanings in the comments Aristophanes makes about Kinesias' contributions to choral song/dance, including the movements of his *pyrrhiche*. As she saw it, 'Cinesias, indecent in his personal life – had cheapened the cyclic chorus with his new-fangled figures and gestures, which were not dignified restrained and appropriate – but often loose, free, and even wanton.'²⁴ I am indebted to Lawler; but I differ in seeing the basis for any pun on *πυρρίχην* not as sexual but as scatological, a type of situation that Aristophanes loved to exploit.²⁵

Were one to prefer Lawler's line of reasoning, it is also possible to see the scatological pun at *Frogs* 153 as arising from the nature of the *pyrrhiche* itself. While it was practised in different ways in different states and went through various developmental phases at Athens, consistent features of the dance in Kinesias' time included wearing of armour and vigorous action and gesticulations. As Plato describes it, the *pyrrhiche* featured movement and positioning of the body for attacking with javelin and bow and defending against the same by bending aside, ducking, leaping and crouching.²⁶ Since Kinesias himself was an adventurous pioneer at the cutting edge of the New Music, his compositions must have been lively.²⁷ Under this scenario, the nature of Kinesias' choreography, not a bowel condition, would be at issue, whether an actual *pyrrhiche* or *pyrrhichai* or dithyrambic compositions that incorporated enough elements of the *pyrrhiche* to be characterised as such. In this case the steps and motions of Kinesias' productions may have appeared to Aristophanes' eyes such

²² See the comments ad loc. by R.A. Neil, *The Knights of Aristophanes* (Cambridge, 1901), and Sommerstein, *Aristophanes Knights* (Warminster, Wilts, 1981).

²³ Aristophanes further associates Kinesias with excrement in the underworld in the fragment of *Gerytades* cited above (Kassel-Austin *PCG* III.2, 156) where he has a character entertain the possibility that Kinesias and other thin poets will be swept away by 'the River of Diarrhea' (*ὁ τῆς διαρροίας ποταμός*). Kassel-Austin deny what others see here: an allusion to Kinesias' bowel issues.

²⁴ Lawler (n. 6 [1950]), 86.

²⁵ *Clouds* 380–90, 1385–90, and *Frogs* 3–10 may serve as examples of instances in which characters cannot control their bowels or allude to that type of situation.

²⁶ *Laws* VII 815a.

²⁷ So the view of Diomedes the Grammarian: – [*Cinesias*] *mobilem decursionem pyrrichio pede contentus est*, – . *Sed ipse* [the pyrrhic foot] *a pedum mobilitate – Cinesias cognominatus est*. See *Art. Gramm.* III, *GrLat* I.475, 9–25 Keil, plus Cecarelli's discussion (n. 6), 43–4. So too the Suda π 3225 s.v. *πυρρίχη* – *οἶτος ὁ Κινησίας διθυραμβοποιὸς ἦν. ἐποίησε δὲ πύρριχον. ἣ ὅτι ἐν τοῖς χοροῖς πολλὴ κινήσει ἐχρήτο*. The Kinesias scene in *Birds* refers to circling movements and leaping up: *τί σὺ δεῦρο πόδα – κυλλὸν ἀνὰ κύκλον κυκλεῖς*; (1379), – *ἀλάμενος ἄμ' ἀνέμων πνοαῖσι βαίην*. (1395).

as to suggest, not the lively steps and gestures of battle, but rather the contortions one would expect of a person beset with the discomfort of diarrhoea, whether the focus was on Kinesias' role (ὑπάδων) or that of his chorus or both.

In any case, whether Aristophanes' pun was inspired by an embarrassing health issue associated with Kinesias or with some aspect of his work or possibly with both, Kinesias could be associated with 'shit fits' so to speak. This would have been irresistible comic fodder to someone like Aristophanes, especially when the victim, as a public figure of notice, was an individual who probably had an air of pretentiousness about himself.²⁸

In sum, if we see in Kinesias' *'Pyrrhiche'* a 'potty dance', so to speak, the jibe at *Frogs* 153 takes on greater comic potential than Aristophanists have granted it up to now. It is this kind of *pyrrhiche* that, as Dionysus contends, no one ought to have learned.²⁹

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²⁸ Note his boast at *Birds* 1403–4: Ταυτὲ πεπόηκας τὸν κυκλιοδιδάσκαλον, ὃς ταῖσι φυλαῖς περιμάχητός εἰμ' αἰεῖ;

²⁹ I am grateful to CQ's anonymous reader for very helpful comments.

SWEARING BY HERA: A DEME MEME?

It is well known that both in Plato and in Xenophon, Socrates is represented as having the unusual habit of reinforcing some of his utterances with the oath νῆ τῇν Ἥρᾳ. He does this six times in Plato¹ and eight times in Xenophon?;² as Dodds noted,³ in Plato this oath 'always accompanies expressions of admiration', and with one exception⁴ this is true of the Xenophontic Socrates as well. We can safely assume that this was a habit of the historical Socrates – one that was imitated, indeed, by another of his pupils, Aeschines of Sphettus.⁵ It was a very unusual one, and no convincing explanation of its origin has ever been given. Oaths of the form νῆ τῇν Ἥρᾳ or μὰ τῇν Ἥρᾳ are otherwise extremely rare, occurring only three times in all of Greek literature other than Plato and Xenophon;⁶ with the exception of Ares,

¹ *Apol.* 24E; *Hipp.Ma.* 287A, 291E; *Gorg.* 449D; *Phdr.* 230B; *Thet.* 154D.

² *Mem.* 1.5.4, 3.10.9, 3.11.5, 4.2.9, 4.4.8; *Oec.* 10.1, 11.19; *Symp.* 4.54. In addition Xenophon makes Socrates, in reasserting his innocence after his condemnation, draw attention (*Apol.* 24) to the fact that 'it has not been proved that I sacrifice to any new divinities, or swear by or recognise any other gods in place of Zeus and Hera and the gods associated with them'.

³ E.R. Dodds, *Plato: Gorgias* (Oxford, 1959), on *Gorg.* 449E.

⁴ The exception is *Mem.* 1.5.4.

⁵ D.L. 2.83.

⁶ In Eur. *IA* 739, however, Clytaemestra swears μὰ τῇν ἄνασσαν Ἀργεῖαν θεάν, and we may therefore assume that in the oath μὰ τῇν ἄνασσαν, quoted by the Euripidean Hermione (*Andr.* 934) from the lips of her (Phthian) women friends, the ἄνασσα is likewise Hera, an appropriate goddess for married women to invoke. *PMG* 960, where someone swears ναὶ τᾶν Ὀλυμπον καταδερχομένην σκηπτουῶχον Ἥρᾳ that he/she has 'a reliable guard-house on my tongue', may well be tragic too – a female chorus assuring some hero(ine) that they can be depended on to keep a secret.