

been a standard formula in the Greek marriage for the bride's father to hand over his daughter to the bridegroom *ep' arotōi gnēsion paidōn*, "to be ploughed and made to produce true offspring."

I should admit that *fossa* may be connected ultimately with the idea of plowing and its very common sexual connotations.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, there is little need to go so far afield when the word *fossa* itself appears elsewhere as a synonym for *cunus*: "nunc misella landicae / uix posse iurat ambulare prae fossis" (*Priap.* 78. 5–6) and "tibi haec paratur, ut tuum ter aut quater / uoret profunda fossa lubricum caput" (*Priap.* 83. 31–32).

Probably this sort of symbolism (in Latin, *fossa* = *cunus*) is deeply rooted in human consciousness; it is paralleled by certain

primitive fertility rituals in which a pit is dug in the earth in order to be fertilized symbolically with a spear as though it were the female genitalia.<sup>4</sup> In any event, we have seen that the metaphorical use of tree (= phallus) and *fossa* (= *cunus*) is well attested in ancient poetry. The presence of these images in Catullus 17. 18–19 clearly suggests that the function of the simile is to reinforce vividly the sexual inertia of the indifferent husband whom the poet ridicules. To Catullus the hopeless situation of so languid a man being married to a desirable woman is summed up in the striking image "alnus / in fossa Liguri iacet supernata securi."

JUSTIN GLENN

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

3. For examples of this metaphorical use of plowing Khan (*op. cit.*, p. 92, n. 13) cites P. J. Enk, *Truculentus*, II (Leyden, 1953), note to line 148 on p. 46. A fuller list of examples may be found in A. Dieterich, *Mutter Erde*<sup>3</sup> (Berlin,

1925), pp. 47–48, nn. 1–2. To Enk's and Dieterich's passages add Lucr. 4. 1272–73.

4. See C. G. Jung, *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*<sup>2</sup> (Princeton, 1969), pp. 42–43.

#### ARISTOPHANES *VESPAE* 68–69: AN UNNOTICED OBSCENITY

\*Ἔστιν γὰρ ἡμῖν δεσπότης, ἑκείνοσι  
ἄνω καθεύδων, ὁ μέγας, οὐπὶ τοῦ τέγους.

Thus reads the text of Coulon (*Aristophane*, II [Paris, 1948], 20). The problem is ὁ μέγας. Translators and commentators innocently assume that Bdelycleon is a tall man. Several examples suffice: "Nous avons un maître, celui-là qui dort là-haut, le grand qui est sur le toit" (van Daele). "This is our master yonder, asleep upstairs—the tall man—the man on the roof" (Starkie *ad Vesp.* 67). "So look—that's our master there—asleep / top-side—the big fellow—the one up on the roof" (Parker).

The difficulty is clear. Xanthias on stage points up to Bdelycleon, who is asleep on the episcenium. One does not identify a man reclining above one's head by drawing atten-

tion to his *height*; and Bdelycleon is explicitly not standing (*καθεύδων*). Such a couplet furthermore lacks its joke. The reference rather is to the large phallus of the comic actor, easily visible to the audience, silhouetted against the sky. For the exaggerated comic phallus see Pickard-Cambridge, *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens*<sup>2</sup>, revised by J. Gould and D. M. Lewis (Oxford, 1968), pp. 220–23. ὁ μέγας, therefore, means *vir bene mutoniatus*. For μέγας in this sense compare *Nubes* 549, *Aves* 1733, and Sappho, Frag. 111. 6 L.-P. with the exegesis of G. Kirk, *CQ*, NS XIII (1963), 51–52, and H. Lloyd-Jones, *CQ*, NS XVII (1967), 168.

WILLIAM M. CALDER III

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY