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NAMES AND NAMING IN ARISTOPHANIC COMEDY*

One of the ironies of literary history is that the survival of Aristophanic comedy and indeed of all Greek drama is due to the more or less faithful transmission of a written text. Reading a play and watching one, after all, are very different sorts of activities. Unlike a book, in which the reader can leaf backward for reminders of what has already happened or forward for information about what is to come, a play onstage can be experienced in one direction only, from 'beginning' to 'end'. Nor can a play be put down and picked up again at one's leisure or interrupted while the audience puzzles over a difficult or intriguing passage. Live theatre is an ephemeral and essentially independent thing, which must be experienced in its own time and on its own terms or not at all, and as a result we modern readers, dependent on the written page, are at a marked disadvantage in understanding ancient drama. Taplin's study of staging in Aeschylus has shed considerable light on the dramatic technique of Athenian tragedy.[1] Stage-practice in Aristophanic comedy, and in particular the ways in which names and naming are used there, has received much less attention.[2]

Modern scholarly editions of Greek dramas generally begin with a list of *πρόσωπα* in order of initial appearance in the text and routinely designate characters by name or title in the margin from the first time they speak.[3] These are old literary conventions, dating back to Roman and perhaps even late Hellenistic times.[4] Their effect, however, is to distort our understanding of these essentially nonliterary texts in subtle but important ways, and comparison with the manner in which characters are introduced in late-fifth century tragedy suggests this problem is particularly acute for comedy. Aside from the ubiquitous mute slaves, who are always anonymous, the

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[1] O. Taplin, *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus: The Dramatic Use of Exits and Entrances in Greek Tragedy* (Oxford, 1977); Taplin offers a useful basic summary of his critical principles on pp. 18–19.

[2] On Aristophanic staging, see C. W. Dearden, *The Stage of Aristophanes* (University of London Classical Series, 7) (London, 1976); an updated study of the question would be welcome. V. Coulon, *Aristophane*, i (Paris, 1923), p. xxxi, makes some brief but salutary remarks on the names of Aristophanic characters. K. J. Dover, *Aristophanic Comedy* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1972), pp. 6–10, also has some helpful observations on the subject but is generally literary in his approach. J. Henderson, *Aristophanes' Lysistrata* (Oxford, 1987), is good on individual names but for obvious reasons never discusses the issue in general terms. Taplin (n. 1) never deals specifically and at length with the question of the verbal identification of characters (although note the brief remarks at p. 10), presumably because his orientation is so overwhelmingly visual and because (as I argue below) this is rarely a problem in tragedy.

[3] That this is a primarily literary rather than dramatic convention is apparent from the fact that all characters must do in order to be identified in our texts is speak a line, even from the wing. Simple physical presence onstage, on the other hand, is not enough to warrant notice in our texts. (This is not to deny that modern critical editions usually include *κωφὰ πρόσωπα* in the initial list of characters.)

[4] For a systematic discussion of the evidence, see J. C. B. Lowe, 'The Manuscript Evidence for Changes of Speaker in Aristophanes', *BICS* 9 (1962), 27–39. A. W. Gomme and F. H. Sandbach (edd.), *Menander: A Commentary* (Oxford, 1973), pp. 40–1, treat the question briefly and cite further bibliography.

tragedies of Aristophanes' contemporaries Sophocles and Euripides feature two basic sorts of characters: named characters (such as Oedipus, Jocasta, Creon and Teiresias in *Oedipus the King*) and anonymous but otherwise identified characters (such as the Messenger from Corinth and the old Shepherd in the same play). The names or identities of all these figures are generally mentioned in the play well before they enter.[5] When they do arrive onstage, moreover, both sorts of characters are normally identified immediately, either by themselves in a prologue speech or soliloquy or through an entrance announcement or direct address.[6] Rarely is there any confusion between the two types. If a tragic character is to receive a name, he or she will almost always receive it immediately; if a name is not given at once, one is rarely given at all.

These conventions seem to be calculated and intentional and to reflect and exploit basic characteristics of the late-fifth century Athenian tragic stage. Sophocles and Euripides (and apparently most of their contemporaries and predecessors as well) normally told very old stories, albeit in new words and with their own particular focus and some (occasionally significant) variations in the plot-line.[7] Audiences of the time were familiar with these stories, as the constant resort to mythological parody and motifs in Old and Middle Comedy shows. As a result, the basic cast of characters in most tragedies could probably have been guessed in advance by many of those sitting in the Theatre of Dionysus. Indeed, access to this vast common reserve of stories and associations probably helps explain the tragic playwrights' evident eagerness to identify onstage characters by name as quickly as possible.[8] As the speaker of Antiphanes, fr. 191.5–8 K (first half of the fourth century B.C.) says in praise of tragic poetry:

> If I mention Oedipus,
> they know all the rest: his father is Laius,
> his mother Jocasta, who his sons and daughters are,
> what he is going to suffer, what he has done.[9]

[5] Thus in Euripides' *Bacchae*, for example, Cadmus' name is given in 10, well before he appears onstage at 178; Pentheus is named at 44 although he does not enter until 212; Agave is mentioned by name already in 229 (if that line is authentic) and at least by 507 but only appears onstage at 1168. The use of names and naming in connection with the entrance of tragic characters is mentioned but never discussed in and of itself by T. B. L. Webster, 'Preparation and Motivation in Greek Tragedy', *CR* 47 (1933), 117–23.

[6] Thus in *Oedipus the King* Oedipus appears onstage at 1 and gives his own name at 8; the character who appears at around 78 and speaks first at 87 is identified as Creon at 79 (cf. 85); Teiresias is addressed by name by Oedipus at 300 (cf. 285) when he first appears onstage; Jocasta's name is given by the Chorus at 632 as she enters from the palace. In *Bacchae* Dionysus reveals his own name in 1–2; Teiresias enters at 170 and identifies himself by name at 173; he also makes it clear at 170 that the other old man who enters at 178 is Cadmus; Pentheus is identified in an entrance announcement at 212–13 when he makes his initial appearance onstage; Agave is identified by name by the Chorus at 1166 as she enters for the first time.

[7] Compare the remarks of Taplin (n. 1), p. 27.

[8] Compare Arist. *Po.* 1451b15–16. The best evidence for tragedies with completely non-traditional plots is Aristotle's reference to Agathon's *Antheus* at *Po.* 1451b20–21. I must stress that I am discussing specifically the issue of names and characters rather than specific plot-lines here; one can have a general sense of (e.g.) who Oedipus is without having any idea of exactly what he is going to say or do next.

[9] *Οἰδίπουν γὰρ ἂν φράσω,*
τὰ γ' ἄλλα πάντ' ἴσασιν· ὁ πατὴρ Λάιος,
μήτηρ Ἰοκάστη, θυγατέρες, παῖδες τίνες,
τί πείσεθ' οὗτος, τί πεποίηκεν.

Antiphanes' character may be exaggerating a bit here in order to make the situation of the comic poet appear more difficult by contrast but his basic point seems sound. A generation later Aristotle can assert about the mythical stories used in tragedies that 'even the ones that are known are known only to a few, but all the same they provide pleasure to everyone' (*καὶ τὰ*

Aristophanes faced a very different situation. The eleven extant comedies deal only on occasion with figures who have an identity or iconography antecedent to and independent of their appearance onstage. Such characters are normally identified by name immediately when they appear, much as in contemporary tragedy. Most of Aristophanes' characters, however, are products of pure imagination, who have no names or personal histories until they are expressly assigned them onstage.[10] As Antiphanes' speaker goes on to say:

> But for us [comic poets] these things aren't true, and we have
> to invent everything: new names, what happened
> earlier, the current situation, the denouement,
> where things begin.[11]

Unlike his tragic counterparts, therefore, Aristophanes often had no dramatic incentive to name his characters as soon as they appeared. Instead, he could hold onto names, releasing them only when he deemed it dramatically appropriate or useful. The ways in which various categories of Aristophanic characters are named (or not named) and the use to which those names are put once they have been revealed thus offer significant insights into the playwright's larger purposes and tendencies. At the same time, they provide important information about the practical limitations under which a comic poet laboured in Athens in the late fifth century B.C.

Heroes

The extant comedies all focus on a hero or heroine whose grand idea sets the plot in motion, and their case can serve as a useful introduction to some of the complexities of Aristophanic names and naming.[12] In only two of the eleven plays is the hero or

γνώριμα ὀλίγοις γνώριμά ἐστιν ἀλλ' ὅμως εὐφραίνει πάντας *Po.* 1451b25–27). This would certainly not have been true for any fifth-century Athenian who had sat through even a year or two's worth of tragedies in the Theatre of Dionysus, and Aristotle's remark probably reflects the results of a gradual change in Athenian education in the fourth century; compare the remarks of G. F. Else, *Aristotle's Poetics: The Argument* (Cambridge, MA, 1957), pp. 318–19.

[10] Cf. Arist. *Po.* 1451b11–14. The extremely scanty evidence for the procedure called the *proagon* is collected and discussed by A. Pickard-Cambridge, *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens*[2] (Oxford, 1968), pp. 63, 67–8. Before the festival began poets appeared in public along with their unmasked actors before a restricted (if perhaps still substantial) audience in the Odeion and announced the subject of their upcoming production. There is no reason to believe that a detailed description of the action of the play was required. The fact that the actors appeared unmasked, in fact, argues strongly against this interpretation of the ceremony. When comedies were re-performed at smaller, local festivals, of course, some members of the audience undoubtedly knew the characters' names (and a great deal else) in advance. All the same, it seems fair to assume that Aristophanes composed his plays with a single, crucial initial performance at one of the great festivals in mind (cf. *Nu.* 521–4).

[11] ἡμῖν δὲ ταῦτ' οὐκ ἔστιν, ἀλλὰ πάντα δεῖ
εὑρεῖν, ὀνόματα καινά, τὰ διωκημένα
πρότερον, τὰ νῦν παρόντα, τὴν καταστροφήν,
τὴν εἰσβολήν. (fr. 191.18–20 K)

[12] The classic discussion of the character of the Aristophanic hero remains C. H. Whitman, *Aristophanes and the Comic Hero* (Martin Classical Lectures, 19) (Cambridge, MA, 1964). On the names of Aristophanic heroes and how they are used in the plays, see A. Barton, *The Names of Comedy* (Toronto and Buffalo, 1990), pp. 13–27, esp. 22–7.

It seems to be a basic convention of Aristophanic comedy that the first free character to appear and speak onstage is 'the hero' (Dicaeopolis in *Ach.*, the Sausage-seller in *Eq.*, Trygaeus in *Pax*, Strepsiades in *Nu.*, Lysistrata in *Lys.*, Praxagora in *Ec.*, Chremylus in *Pl.*). When two free characters appear more or less simultaneously, *V.*, *Av.*, *Th.*) the lead is split, at least initially, but one character eventually emerges as dominant (Philocleon in *V.*, Peisetairos in *Av.*, 'In-law' in *Th.*).

heroine identified by name in the opening lines of the dialogue: Lysistrata enters at *Lys.* 1 and is called by name at 6, while Dionysus gives his own name (together with a comic patronym) at *Frogs* 22.[13] The hero in *Acharnians*, on the other hand, appears onstage alone at 1 and identifies himself first as a disappointed spectator in the theatre (*Ach.* 1–16) and then as a discontented and potentially disruptive citizen (*Ach.* 17–42) and a farmer (*Ach.* 32), but only gives his name at 406, a third of the way through the action. So too in *Peace* the hero is introduced as a crazed δεσπότης at 54–9, speaks from offstage at 62–3 and appears onstage on the back of his flying beetle at 82. He waits until 190, however, to identify himself as 'Trygaeus'. In *Clouds* the hero is onstage from the very beginning of the play but reveals his name is Strepsiades only at 134; in *Ecclesiazusae* the heroine appears at 1 but is first called 'Praxagora' at 124; in *Wealth* the hero also enters at 1 but is identified as 'Chremylus' only at 336. Identification is delayed even longer in *Birds*, where the heroes appear onstage at 1 but do not give their names until 644–5. The two most extreme cases, however, are *Knights* and *Thesmophoriazusae*. In *Knights* the Sausage-seller enters at 146 but only reveals his name is Agoracritus at 1257, over 1100 lines later. In *Thesmophoriazusae*, finally, the hero appears onstage at 1 and is identified as Euripides' κηδεστής ('kinsman') at 74 (cf. *Th.* 210, 584–5). Other than that, he never receives a name at all.

On average, therefore, heroes and heroines in the extant comedies are anonymous for about 383 lines, and with the four extreme cases (*Eq.*, *Lys.*, *Th.*, *Ra.*) excluded the average is still 263 lines. The names of all these characters, of course, are chosen by the poet, often with some comic or ironic point in mind. Thus the name Dicaeopolis in *Acharnians* is a comment on the lack of δικαιοσύνη in the old Athens and an intimation of the intended character of the hero's new city;[14] Lysistrata's name foreshadows her role as 'Dissolver of Armies'; Trygaeus' name reflects his position as an advocate of the Dionysiac countryside, while Strepsiades' is a comment on his constant legal 'twisting' as well as his restlessness in bed; Peisetairos' name, 'Persuader of Companions', is at least as appropriate to the plot of *Birds* as that of his ever-hopeful (esp. *Av.* 598, 602, 610) comrade Euelpides. One reason for delayed naming is thus that it allows Aristophanes to establish a character or situation and then bestow a name as a final climactic joke. In *Wasps*, for example, the struggle

[13] There is remarkable emphasis on the women's names throughout the opening scenes of *Lysistrata*; the heroine, for example, is named not only at 6, but also at 21, 69, 135, 186, 189, 216. This may be in part an attempt to increase the voyeuristic character of the opening action by offering a glimpse of 'how women really talk among themselves', for the names of respectable women not holding public office were normally not mentioned in public by free men unrelated to them (see D. Schaps, 'The Woman Least Mentioned: Etiquette and Women's Names', *CQ* 27 (1977), 323–30; A. H. Sommerstein, 'The Naming of Women in Greek and Roman Comedy', *Quaderni di storia* 11 (1980), 393–418; J. Bremmer, 'Plutarch and the Naming of Greek Women', *AJP* 102 (1981), 425–6). We may also see here an emphatic effort on the playwright's part either to associate his heroine with Lysimache, priestess of Athena Polias, who may have been well known as an advocate of peace (cf. *Pax* 991–2; *Lys.* 554) or simply to bring the most significant aspect of Lysistrata's character out into the open as soon as possible. The question is discussed by Henderson (n. 2), pp. xxxvi–xli, who argues it is probably significant that Lysistrata is never named by a man until the success of her scheme is assured (p. xl). The situation in *Frogs* is somewhat more straightforward and probably reflects the fact that Dionysus is a god and oddly costumed; see 'Gods' below and n. 38. The artlessness with which Dionysus reveals his name may also represent a comment on his lack of substantial qualifications to be a comic hero.

[14] For a different perspective on Dicaeopolis' name and its meaning, see E. L. Bowie, 'Who is Dicaeopolis?', *JHS* 108 (1988), 183–5, and the response of L. P. E. Parker, 'Dicaeopolis or Eupolis?', *JHS* 111 (1991) 203–8.

between the master and his old father and their very different feelings about the Athenian lawcourts are described in detail for almost 65 lines (*V.* 67–130, esp. 88–130), and only then are the two finally identified as Bdelycleon and Philocleon ('LoatheCleon' and 'LoveCleon') (*V.* 133–4). So too in *Clouds* the hero's elaborate story of his difficult marriage to an aristocratic city-woman and the son who was born to them (*Nu.* 41–55, 60–5) culminates in the revelation that the boy is called by the hybrid name 'Pheidippides' ('Son of Cheap-horse' or, more elegantly, 'Thrifty Knightson') (*Nu.* 66–7). In other cases, the poet seems to be responding to specific comic stage-conventions, so that, for example, no hero ever enters or even attempts to enter another person's house without having revealed his name.[15] When left to their own devices, however, Aristophanic heroes are often extremely circumspect about revealing their names to others. Thus in *Knights* the Sausage-seller does not give his name to Demos, despite being asked point-blank who he is (*Eq.* 786), until he has finally and completely defeated his rival the Paphlagonian (*Eq.* 1257). So too in *Acharnians* Dicaeopolis refuses to tell Lamachus his name when the latter interrogates him (*Ach.* 594–6),[16] while in *Birds* the heroes offer silly pseudonyms to the Footbird when they first arrive in Birdland (*Av.* 65–8). Only when they are at last being admitted to the Hoopoe's house and about to receive wings do they reveal their real (?) names (*Av.* 644–5). All these characters have good reason to fear for their personal safety: the Sausage-seller is locked in combat with an enemy whose oracle-collection gives him the ability to identify (and thus potentially counter) an opponent in advance if he knows enough about him (*Eq.* 1229–48); General Lamachus represents the full power and authority of official Athens up against the anonymous upstart 'beggar' Dicaeopolis (e.g. *Ach.* 593); Peisetairos and Euelpides have invaded the country of creatures naturally hostile to men and do not know what sort of reception they will receive (esp. *Av.* 322–53). As the case of slaves (below) will also suggest, names represent a form of power on the comic stage, and the fact that Aristophanes' heroes often do their best to keep theirs secret is thus presumably only a further display of

[15] Thus the heroes in *Acharnians*, *Knights*, *Peace*, *Clouds* and *Birds* all identify themselves by name for the first time specifically in the context of a doorkeeper scene or a visit to another character's home (Euripides' house in *Ach.*; Demos' house in *Eq.*; Zeus' house in *Pax*; Socrates' ThinkTank in *Nu.*; the Hoopoe's house in *Av.*). Dionysus' name is revealed at *Frogs* 22, just before he arrives at Heracles' house. When a minor free character is given a name and allowed to engage a previously anonymous hero or heroine in dialogue, this also seems to trigger naming of the hero (Lysistrata at *Lys.* 6 after naming Kalonike; the previously anonymous Chremylus at *Pl.* 336 after identifying Blepsidemus in an entrance announcement at 332). The reverse is not true: the heroine of *Ecclesiazusae* is called 'Praxagora' at 124, but none of the other female conspirators who appear onstage with her is ever so distinguished. In fact, there seems to be a relatively simple convention at work with characters of this sort: either they are named immediately (Kalonike at *Lys.* 6; Myrrhine at *Lys.* 70; Lampito at *Lys.* 77; Kinesias at *Lys.* 838; Blepsidemus at *Pl.* 332), or they are never named at all (esp. the women in *Ec.* and *Th.*). The sole exception (except for real Athenians parodied onstage, for whom different conventions apply; see below) is Chremes, who appears as an anonymous character at *Ec.* 372 and receives a name at the moment he exits (*Ec.* 477). This is extremely odd, and suggests he is being marked out as a character who will reappear again later on in the play, in this case as the otherwise anonymous Master (*Ec.* 1128); cf. S. D. Olson, 'Anonymous Male Parts in Aristophanes' *Ecclesiazusae* and the Identity of the *Despotes*', *CQ* 41 (1991), 36–40, esp. 39–40.

[16] Dicaeopolis clearly has the advantage here since he knows his opponent's name. He therefore uses it repeatedly (*Ach.* 575, 578, 614, 619) and ultimately puts it to good service by expressly barring Lamachus from the New Agora (*Ach.* 625, cf. 722). Compare the behaviour of the hero in *Peace*, who eventually gives his name when asked (*Pax* 188–91) but only after showing his contempt for Hermes' bluster by mockingly identifying himself as *Μιαρώτατος* son of *Μιαρώτατος* (*Pax* 185–7).

their usual πονηρία.[17] Few of them can be eager to make the mistake of the anonymous old beggar Wealth, who identifies himself to Cario and Chremylus (themselves still nameless) and immediately falls into their power (*Pl.* 52–101).[18]

Slaves

Like contemporary tragedy, Aristophanic comedy includes some silent and anonymous servants, who simply carry out the orders given them (e.g. *Ach.* 1061, 1067, 1097–1142; *V.* 860–1; *Av.* 850, 933–4, 947; *Pl.* 1194).[19] Unlike tragic masters, however, Aristophanic characters often address their servants by name when they tell them what to do. This may reflect the colloquial character of much comic speech, but it is worth noting that servants named in this way usually remain mute. Such mute but named Aristophanic servants include: (1) one of the slaves who help Dicaeopolis celebrate the Rural Dionysia in *Ach.* 241–79, called 'Xanthias' when ordered to hold the phallus upright (*Ach.* 243, 259); (2–4) the slaves summoned to assist Bdelycleon in driving off the old jurymen in *Wasps* 433, called 'Midas', 'Phryx' and 'Masintuas'; (5) the slave at *Wasps* 1251, addressed as 'Chrysios' when Bdelycleon orders him to pack up a dinner; (6) the slave summoned by Strepsiades at *Clouds* 1485 and ordered to help his master burn down the ThinkTank, addressed as 'Xanthias'; (7–8) the slaves who apparently accompany the heroes onstage at *Birds* 1, addressed as 'Xanthias' and 'Manodoros' at *Birds* 656–7 when they are ordered to carry the baggage into the Hoopoe's house; (9) the slave called 'Manes' at *Birds* 1311 (cf. *Av.* 1329) when he is ordered to carry baskets full of wings outside for Peisetairos;[20] (10) the slave who apparently accompanies Kinesias onstage at *Lys.* 845, addressed as 'Manes' when ordered to carry away his master's child (*Lys.* 908); (11) the (apparently imaginary) slave-girl in *Thesmophoriazusae*, called 'Thratta' by the hero when he orders her to accompany him, assist in the sacrifice and then leave (*Th.* 279–80, 284, 293);[21] (12) Woman A's first slave-girl in *Thesmophoriazusae*, addressed as 'Philiste' when she is ordered to hold her mistress' robe (*Th.* 568); (13) Woman A's

[17] On the power of names and 'name-magic' in Greek literature, see C. S. Brown, 'Odysseus and Polyphemus: The Name and the Curse', *CompLit* 18 (1966), 193–202; N. Austin, 'Name Magic in the *Odyssey*', *CSCA* 5 (1972), 1–19; J. Peradotto, *Man in the Middle Voice: Name and Narration in the Odyssey* (Martin Classical Lectures New Series, 1) (Princeton, 1990), esp. pp. 94–170. As a direct result of the power they represent, names are used on a routine basis in dialogue for emphasis or to attract the notice of another character (e.g. *Eq.* 769, 773, 850, 1152, 1173, 1261; *V.* 163; *Nu.* 827; *Lys.* 9, 135, 186, 189, 216, 1147; *Th.* 193; *Ra.* 1220, 1268, 1272; *Ec.* 124, 241; *Pl.* 344) as well as in the context of (often desperate) pleas, requests or offers (e.g. *Eq.* 747, 820, 905, 910, 1207; *Pax* 1203; *Nu.* 256, 736, 784; *Lys.* 746, 872, 874, 906; *Th.* 177, 218, 249, 634; *Pl.* 230); even initial greetings are sometimes combined with requests (*Ach.* 959–62, 1048–53, 1085–8; *Eq.* 147–8, 725–6; *Nu.* 80–1, 218–19, 221–4, 866–7) or complaints (*Ec.* 520). Obsequious flatterers also have a strong tendency to use vocatives when addressing their victims (esp. *Eq.* 47–52, 1341–2; cf. 725–6, 732, 747, 769, 773, 777, 820, 905, 910, 1111, 1152, 1173, 1207, 1261; note also *Pl.* 230, 786), while legal summonses are made if possible specifically by name (*Nu.* 1221; *Av.* 1046; contrast *V.* 1406–8, 1417–18).

[18] Cf. Barton (n. 12), p. 27.

[19] On tragic slaves and the 'dramatic grammar' that determines their behaviour, see Taplin (n. 1), pp. 79–80; D. Bain, *Masters, Servants and Orders in Greek Tragedy* (Manchester, 1981). On ancient slavery and modern approaches to it, see H. Klees, *Herren und Sklaven: Die Sklaverei im oikonomischen und poelitischen Schrifttum der Griechen in klassischer Zeit* (Forschungen zur Antiken Sklaverei, 6) (Wiesbaden, 1975), pp. 37–55; N. Brockmeyer, *Antike Sklaverei* (Ertraege der Forschung, 116) (Darmstadt, 1979); M. I. Finley, *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology* (London, 1980).

[20] This character is perhaps to be identified with the mute Manodoros at *Av.* 657.

[21] *Th.* 280–1 is in part an appreciative comment on the sights at the festival but the verb is an imperative and thus formally merely another command.

other slave-girl, called 'Mania' when she is ordered to bring and stack brushwood around the hero (*Th.* 728, 739) and then told to hold out a bowl for the 'baby's' blood (*Th.* 754); (14–16) the slaves who try to arrest Dionysus and Xanthias in *Frogs*, called 'Ditylas', 'Skeblyas' and 'Pardokas' by the doorkeeper when he summons them (*Ra.* 608); (17) the slaves who help the Good Citizen in *Ecclesiazusae* bring out his household goods (cf. *Ec.* 730–45), hailed as 'Sikon' and 'Parmenon' when ordered to lift up the load and carry it away (*Ec.* 867–8).[22]

Slaves who take an active part in the dialogue of the plays, on the other hand, normally remain anonymous. Anonymous Aristophanic slaves with speaking parts include: (1) the slave who acts as Euripides' doorkeeper and assistant in *Ach.* 395–402, 432–4;[23] (2) Lamachus' servant, who comes onstage to ask Dicaeopolis to sell some of his delicacies at *Ach.* 959–68 and later announces the arrival of his wounded master (*Ach.* 1174–89); (3–4) the two slaves who speak the prologue and participate in the action in the first part of *Knights* (*Eq.* 1–497); (5–6) the slaves who speak the prologue in *Peace*, one of whom then takes part in a brief dialogue with the hero and his child (*Pax* 1–113); (7) the slave who greets Trygaeus on his return from Heaven, assists with the sacrifice and joins in driving off Hierocles in *Peace* 824–1126;[24] (8) the slave who brings Strepsiades his ledgers and informs him there is no oil in the lamp in *Clouds* 56–8 (cf. *Nu.* 18–19); (9) the slave who opens the door at Socrates' house and shows Strepsiades around at *Clouds* 133–221;[25] (10) the slave-bird who acts as the Hoopoe's doorkeeper and greets the human visitors at *Birds*

[22] The character who accompanies the Boeotian trader onstage at *Ach.* 860 would naturally be taken as another mute slave were it not that his name ('Ismenia/Ismenichos' – *Ach.* 861, 954) is the male equivalent of the one assigned the previously anonymous free Boeotian ambassadress (*Lys.* 85–9) at *Lys.* 697. Some degree of identification between the first slave in *Knights* and the Athenian general Demosthenes is hinted at in 54–7 but the character is not given a name and thus remains anonymous. For a different perspective on the question, see A. H. Sommerstein, 'Notes on Aristophanes' *Knights*', *CQ* 30 (1980), 46–7.

[23] There is no textual basis for calling this character 'Cephisophon' as do Hall and Geldart (following an ancient scholiast to R.); compare the remarks of Coulon (n. 2), p. xxxi. The real Cephisophon was certainly free and probably an Athenian citizen; cf. the remarks of S. Halliwell, 'Ancient Interpretations of ὀνομαστὶ κωμῳδεῖν in Aristophanes', *CQ* 34 (1984), 85–6. The character who brings Dicaeopolis food from a marriage feast and requests a bit of peace in return at *Ach.* 1048–53 is also probably an anonymous servant. Certainly the text gives no reason to believe he is a Best Man, as Hall and Geldart would have it. The woman who accompanies him onstage, on the other hand, is a brideswoman (*Ach.* 1056–7) and therefore free.

[24] It is possible that this slave is one of the two who open the play but it is impossible to deduce this from the text and may have been impossible to tell onstage. Servile anonymity, that is to say, may have been reinforced on the level of costuming and masks as well. For a discussion of the (not very abundant or revealing) evidence for how Aristophanes' slaves were costumed, see L. M. Stone, *Costume in Aristophanic Poetry* (Salem, 1984), pp. 282–5.

[25] K. J. Dover, *Aristophanes: Clouds* (Oxford, 1968), ad 133, argues that this character is a student rather than a slave. There is no explicit indication of this in the dialogue, however, so that the original audience would have been as confused about the question as we are. *Contra* Dover, the fact that this character is apparently acquainted with 'Socratic' philosophy and speaks in an abusive manner proves nothing, since Aristophanic doorkeepers regularly talk and act in ways that reflect their masters' characters and interests (Euripides' sophistically wise and quibbling doorkeeper at *Ach.* 395–402, esp. 398–401; Zeus' initially abusive but actually craven doorkeeper Hermes at *Pax* 180–233; Agathon's musical and apparently effeminate [*Th.* 59–62] doorkeeper at *Th.* 39–70). It is thus better to regard the doorkeeper in *Clouds* as a slave rather than a student, particularly since a separate group of real students is brought onstage at *Nu.* 184–99. (That Socrates himself answers the door at *Nu.* 1145 proves nothing more than that Aristophanes was not interested in presenting a second doorkeeper scene in the play.) Compare the remarks of M. Landfester, 'Beobachtungen zu den *Wolken* des Aristophanes', *Mnemosyne* 28 (1975), 384–6.

60–84; (11) the servant who comes onstage to introduce Agathon at *Th.* 36–70; (12) Pluto's doorkeeper, who threatens and then tortures Dionysus and Xanthias at *Frogs* 464–78, 605–71, and has a conversation with Xanthias at 738–813; (13) Persephone's maid, who greets 'Heracles' (i.e. Xanthias) at *Frogs* 503–18; (14) the servant-girl who issues an invitation to the Master in the final scene of *Ecclesiazusae* (*Ec.* 1112–43).[26]

That many Aristophanic slaves go without names for extended periods of time onstage comes as no surprise, given the fact that their masters are often anonymous for hundreds of lines as well. The fact that mute slaves often have names while slaves with speaking parts do not, however, suggests that something important is at stake here. As the example of Aristophanes' heroes has already suggested, control of a name is an important thing on the comic stage. Silent slaves can accordingly be allowed one, not only for the sake of social verisimilitude but also in order that vocatives can be used against them to determine their behaviour. Servile characters who can speak (and thus potentially speak back) to their masters, on the other hand, are apparently best kept anonymous and thus prevented from wielding their names in potentially subversive ways.

A few Aristophanic slaves who take part in dialogue with free individuals do have names. In most of these cases, we seem to be dealing with an essentially accidental contamination of the two categories defined above, and the poet is careful to restrict the ways in which the servant's name is used. Thus of the two slaves who speak the prologue and take part in the opening scenes of *Wasps* (1– at least 460), the one designated 'Sosias' in most modern texts actually remains anonymous until 136 when (as Aristophanic masters are wont to do) Bdelycleon shouts for his servants by name and orders them to get to work guarding his father (*V.* 138–42). 'Sosias' apparently never speaks again after 137 and exits abruptly at around 140, never to reappear. The second slave, on the other hand, is addressed by the first as 'Xanthias' at *Wasps* 1 (cf. 136, 456) and goes on to take a substantial part in the dialogue with his master and Philocleon which follows (esp. *V.* 152–229, 395–460).[27] All the same, Bdelycleon never uses his name again, except in the typical context of giving him an order (*V.* 456), and is addressed in return only as δέσποτα (*V.* 420, cf. 142).[28] Much the same is true of the slave who accompanies the hero onstage at the beginning of *Plutus*, joins him in interrogating Wealth and then summons the Chorus (*Pl.* 1–228,

[26] If someone other than Xanthias speaks *Wasps* 458 or 460, this character should be added to our list, but see MacDowell ad loc. For Kudoimos and Hermes in *Peace*, both of whom are hybrid characters and only secondarily slaves, see the discussions below ('Symbolic Characters' and 'Gods', respectively).

[27] Part of the point of the naming here may also be to mark these characters out as servile from the very beginning of the play, since the most regular male slave-name in Aristophanic comedy is in fact Xanthias (*Ach.* 243; *Nu.* 1485; *V.* 1; *Av.* 656; *Ra.* 271). That this is what Dionysus' servant in *Frogs* is called thus takes away some of his otherwise undeniable individuality. Manes (technically an ethnic) is the name of only two onstage characters (*Av.* 1311, 1329; *Lys.* 908) but is also used three times for servants mentioned in passing (*Pax* 1146–8; *Av.* 523; *Lys.* 1211–12; cf. Henderson [n. 2], ad loc.). Mania, the feminine form of the name, occurs at *Th.* 728, 739, 754 (all references to a single character); cf. *Frogs* 1345 (supposedly an imitation of tragedy). The most common name assigned female slaves is Thratta (another ethnic) (*Th.* 279; cf. *Ach.* 273; *V.* 828; *Pax* 1138).

[28] At the beginning of the play the slaves do speak of their master by name, but only behind his back and in large part in order to help the audience identify the individual who speaks 136 (*V.* 134, 137). Xanthias apparently addresses Philocleon by name at *V.* 163, but the old man is no longer his δεσπότης (*V.* 67–9) and therefore no longer entitled to the sort of respect Bdelycleon receives (cf. *V.* 439–51). For masters addressed as δέσποτα, cf. *Pax.* 257, 875; *Ra.* 1, 272, 301; *Pl.* 67.

253–321).[29] Despite the impression given by modern texts, this character is also initially anonymous. Only at 624 does Chremylus address his servant as 'Cario', and then only in the course of an order when he enters as a mute carrying a load of bedding. Although Cario takes an important and vocal part in the action in the second half of the play (*Pl.* 627–770, 802–958, 1097–1170), his name never enters the conversation when he is onstage with a free character (*Pl.* 627–770, 823–958) and only the equally 'slavish' Hermes ever uses it again (*Pl.* 1100). Indeed, after 228 Cario is never anything except a mute when he appears onstage with Chremylus (*Pl.* 624–6, perhaps 782–801), whom he always addresses and refers to only as 'Master' (e.g. *Pl.* 67, 253, 262, 285, 319, 633, 819; cf. 644, 738).

If a servile character is onstage for an extended period of time, therefore, he does occasionally receive a name, although only in the context of an order, and this name is never of any real use to him. The sole exception is Dionysus' talkative and aggressive servant in *Frogs*. Like Sosias in *Wasps* and Cario in *Plutus*, Xanthias is initially anonymous, although he takes a vigorous (if secondary) part in the prologue of the play. After master and man become separated during the crossing into the Underworld, however, Dionysus summons his servant by name (*Ra.* 271), and Xanthias proceeds to talk (and indeed talk back) throughout the action that follows, going so far as to name his master to his face at 300.[30] At 579, Dionysus, desperate now to win back his servant's favour, refers to him by name not in order to give him an order but as part of a fawning attempt to convince him to switch clothing one last time. At 582, moreover, he actually calls his slave by the endearing hypocoristic (cf. *Eq.* 726; *Pax* 382; *Nu.* 79–80; *Lys.* 872; *Pl.* 1011) Ξανθίδιον, 'sweet little Xanthias', and offers to be beaten by him without protest (*Ra.* 585). This is extraordinary but, as seems to be universally recognized, Dionysus is not particularly commanding as a comic hero and is even less commanding as a master. His odd and exceptional willingness to use his servant's name in normal conversation is thus a final neat piece of characterization, designed to show just how thoroughly he has lost (or abandoned) what ought to be a free character's natural dignity and superiority (cf. *Ra.* 584–8).

Minor characters

The second halves of Aristophanic comedies typically feature a stream of visitors, whose arrival makes the consequences of the hero's plan clear. The identity of some of these characters is given in an entrance-announcement as they arrive onstage. Thus Trygaeus identifies the Arms-dealer as he appears at *Peace* 1208–9, while messengers are regularly announced as such when they make their entrance (*Ach.* 1069–70, 1084; *Av.* 1119–21, 1168–9).[31] Other characters have their entrances specifically prepared in the preceding action or dialogue. As Dicaeopolis organizes his agora in *Acharnians*,

[29] On this character and his significance in the play, see most recently S. D. Olson, 'Cario and the New World of Aristophanes' *Plutus*', *TAPA* 119 (1989), 193–9.

[30] Compare the way in which the Paphlagonian slave in *Knights* repeatedly addresses his master as 'Demos' (e.g. *Eq.* 725, 773, 905; cf. 50), thus showing exactly how tenuous the old man's control over his household really is.

[31] Messengers and heralds are different sorts of characters. Messengers bring news to particular individuals (*Ach.* 1069–77, esp. 1073–4, 1084–94, esp. 1085–8; *Av.* 1121–63, esp. 1122–4, 1168–85). Heralds either make or are on their way to make public proclamations (*Ach.* 1000–2; *Av.* 1269–75; *Lys.* 980–1012; *Ec.* 834–52; cf. *Av.* 448–50), or are involved in the official functions of the Assembly (*Ach.* 43–173; *Th.* 295–311, 372–9). They are therefore not announced. The character at *Birds* 1706–19, designated Ἄγγελος in the Hall and Geldart text, is thus actually a herald. For the complexities that surround messengers in tragedy, see Taplin (n. 1), pp. 81–5.

for example, he twice declares it open to all Peloponnesians, and in particular to Megarians and Boeotians (*Ach.* 623–5, 720–1), and warns away all sycophants (*Ach.* 725–6). The first visitor is in fact a Megarian, as his opening salutation to the marketplace (*Μεγαρεῦσιν φίλα Ach.* 729) and his accent both make clear. The complaint of the second that the pipers who accompany him have followed all the way from Thebes (*Ach.* 862), on the other hand, quickly proves him a Boeotian. Both are naturally trailed by informers (*Ach.* 818–28, 910–58). The arrival of many other characters is not so specifically and carefully prepared, however, and the tendency of modern critical texts to assign these visitors identities such as 'Just Man', 'Father-beater' or 'Sycophant' the moment they arrive onstage tends to obscure the fact that these are all, at least initially, anonymous and identity-less characters. Indeed, much of the interest in these scenes consists in the gradual revelation of what sorts of individuals the unknown visitors really are. Thus the man who appears at *Pl.* 850 moaning and groaning about his terrible misfortune is not obviously a sycophant, and to start with the assumption that he is, distorts the significance of the action and dialogue in the scene. Only gradually does it become clear that this poor, anonymous victim of some obscure but wretched fate (cf. the parallel entrances at *Ach.* 1018–19; *Nu.* 1259–65) has lost all his money (*Pl.* 856–7) and must therefore be morally bad (*Pl.* 860–2). It is not until he begins to make wild accusations at 870, in fact, that he is identified by Cario as a sycophant (*Pl.* 872–3; cf. 877–9, 885), a title he never claims or accepts for himself (cf. *Pl.* 907–8).

Symbolic characters

Aristophanic comedy features a large number of symbolic figures, who often seem to be invented specifically for the plays in which they appear. Dramatic symbols are naturally valueless unless their significance is apparent to the audience, and the identities of these characters are therefore announced specifically onstage either slightly before or just as they appear. Male and female symbolic characters are also treated in slightly different ways. Female symbolic characters are generally mutes, who represent large, abstract ideas and have little identity or personality beyond them. Characters of this sort include: (1) the beautiful women brought out at *Knights* 1389, immediately identified as Treaty Agreements (*Σπονδαί*); (2) the goddess rescued at around *Peace* 520, whose name is already known from the preceding discussion about the circumstances of her imprisonment (*Pax* 221–6; cf. 294, 497–8) and who can therefore be addressed simply as *πότνια βοτρυόδωρε* ('Queen Giver-of-grape-clusters') when she appears onstage; (3–4) the two attendants of Peace, who have never been named or even mentioned before and must therefore be identified specifically as Harvest (*Ὀπώρα*) and Festival (*Θεωρία*) as soon as they enter (*Pax* 523); (5) The Queen (*Βασίλεια*) in *Birds* 1708–65, who represents absolute political control of the universe (*Av.* 1537–43) and whose identity is obvious from the repeated earlier discussions about who will have custody of her in the settlement between Peisetairos and Zeus (*Av.* 1534–43, 1634–5, 1674–87); (6) Reconciliation (*Διαλλαγή*), whose identity is established the moment she is called onstage at *Lys.* 1114.

Aristophanes' male symbolic figures, on the other hand, are usually somewhat more concrete and developed characters and regularly take part in the dialogue of the plays in which they appear. Characters of this sort include: (1) the master in *Knights*, who is given the name The People (*Δῆμος*) in 40–3, and whose symbolic character is made absolutely clear in the description of his manners that follows (*Eq.* 43–70) and again in 710–24, just before he appears onstage (*Eq.* 728); (2) War (*Πόλεμος*), whose name and symbolic significance, as well as the meaning of the mortar he is carrying,

are made clear at *Peace* 204–6, 227–31, shortly before he emerges from the stage-house at 236; (3) War's assistant, Uproar (Κυδοιμός), who has not been mentioned previously and whose name is therefore given in the order which calls him onstage (*Pax* 255); (4–5) the two Arguments in *Clouds*, which have been discussed as abstract intellectual entities from the very beginning of the play (*Nu.* 112–15, 244–5) but whose appearance onstage as symbolic characters at 889 and 891 is specifically announced (*Nu.* 886; cf. 882–4) and followed by their own immediate declaration of their identities when they enter (*Nu.* 893–5, 900).

Aristophanes' normal practice is thus to identify symbolic characters by name either before or immediately after they appear in order to get the full benefit of their presence onstage. The only exceptions are in *Plutus*. Wealth (Πλοῦτος) initially appears to be merely a ragged and decrepit old blind man (*Pl.* 13, 84, 265–7), and it is only after he has been seized and brutally interrogated by the hero and his slave that he admits his real identity (*Pl.* 78). The result is a complete (and obviously very amusing) revolution in the way he is treated (contrast *Pl.* 68–71 to 208–10, 230–1, 249–51).[32] The identity of Poverty (Πενία) is also unclear when she first appears onstage screaming and cursing at Chremylus and Blepsidemus (*Pl.* 415–21). The heroes therefore initially regard her as an abusive madwoman (esp. *Pl.* 422–8) and treat her with disdain (e.g. *Pl.* 431). When she gives her name (*Pl.* 437) and thus reveals the significance of the apparently odd remarks she has been making (esp. *Pl.* 429–30, 434), however, Blepsidemus' attitude undergoes an immediate reversal as he panics and desperately attempts to run away (*Pl.* 438–44). In both cases Aristophanes has set his usual staging procedures aside for a very similar dramatic effect, sacrificing some of the initial power of his characters' symbolic presence for the sake of humour.

Gods

Like the traditional mythological figures in fifth-century tragedies but unlike most of Aristophanes' other characters, comic gods have an identity and usually an iconography independent of and antecedent to their appearance onstage.[33] All the same, Aristophanes occasionally seems concerned that some of these characters will not be identified quickly or easily by his audience. The ways in which the poet deals with divinities onstage thus offer helpful insights into the practical constraints under which a fifth-century comedy was produced.

In a number of cases it is apparent that the identity of a god is known to the audience well before his name is mentioned onstage. Thus Heracles is never addressed by name during the extended scene that takes place in front of his house in *Frogs* 35–165, although the numerous oblique references to his reputation as a glutton (*Ra.* 62–3, 112) and his famous descent to the Underworld (esp. *Ra.* 111, 135–6) take his identity for granted.[34] So too in *Pl.* 1097–1170 Hermes' name is not mentioned until 1122, but his position as Zeus' messenger is assumed in 1107–10 while the fact that he is a god is taken for granted in 1117–18. Both characters are presumably identified

[32] The return of the newly healed (*Pl.* 738) Wealth at *Pl.* 771 is carefully prepared for and announced by the Wife's question and Cario's extended response at 749–59 (cf. *Pl.* 767). Presumably Wealth's physical appearance has changed as a result of his experiences in the Asclepieion and the poet wants to make sure he is recognized when he enters. On the costuming in this play and its significance, see A. H. Groton, 'Wreathes and Rags in Aristophanes' Plutus', *CJ* 86 (1990), 16–22.

[33] For the physical appearance of Aristophanic gods onstage, see Stone (n. 24), pp. 309–40, to whose arguments and conclusions I refer frequently below.

[34] He and Dionysus do address one another repeatedly as 'brother' (*Ra.* 58, 60, 164), and Dionysus names him outright later on (*Ra.* 282).

by distinctive iconographic costuming: Heracles must be dressed in a lion-skin and carrying a club, while Hermes wears a winged hat and shoes and may also have a caduceus in his hand. Thus also in *Peace* although Hermes is addressed by name for the first time only at 365 (cf. *Pax* 382, 385), his identity is probably apparent from the moment he opens the stage-door at 180, both as a result of costuming and because he is working as Zeus' servant on Olympus (esp. *Pax* 195–202).[35] In *Frogs*, finally, Pluto is never addressed by name at all, but his identity must be obvious from the moment he appears, both because the doorkeeper has identified him as the judge of the upcoming poetry contest (*Ra.* 784–6) and because of his generally regal appearance in the specific context of the Underworld (cf. *Ra.* 163, 436, 765).[36]

All these examples suggest a fifth-century comic poet could rely on visual iconography to help identify at least some divine characters for his audience. In a number of other cases, however, Aristophanes names gods onstage in what seem to be deliberate attempts to eliminate potential staging ambiguities. This is particularly clear in the treatment accorded the divine embassy in *Birds*. That the three male characters who arrive onstage at 1565 are the ambassadors announced by Prometheus (*Av.* 1532–3) is apparent from the remark one of them makes at 1566, πρεσβεύομεν ('we are on an embassy'). All the same, the individual identities of all three are carefully marked in the subsequent dialogue. This makes obvious sense in the case of the Triballian, who is an invented character (cf. *Av.* 1520–9), and it is this purpose which Poseidon's disgusted remarks about barbarian manners at the beginning of the scene serve (*Av.* 1567–73, esp. 1572–3). That Poseidon also immediately addresses Heracles, who was apparently readily recognizable in *Frogs*, by name (*Av.* 1574) is more difficult to explain, although it may be that all three ambassadors are wearing some sort of elaborate costume, which partially obscures their normal iconography (cf. *Av.* 1567–9). The real problem involves Poseidon himself. As Stone points out, the humour of *Birds* 1614 (in which the sea god swears by himself) would seem to depend on his identity being apparent to at least some members of the audience by that point.[37] Despite that fact, however, Aristophanes has Heracles address him by name at 1638, just before the crucial discussion of his alleged interest in his nephew's inheritance (*Av.* 1641–70). A reasonable conclusion would seem to be that the poet is aware Poseidon may not be recognized by everyone in the audience on the basis of visual evidence alone and has therefore used the dialogue to eliminate any possible confusion.[38]

Similar caution can be detected in the treatment of Charon in *Frogs*. The audience knows well in advance that Dionysus must be ferried across a great lake in order to reach the Underworld (*Ra.* 136–40), but Aristophanes nonetheless identifies Charon by name at 183, as he enters with his boat. This is in part for the sake of Dionysus' rather silly (but thrice repeated) pun, χαῖρ' ὦ Χάρων (*Ra.* 184). At the same time, as the otherwise extraneous dialogue in 181–2 ('What's this?' 'The lake, by Zeus...') as well as the strikingly explicit stage-directions at 180 (χωρῶμεν ἐπὶ τὸ πλοῖον) seem to indicate, the stage-properties here must not be very elaborate. A great deal is

[35] Thus also Stone (n. 24), pp. 316–20.

[36] Stone (n. 24), pp. 327–8, argues (although without explicit textual support) that Pluto carries a cornucopia with him when he enters. It is unclear whether the god enters at ca. 830 and then sits mute for almost 600 lines until 1414 (W. B. Stanford, *Aristophanes: The Frogs* (London, 1958), or whether he instead comes onstage somewhere around 1410, which would require postulating a lacuna in the text (D. MacDowell, 'Aristophanes' *Frogs* 1407–67', *CQ* 9 [1959], 261–8).

[37] Stone (n. 24), p. 329.

[38] It may well be the similarly confusing mixture of his own iconography with that of Heracles (*Ra.* 46–7, cf. 108–9) which forces Dionysus to give his name at *Frogs* 22.

apparently left to the audience's imagination, and Aristophanes accordingly identifies Charon by name at least in part in order to make sure his identity is clear to everyone in the theatre.[39]

Even more radical procedures can be seen in the treatment of Iris and Prometheus at *Birds* 1199–1261, 1494–1552. Iconographically, Iris does not seem to have been particularly distinctive, and the text of *Birds* suggests she is not immediately recognizable when she first appears onstage.[40] She is accordingly interrogated and forced to give her name (*Av.* 1201–4) not only because of the fun this allows but also in order to identify her explicitly for the audience. Prometheus, on the other hand, is brought on completely bundled up, ostensibly so he can remain hidden and thus avoid Zeus' wrath (*Av.* 1496; cf. 1503).[41] The practical effect of the costuming, however, is to keep the visitor's identity a mystery for Peisetairos as well as for the play's audience (*Av.* 1496, 1498, 1500). When Prometheus finally unwraps himself (*Av.* 1503), therefore, the hero can quite reasonably hail him by name and thus identify him explicitly (*Av.* 1504).

Contemporary Athenians

Characters representing real contemporary Athenians onstage are in some ways similar to gods, in that they too have an existence and appearance independent of the particular play in which they appear.[42] Attention to the ways in which Aristophanes uses names in connection with these characters, however, shows that he had even less confidence they would be recognized on the basis of visual evidence alone. Indeed, the great majority of the poet's contemporary Athenians onstage are identified explicitly by name either just before or immediately after they appear.[43] Characters of this sort

[39] Stone (n. 24), pp. 311, 335–6 n. 5, on the other hand, argues that Charon is immediately recognizable to the audience and that the humour here depends on the fact that Dionysus 'is ridiculously unaware of everything connected with the underworld'.

[40] Cf. *Birds* 572–5, where Peisetairos' remark points to the fact that many of the gods match the sketchy description the Messenger gives of the divine interloper (*Av.* 1171–7), and the remarks of Stone (n. 24), pp. 320–2.

[41] The evidence for Prometheus' iconography is discussed at length by J. D. Beazley, 'Prometheus Fire-lighter', *AJA* 43 (1939), 618–39; a summary is given by Stone (n. 24), pp. 330–2.

[42] I trust it is clear that what follows is not an attempt to offer an updated prosopography of Athenians in Aristophanes; a full-length study of the problem by I. C. Storey is forthcoming. On the caution with which Comic slanders must be treated, cf. Halliwell (n. 23), pp. 83–8.

[43] Given this very clear overall pattern, it seems likely that Nicarchos (*PA* 10718), who appears onstage at *Ach.* 910 after having been named at 908, is a real (but otherwise unattested) Athenian citizen. The name of the deceptive Persian ambassador Pseudartabas ('False Measure') (*Ach.* 91, 99), on the other hand, is obviously just a joke, as is that of the abusive innkeeper Plathane (< πλάθανον, 'bread-pan') at *Frogs* 549; compare four members of the Chorus of charcoal-bearers in *Acharnians*, named Marilade ('Coal-dust') (*Ach.* 609), Drakyllos ('Handful of wood'?), Euphorides ('Son of Good-carrying') and Prinides ('Son of Pine') (*Ach.* 612). The name of the battered bread-woman Myrtia at *Wasps* 1388–1414 may be an obscure (sexually oriented?) pun on μύρτον, 'myrtle-berry'; cf. *Lys.* 1004–5.

Characters who represent real contemporary individuals under different identities also have these secondary identities established carefully and early on. Thus the fact that the Paphlagonian slave who enters at *Knights* 235 represents Cleon (*PA* 8674) is made clear by the emphatic initial connection of him with hides and tanning (*Eq.* 44, 47), as well as by the description of his political practices in 46–70; note also the emphatic reminder at 230–3 that this is a symbolic figure. So too the real identity of the dog 'Labes' (= the general Laches [*PA* 9019]) in *Wasps* is obvious from the first, since Cleon's prosecution of Laches is mentioned early on in the play (*V.* 240–4) and the Sicilian origin of the cheese allegedly gobbled down is made explicit (*V.* 837–8) well before the two dogs actually appear onstage (ca. *V.* 893, 899).

include: (1) Amphitheos, who enters at *Ach.* 45 and identifies himself by name at 46;[44] (2) Theorus (*PA* 7223), who is summoned by name at *Ach.* 134 and enters immediately; (3) Euripides (*PA* 5953), who is summoned by name by Dicaeopolis at *Ach.* 404 (cf. *Ach.* 394, 396, 400), speaks at 407 and is immediately addressed by name when he finally appears onstage at 409 (*Ach.* 410); (4) Lamachus (*PA* 8981), called onstage by name at *Ach.* 566, 568 and addressed by name again immediately after he arrives (*Ach.* 575–6); (5) Hierocles the oracle-monger (*PA* 7473), identified by name at *Peace* 1046–7 as he enters and well before he speaks at 1052; (6) the son of the allegedly cowardly Cleonymus (*PA* 8880), identified by his father's name (*Pax* 1295) even before he begins his pacific (and all too appropriate) song about throwing away one's shield in order to save one's life (*Pax* 1298–1301);[45] (7) Socrates (*PA* 13101), hailed repeatedly by name by Strepsiades as he enters in his basket at *Clouds* 218–23; (8) Euripides, addressed by name at *Th.* 4 immediately after he enters (*Th.* 1); (9) Agathon (*PA* 83), mentioned repeatedly (*Th.* 29–31, 49, 65, 88) and then identified again by name (*Th.* 94) just before his entrance at *Th.* 95; (10–11) Euripides and Aeschylus (*PA* 442), already named at *Frogs* 758, where the beginning of the quarrel that bursts onstage at 830 is described in detail (*Ra.* 759–86); Euripides' identity is apparent from his first words onstage, which reflect the part he has supposedly taken in an earlier stage of the argument (*Ra.* 830–1; cf. 777–8), while Aeschylus, who is initially silent, is immediately addressed by name (*Ra.* 832).

The appearance and behaviour of characters representing real contemporary Athenians onstage was thus apparently not normally sufficiently distinctive to make their identity obvious. Indeed, the poet occasionally puts what seem to have been the difficulties involved in identifying such individuals to work for him by first marking out an anonymous character's behaviour as ridiculous and then pinning that behaviour on a particular real person.[46] Thus only after the anonymous man who enters at *Ach.* 1018 has made his absurd complaint about no longer being nourished 'in all cowshit' and having therefore literally cried his eyes out (*Ach.* 1025–7) is he identified as Derketes of Phyle (*PA* 3245) (*Ach.* 1028).[47] A similar process is at work with the anonymous παιδίον who appears onstage at *Peace* 1265. Only after the boy displays an inability to sing anything other than songs of war (*Pax* 1270–89) does Trygaeus ask whose son he is and learn he belongs to the allegedly over-belligerent Lamachus (*Pax* 1289–90). So too Meton (*PA* 10093) enters at *Birds* 992 as an anonymous character and is allowed to make a ridiculous initial offer to measure and divide up the air (*Av.* 995–6) before giving his name (*Av.* 997). Kinesias (*PA* 8438) as well recites several lines of hackneyed and unremarkable poetry (*Av.* 1372–4, 1376)

[44] Given that the name is very rare, it seems a reasonable assumption that this Amphitheos is to be identified with the man whose name appears in *IG* ii².2343, a list of members of a thiasos of Heracles which dates from the late fifth century B.C. and includes a number of other individuals associated with Aristophanes; cf. S. Dow, 'Some Athenians in Aristophanes', *AJA* 73 (1969), 234–5; D. Welsh, '*IG* ii².2343, Philonides and Aristophanes' *Banqueters*', *CQ* 33 (1983), 51–5. As we know nothing more about Amphitheos, however, it is difficult to understand precisely what the point of the parody in *Acharnians* might be. Presumably the claim to divine forebears (*Ach.* 46–51) is only an Aristophanic joke based on the literal meaning of the name ('a god on both sides').

[45] On the real significance of Aristophanes' repeated attacks on Cleonymus' alleged cowardice, see I. C. Storey, '"The Blameless Shield" of Kleonymos', *RhM* 132 (1989), 247–61.

[46] Compare the treatment of Minor Characters (above), which this procedure largely duplicates.

[47] For Derketes, see *IG* ii².75.7 and 1698.6, cited by Sommerstein ad loc. There must be more to this joke (which also plays with the idea of a blind character whose name literally means 'Seer') than we can appreciate.

before Peisetairos identifies him at *Birds* 1377.[48] Portrait-masks, if they existed at all in this period, must therefore have been of little practical help for the audience in the theatre, so that the apparent unrecognizability of the Paphlagonian's Cleon-mask in *Knights* (esp. *Eq.* 230–2) was probably more the dramatic rule than the exception.[49] As Dover has argued on somewhat different grounds, on the other hand, the effeminate figure who appears onstage at around *Th.* 571 and is announced there as γυνή τις must represent one of those very rare instances in which a real individual had a personal iconography so distinctive as to allow him to be recognized immediately from his mask.[50] That the newcomer is a man rather than a woman is apparent from his very first words and in particular from his use of masculine participles and adjectives to refer to himself (esp. *Th.* 575–9). He is only identified explicitly as Cleisthenes (*PA* 8525) at 634, however, after he has been onstage for over 60 lines, and even then nothing is made of the revelation (contrast *Ach.* 117–21). The 'real identity' of this character must therefore already be obvious to the audience, undoubtedly as a result of his shaved (or at least beardless) cheeks (*Th.* 575, 583; see also *Ach.* 117–21; *Eq.* 1373–4; *Th.* 235; *Ra.* 426–8; cf. *Nu.* 355; *Av.* 829–31). Few other individual Athenians were apparently so easily identified onstage.

CONCLUSIONS

Names are thus used in Aristophanic comedy in far more complex and revealing ways than has generally been recognized. The fact that the majority of the poet's characters were essentially anonymous products of free invention, while the limitations of contemporary masks and costuming meant that even gods and 'real Athenians' onstage frequently had to be identified expressly by name, created both serious dramatic problems and substantial opportunities. Aristophanes could expect his audience to recognize some basic formal conventions: that the first free character to speak would be the 'hero', for example, or that slaves with speaking parts would normally be anonymous. He could also assume they would recognize a few traditional characters such as Hermes, Heracles and Hades, at least so long as they appeared in a standard context or costume, as well as a very few, iconographically distinct real individuals like Cleisthenes. All the poet's other characters, however, were essentially anonymous until assigned a name or identity onstage. In general, moreover, Aristophanes' audience brought with it to one of the comedies very little traditional background and information of the sort which so obviously shapes the story-line and narrative presuppositions of most contemporary tragedy. They did not know who would appear onstage or what would happen there, and as a result the poet could use the process of naming (or refusing to name) his characters for his own deliberate purposes. Provided he observed a few basic stage-conventions, such as that no

[48] The same sort of humour is apparently at work in *Ach.* 115–22, where the two anonymous eunuchs who enter with Pseudartabas are suddenly revealed to be Cleisthenes (*PA* 8525) and Straton (*PA* 12964). On the notoriously confusing action in this scene, see most recently C. C. Chiasson, 'Pseudartabas and his Eunuchs: Acharnians 91–122', *CP* 79 (1984), 131–6. This sort of joke also probably helps explain the twenty-line delay in identifying the cadaverous witness brought onstage at *Wasps* 1388 as Chaerephon (*PA* 15203), whose unhealthy appearance was perhaps a matter of public comment (cf. *Nu.* 501–4).

[49] The most important study of the problem remains K. J. Dover, 'Portrait-Masks in Aristophanes', in *Κωμωιδοτραγήματα: Studia Aristophanea Viri Aristophanei W. J. W. Koster in Honorem* (Amsterdam, 1967), pp. 16–28.

[50] Dover (n. 49), p. 20. On the cause of Cleisthenes' beardlessness, see also Dover (n. 25), ad 355: 'no doubt through an endocrine disorder'.

character would enter or even attempt to enter another's house without revealing his or her name, he could call them what he wished and reveal their names and identities only when he found it dramatically necessary or convenient to do so.

Much of this must have seemed obvious to the spectators gathered together in the Theatre of Dionysus in late-fifth and early-fourth century B.C. Athens. As viewers of live dramatic performances rather than readers of texts, they did not share many of our most basic literary concerns. They were unlikely to become confused about how lines were assigned and had no need for marginal identification of speakers, for they could see Aristophanes' characters before them on the stage. As a result, they could effortlessly appreciate the tension and play which surrounded the poet's use of names and which we today recover only with difficulty from our carefully annotated but nonetheless immensely impoverished texts. Oddly enough, therefore, one final effect of the literary style in which Aristophanes' comedies have been preserved is to alienate us from them. We know the plays only because we can read them, but the very act of reading distorts its object in subtle but important ways. It would perhaps be too much to call for an absolute rejection of the traditional scholarly conventions under which the names or identities of characters are given at the beginning of the text, while initially anonymous figures are identified fully in the margin as soon as they speak. These are useful tools, given our culture's resolutely literary orientation. They only remain helpful for us, however, so long as we remain aware of precisely how artificial they are and of what they conceal about both the possibilities and the limitations of the Attic stage.

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign S. DOUGLAS OLSON