

ARISTOPHANES AND THE EVENTS OF 411

THE dates of performance of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* and *Thesmophoriazusae* are still not generally agreed. The most widely accepted opinion is perhaps that of Wilamowitz,¹ that *Lysistrata* was produced at the Lenaia and *Thesmophoriazusae* at the City Dionysia in the same year, 411 B.C. But both Schmid² and Gelzer,³ in their authoritative works on Aristophanes, have given reasons for reversing these assignments and putting *Th.* first; Russo⁴ holds that both plays were produced on the same occasion; and Rhodes⁵ has recently revived the view—which goes back to Dobree and beyond—that *Th.* is to be dated to 410, during the régime of the Five Thousand.

The one unequivocal and undisputed datum we have comes from Hypothesis I to *Lys.*, which tells us that that play was produced in the archonship of Kallias (412/1). Further information can be elicited from a variety of sources:

- (1) statements by scholiasts giving the date, relative to one of the plays, of an event whose date is independently known;
- (2) references (or, less safely, failures to refer) in the plays themselves to datable events;
- (3) references to the season of the year at which the performance took place;
- (4) considerations of the type of play more likely to have been produced at one or the other festival;
- (5) references in one play to the other;
- (6) the political, military and diplomatic conditions, movements, prospects and attitudes reflected in the plays, considered with reference to contemporary events.

I propose to pass in review, as nearly as possible, the whole of the relevant evidence.

Statements of relative date, since at best they can only fix the year of production, are of interest only for *Th.* And here we have two.⁶ One scholion (on 190) says that Euripides died in the sixth year (ἕκτω ἔτει) after the production of the play, another (on 841) that Lamachos had died in the fourth year (τετάρτῳ ἔτει) before the production. We can safely assume that these ordinal numbers indicate that years are being reckoned inclusively; but unfortunately neither the death of Euripides nor that of Lamachos can be given a firm year-date.

Euripides' death is variously placed in 407/6⁷ and in 406/5;⁸ the former is guaranteed if the story⁹ of Sophokles' public tribute to his memory is authentic. What we need to know, however, is not what the date actually was, but what our scholiast's source took it to be, and this there is no way of discovering. Six years back from 407/6 by inclusive reckoning brings us to 412/1 as the date of *Th.*; six years back from 406/5 brings us to 411/0. This 'fix' therefore helps us not at all.

Nor does the dating relative to Lamachos' death decide the question. According to Diodoros,¹⁰ it is true, Lamachos was killed in the archonship of Teisandros (414/3); but as Thucydides' narrative¹¹ points to his death having taken place very close to the turn of the

¹ U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Aristoteles und Athen* ii 343 ff.

² W. Schmid, *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur* I iv 2.1 204 ff.

³ T. Gelzer, *R.E.* Supplementband xii, *Aristophanes* (12) (Nachtrag) (also published separately as *Aristophanes der Komiker*), col. 1467 ff.

⁴ C. F. Russo, *Aristofane autore di teatro* 298 f. (City Dionysia 411). These four works will henceforward be cited by author's name only.

⁵ P. J. Rhodes, *The Athenian Boule* 185 f., 190.

⁶ Schol. *Th.* 32 is useless for our purpose: it tells us that Agathon ἡρξάτο διδάσκειν . . . τρισὶν πρὸ τούτων ἔτεσιν, but all we know independently on that subject is that he was victorious at the Lenaia in

417/6 (*Athen.* v 217a). Statements by modern scholars that his first Dionysian production was in 414 are merely inferences from the Aristophanic scholion.

⁷ By the Parian Chronicle: F. Jacoby, *FGH* 239 A 63.

⁸ By Apollodoros (F. Jacoby, *FGH* 244 F 35), who says he died 'the same year as Sophokles': Sophokles' death is mentioned under 406/5 by Diodoros xiii 103.4.

⁹ *Vita Euripidis* 44–47 Nauck: Sophokles presented his chorus in mourning and without crowns.

¹⁰ xiii 8.1; Wilamowitz is to be corrected on this point.

¹¹ Lamachos' death, *Th.* vi 101.6. According to B. D. Meritt, *The Athenian Year* 218, the year 414/3

Athenian year, its archon-date may very well never have been known with precision, and we cannot exclude its having been placed by at least some chronographers in 415/4. Four years, reckoned inclusively, from 415/4 takes us to 412/1; from 414/3, to 411/0. We are again back where we started.

Of the clear, hard references to datable events in the plays themselves, the one that has most often been used in the present connexion is that to Euripides' *Andromeda*. At *Th.* 1060 Euripides, who is impersonating Echo in a parody of that play, says that she (Echo) 'took part in Euripides' performance last year in this very place'; and this proves that *Th.* was produced the year after *Andromeda*. A scholion on *Frogs* 53 gives us the information that *Andromeda* was produced eight years before *Frogs*, i.e. in 413 or 412 depending on the method of counting; which dates *Th.* to 412 or 411. And as the former is beyond doubt excluded by the reference in *Th.* 804 to Charminos' naval defeat¹² in the winter of 412/1, we seem to have a definite 'fix' on 411.

Still, it may be necessary to reject this evidence if there are decisive considerations pointing to 410, and to take refuge, as Rogers does,¹³ in the supposition that the scholiast miscounted. We must suspend judgment until we have considered the other evidence.

No conclusion can be drawn from *Th.* 1060 about the festival at which *Th.* was produced, unless we accept Anti's and Russo's theory of a separate Lenaian theatre, which there are adequate reasons for not doing.¹⁴

Another relevant reference to *Andromeda* comes, as Wilamowitz noted, in *Lys.* 963, which according to the scholiast is parodied from that play (*E. fr.* 116 N.). The scholiast may be wrong; there are at least three places in Aristophanes where the scholia detect parody of a Euripidean play that had not yet been written;¹⁵ but taken at its face value, the statement proves that *Andromeda* is earlier than *Lysistrata*—which, as *Lys.* is firmly dated to 411, makes *Andromeda* not later than 412, with obvious consequences for the dating of *Th.* But yet again, as we have noted, the evidence is not watertight.

What of references to definite political events? Here we must first digress briefly on the dates of the dramatic festivals in 411, for political events in that year moved swiftly. According to Meritt¹⁶ the Athenian year 412/1 began on 5 August 412 and was a regular year of 354 days. This means that the seventh month, Gamelion, began on 29 January 411, and the Lenaia will have fallen in early February, while the City Dionysia, lasting from 10 to 14 Elaphebolion, were celebrated on 7–11 April. These dates were unusually late—a point that is not without significance in considering the evidence.

Lysistrata contains no clear reference to anything that needs to be dated later than the Lenaia of 411. The justification of this statement requires detailed consideration of a passage, *Lys.* 489 ff., that might seem to promise some light on the subject.

ΠΡΟΒΟΥΛΟΣ

διὰ τὰργύριον πολεμοῦμεν γάρ;
 ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ καὶ τᾶλλα γε πάντ' ἐκκλήθη. 490
 ἵνα γὰρ Πείσανδρος ἔχοι κλέπτειν χοῖ ταῖς ἀρχαῖς ἐπέχοντες,
 αἰεὶ τινα κορκορυγὴν ἐκύκων. οἱ δ' οὖν τοῦδ' οὐνεκα δρώντων
 ὁ τι βούλονται· τὸ γὰρ ἀργύριον τοῦτ' οὐκέτι μὴ καθέλωσι.

The key phrase Πείσανδρος . . . χοῖ ταῖς ἀρχαῖς ἐπέχοντες is for us at first sight ambiguous. It is tempting to take it of the coalition between Peisandros and the hetaireiai, which for

began on July 29; and A. Andrewes, in Gomme-Andrewes-Dover, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides*, note on v 25.3, shows that the evidence virtually excludes Lamachos' having been killed so late as August.

¹² *Th.* viii 42. Henceforward references to Thucydides will, unless otherwise indicated, be to the eighth book; references to other books will be distinguished by an asterisk.

¹³ B. B. Rogers, ed., *The Thesmophoriazusae of Aristophanes* p. xxxviii. (References to this work are

to the original edition; for the 1920 reprint all Roman numerals here given should be increased by four.)

¹⁴ See, pro, Russo 3–21; contra, A. W. Pickard-Cambridge, *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens*² (rev. J. Gould—D. M. Lewis) 39 f.

¹⁵ On *Wasps* 1326 (*Troïades*) and *Birds* 348 (*Andromeda*) and 424 f. (*Phoinissai*). In the latter two cases the unlucky commentator is named as Asklepiades.

¹⁶ *The Athenian Year* 218.

Athenians first gave evidence of its existence in the Assembly debate which resulted in the appointment of a mission to treat with Alkibiades and Tissaphernes (Thuc. 53–54), and hence to conclude that *Lys.* must be later than that debate.¹⁷ This, however, is excluded by *ἀεί*, which indicates that the reference is to a course of action sustained over a long period, and hence no doubt to Peisandros' previous reputation as an extreme and pro-war¹⁸ democrat.

At this point it might seem that we had established that *Lys.* was produced before the Assembly debate just referred to—which would inevitably mean at Lenaia 411.¹⁹ But we must be given pause by the fact that Lysistrata's lines 489b–491a are couched in past tenses—and that although she is answering the present-tense question *διὰ τὰργύριον πολεμοῦμεν γάρ*; and begins her answer by carrying on the questioner's sentence: it is as if the course of action ascribed to Peisandros and 'the office-hunters' were one they were no longer pursuing. It is possible that Lysistrata merely means that this is what was happening before she and her followers decided to intervene; but elsewhere in the play,²⁰ when Aristophanes is referring to current political realities, he uses present tenses even where, in the world of the play, Lysistrata's successful revolt has abolished the political realities in question—and at 489–491 the revolt is not yet successful. The possibility is therefore worth considering that the reason for the use of past tenses in *Lys.* 489–491 is that Peisandros was no longer an extreme democrat, that his political attitudes and alliances had recently undergone a startling change—so recently as not to allow time for any rewriting of this passage beyond necessary changes of tense and mood;²¹ for if Aristophanes had had the opportunity for serious recasting, he would hardly have left in a political allusion that had lost its point. If this is correct, *Lys.* must have been produced very shortly after the debate in which Peisandros first advocated a change in the constitution. When then was this debate held?

The orthodox answer to this question was 'about the end of January',²² which would fit excellently with a production of *Lys.* at the Lenaia in early February. But more recently Lang has attempted to shift the whole series of events, of which this assembly was a part, to later dates, placing the assembly in mid-March.²³ The prime motivation for this has been the redating²⁴ of the treaty made between Tissaphernes and the Spartans (Thuc. 58), after the failure of the Athenian attempt to secure his support, to not earlier than 29 March 411, the beginning, according to the Babylonian calendar, of the thirteenth year of Darius II's reign, in which the treaty is expressed to have been made. The redating is by no means certain;²⁵ but even if it is correct, does it require a late dating of the 'first assembly'?

Lang has to assign the assembly to mid-March because she allows only four weeks for all the events which followed it up to the Spartan–Persian treaty.²⁶ She gives no evidence for fixing on this interval, and the late date certainly is not necessary to leave adequate time

¹⁷ It was so taken by Gelzer, col. 1474, and by me in an earlier version of this paper; I am grateful to Professor A. Andrewes for pointing out the error.

¹⁸ Cf. Ar. *fr.* 81 (from *Babylonians*) and *Peace* 395: the reputation was of long standing.

¹⁹ For the earliest date on which an Assembly could take place after the City Dionysia was 12 April; and on the most generous interpretation of the length of the Thucydidean winter there is not then enough time for the events of Thuc. 54.4–60 to take place before the end of it.

²⁰ In vv. 1231 ff., where there is a striking juxtaposition: 'At present (*νῦν*) when we go to Sparta sober <on embassies>, we immediately look to see what we can throw into confusion; so we don't hear what they do say and make guesses about what they don't say, and make different reports about the same thing. But this time (*νῦν*) everything was satisfactory.'

Here 'at present' refers to real life, 'this time' to the world of the play.

²¹ Did Aristophanes originally write *κικᾶται*, *ἔχην* and (e.g.) *ιστᾶσ'* (cf. the familiar *βοῖην ιστάναι*, etc.), and at the last moment substitute *ἐκκλήθη*, *ἔχοι*, and (*ἴστασαν* being metrically unsuitable) *ἐκύκων*?

²² So G. Busolt, *Griechische Geschichte* iii 1471, who deduces the date from the relationship between events at Samos and Athens on the one hand, and naval movements on the other.

²³ M. Lang, 'The Revolution of the 400: Chronology and Constitutions', *AJPh* 88 (1967) 176–87.

²⁴ First made, so far as I know, by D. M. Lewis, 'The Phoenician Fleet in 411', *Historia* 7 (1958) 392; see also B. D. Meritt in *Hesperia* 33 (1964) 228–30.

²⁵ The doubts raised by Pritchett, *CP* 60 (1965) 259–61, are not entirely stilled by Meritt, *CP* 61 (1966) 182–4; cf. also A. W. Gomme, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides* iii 703 ff.

²⁶ Lang, *op. cit.* 179.

for earlier events; indeed, it leaves too much. The intrigue of Phrynichos against Alkibiades (Thuc. 50–51) was carried out when the Peloponnesian fleet was still at Miletos, i.e., at any rate, before mid-January; and since on a plain reading of Thucydides' text 'preparations' were already being made to send Peisandros and others to Athens (Thuc. 49) when Phrynichos acted, it seems necessary to make the improbable supposition that these 'preparations' dragged on for two months.²⁷ Lang is therefore forced to suppose that Thucydides, merely to make his narrative 'more compelling', has deliberately misplaced the decision to send Peisandros to Athens and that it properly belongs after chapter 52.²⁸ Rather than resort to this, we might well wish to look again at the dating of the 'first assembly'.

First of all it must be pointed out that there is no call to assign the Spartan–Persian treaty, with Lang, to so late a date as the second week in April; it could be as early as 30 March even if Lewis is right.²⁹ Between that date and a 'first assembly' in the first week of February, a few days before the Lenaia, there are some eight weeks. Is this too much for the intervening events?

Lang's timetable can roughly be summarised as follows, taking the day of the 'first assembly' as day 0: negotiations with Alkibiades and Tissaphernes, days 4 to 18; Tissaphernes goes to Kaunos, about day 21; Spartan–Persian treaty, about day 28. It may first be noted that this requires Peisandros and his colleagues to have left Athens almost immediately after their appointment, whereas Thuc. 54.4 suggests that he had a good deal of secret business to transact first, for which we might want to allow as much as ten days; and since there was no particular hurry to reach Tissaphernes' court (for the Athenian oligarchs had to be given time to ensure that the democracy would agree to 'voluntary' suicide; and it is hard to believe that Peisandros did not call at Samos to acquaint his confederates there with what had happened at Athens) we might place their arrival, say, at day 16. Then followed the negotiations, of whose length we cannot be certain; there were only three meetings (Thuc. 56.4), but there must also have been intervals (first in order for Alkibiades and Tissaphernes to work out a negotiating position, then for the Athenians to decide whether to accept Alkibiades' progressively higher demands), and a period of three weeks, rather than two, cannot be excluded. Peisandros and his colleagues may not have left for Samos until day 37.

'Immediately' (εὐθὺς) after their departure Tissaphernes went to Kaunos (Thuc. 57.1). The indication of time has a slight degree of elasticity; it does not necessarily mean Tissaphernes left the very next day—he may have left, say, on day 40 and reached Kaunos on day 43. When he got there he had first to persuade the Peloponnesian commanders to return to Miletos, and they then had to prepare the fleet, which had been beached,³⁰ to sail; Miletos may not have been reached until day 50, and the treaty concluded on the plain of the Maiandros nearby (Thuc. 58.1), after some negotiation, about day 56.

I do not put this timetable forward as correct: merely as possible, and as showing that regardless of the date of the Persian–Spartan treaty, the 'first assembly' does not *need* to be dated after the Lenaia.

²⁷ Or else that there was a similar delay in Athens between the arrival there of the conspirators and the 'first assembly': Lang, *op. cit.* 181, rightly rejects this suggestion, and in her 'summary timetable', p. 183, allows the conspirators about a fortnight in Athens before the assembly—though Thuc. 53.1, which says nothing about any delay at all, might be taken to imply that Peisandros addressed the assembly the first time it met after his arrival.

²⁸ Lang, *op. cit.* 181–3.

²⁹ As Lang herself points out (*op. cit.* 178), 'that the treaty belongs very soon after 29 March is made likely by Thucydides' statement that it was still winter when the treaty was made'. The need to accommodate the 80 days of Thuc. 44.4 does not require us to delay the treaty until 10 April or so,

for the timetable is flexible at two points: (1) its starting point is not, as usually stated, the winter solstice, but the sailing of a fleet under Antisthenes about the time of the winter solstice (Thuc. 39.1); (2) 'eighty days' may be a round figure covering anything from 75 upwards. In the 56-day timetable given below between an early 'first assembly' and a March 30th treaty, the departure of the Peloponnesian fleet from Rhodes comes around day 47, say 21 March; 75 days back from this by inclusive reckoning brings us to 6 January, which would be quite consistent with Antisthenes' fleet having left the Peloponnese a week, or even less than a week, before the solstice on December 24th.

³⁰ Thuc. 44.4; 55.1; 55.3.

But this is a purely negative conclusion. We cannot firmly fix the date of the assembly; and we cannot determine for certain, on the evidence we are *at present* considering, whether *Lys.* was produced before it or after it. We can only express ourselves conditionally, concluding that *if* we are convinced that the play was produced either before the 'first assembly' or only a matter of days after it, then it must have been produced at the Lenaia.³¹ But on the evidence of vv. 489–491 we cannot claim that the protasis of this conditional has been proved. I have suggested that the presence (even in the past tense) of a reference to Peisandros treating him as an extreme democrat favours a production not long after the assembly; but it cannot be proved that I am right to believe that Aristophanes would otherwise have recast the passage, and even if I am it is obviously impossible to say precisely how long he would have needed to do so. It may, however, be noted at this point, for future reference, that if by any chance the passage had not merely lost its power to amuse but become dangerous, Aristophanes could have omitted it altogether; 493 could follow on 488 almost as well as on 492.

Th. is on the surface one of Aristophanes' least political plays, and has only two hard political references. (The vaguer echoes of current politics, which are of great importance, will be considered later.) Both of these references are in the parabasis.

804 *Ναυσιμάχης μὲν γ' ἦπτων ἐστὶν Χαρμῖνος· δῆλα δὲ τάργα.*

This has been universally recognised to refer to the naval defeat suffered by the Athenian admiral Charminos at Syme in the winter of 412/1, and Rogers³² argued that this would not have become known at Athens in time for either the Lenaia or the City Dionysia of 411 and therefore proves that *Th.* was produced in 410. The battle, however, is unlikely to have occurred later than the second week of January,³³ which leaves ample time for news of it to reach Athens well before the Lenaia, let alone the City Dionysia. Further, as Wilamowitz 346 pointed out, the hit made here at the Athenian navy (and renewed in v. 837, where instances of cowardice are taken from the navy, trierarchs and steersmen, in contrast to the instances of merit taken in v. 833 from the army, generals and taxiarchs) would have backfired badly in early 410, 'als nicht bloss *Ναυσιμάχη*, sondern *Ναυσική* dank Thrasyllus und Alkibiades bei den attischen schiffen war'.³⁴

The other hard political reference in *Th.* comes at 808 f.

ἀλλ' *Εὐβούλης τῶν πέρυσιν τις βουλευτῆς ἐστὶν ἀμείνων*
παραδοὺς ἐτέρῳ τὴν βουλείαν; οὐδ' αὐτὸς τοῦτό γε φήσεις.
αὐτὸς R: Ἄντος Maas φήσεις R: φήσει Küster

Now if the play was produced in 410, the reference here seems clear, unequivocal and easy, being to the dispersal without resistance of the boule of 412/1 by the Four Hundred shortly before the end of their term of office; *παραδοὺς* would put particular emphasis on this meek submission.³⁵

Things are much less easy if we put the play in 411. Schmid 205 n. 1 finds the passage 'unverständlich'. Others³⁶ have thought of the transfer in late 413, while the boule of 413/2 was in office, of many of its functions to the ten probouloi; but *Th.* itself, if produced in 411, shows that this transfer was far from complete—the boule makes decisions and a prytanis sees that they are carried out (929–946); and in *Lys.* (1011 f.) it is the boule, not the probouloi, that takes the important decision to choose ambassadors to negotiate a peace

³¹ The latest date proposed for the assembly (and surely the latest possible, if time is to be allowed for the events of Thuc. 56–60) is mid-March, still nearly a month before the City Dionysia.

³² Rogers, ed., *Thesmophoriazusae* p. xxxi f.

³³ The naval movements of Thuc. 39–42, beginning 'about the winter solstice', run without a break until the battle; they can hardly be taken (and so far as I know never have been taken, except by Rogers who seems to proceed by impressionism rather than calculation) to cover more than about 20 days, if that.

³⁴ A scholion on the line seems to point the same way, stating that Charminos *περὶ Σάμου συνεστρατήγησε κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν τοῦτον τοῖς περὶ Φρύνιχον*; for by 410 Phrynichos was dead. But since Phrynichos was deprived of his office by the 'first assembly', possibly before the Lenaia and certainly before the City Dionysia of 411 (Thuc. 54.3), the scholiast's rather vague phraseology should not be pressed.

³⁵ Cf. Thuc. 69.4–70.1, esp. ἡ . . . βουλὴ οὐδὲν ἀντειποῖσα.

³⁶ E.g. O. Müller and Wilamowitz 344.

treaty. On this evidence it can hardly be said to have 'handed over its councillorship'.

Before, however, we conclude that *Th.* 808 f. dates the play to 410, we must ask whether the passage is consistent with *either* of the above interpretations. In 413 and 411 alike, the boule surrendered all or some of its functions to another body. Our passage does not speak of this; it speaks of one member of the boule surrendering his position to another person. Nor is this reference merely generic; for 809 shows (unless, causelessly, we emend away the second person verb)³⁷ that the ex-bouleutes in question is picked out in the audience and directly addressed. Such a procedure would be utterly pointless if this man's misdeed was one he shared with 499 colleagues: rather we must seek an explanation of the passage in some scandal affecting one individual. The scholia *ad loc.* cannot be said to be very clear, but they do seem to think that the word ἐπιλαχών is relevant; and the most likely solution is surely that the unknown councillor addressed is one who for some reason (rejection at the δοκιμασία? a corrupt bargain?) was replaced on the boule by his ἐπιλαχών in the year preceding that in which the play was produced.

It therefore seems that *Th.* 808 f. is not decisive for the date of production.³⁸ And looking over the hoped-for 'hard' chronological data, we find them pretty thin. The evidence of the relative dating of Euripides' death, and two bits of evidence connected with *Andromeda*, together with the reference to the defeat of Charminos, point to 411 as the date of *Th.*; the passage about the boule points rather doubtfully to 410; none of them is absolutely decisive, and on the question 'which festival' we have no pointers even as firm as these.

As to the season of the year at which the performances took place, the only apparent reference in either play is χειμῶνος . . . ὄντος at *Th.* 67 f. It has been argued on the one hand³⁹ that this indicates production at the Lenaia, on the other⁴⁰ that the phrase would have more point at the City Dionysia when wintry weather would not normally be expected. If we had to choose between these arguments the former would be preferable, since Aristophanes could not know in advance whether April would be abnormally cold; but consideration of the actual date on which the Thesmophoria fell in 412/1 puts a different complexion on the matter. The third day, μέση or νηστεία, 12 Pyanopsion, on which the action of *Th.* is set, fell that year on November 13, over a week after the morning setting of the Pleiades which conventionally marked the beginning of winter.⁴¹ Thus this too may be discounted as evidence for the dating of *Th.*

It has often been noted that the Aristophanic plays known to have been produced at the Lenaia (*Acharnians*, *Knights*, *Wasps*, *Frogs*) deal with matters of essentially local Athenian interest (though this applies less strongly to *Frogs* than to the other three), whereas the Dionysian plays, *Clouds*, *Peace* and *Birds*, seem to have a wider appeal—*Clouds* with its universal moral theme and its concern with sophistic and scientific doctrines most of whose exponents were non-Athenian; *Peace* with its emphasis (in contrast with *Acharnians*) on the blessings peace will bring to *all* the Greeks; *Birds* with its fairyland setting and folktale story. The evidence for this dichotomy is neither plentiful nor unequivocal, but it is there, and one might well seek to determine where *Lys.* and *Th.* stand in relation to it. At first sight the conclusion is obvious:⁴² since *Lys.* treats the war as *Peace* does, viz. as a panhellenic disaster, while *Th.* is concerned with an Athenian festival and with Euripides (who appears in person in two other extant Aristophanic plays, both of them Lenaian), *Lys.* is most likely to be Dionysian and *Th.* Lenaian.

Still, we must be careful. What is typical of the certainly Dionysian plays we possess is

³⁷ Corruption might be expected to proceed, if at all, from φήσεις to the more obvious φήσει, not vice versa.

³⁸ Except that since the sources of our scholia evidently knew the date of the play, it is odd, if the date is 410, that they did not think of explaining the passage by reference to the dispersal of the boule by the Four Hundred (Wilamowitz 344). But argument from silence is particularly dangerous when dealing with the scholia in cod. R of Aristophanes,

which are known to have been drastically abridged.

³⁹ E.g. Schmid 205 n. 1.

⁴⁰ Lang, *op. cit.* 181 n. 6, giving χειμῶν here the same 'elastic' meaning which, following Meritt, she assigns to it in Thucydides.

⁴¹ At this date the morning setting occurred about 5 November: E. J. Bickerman, *Chronology of the Ancient World* 143.

⁴² Schmid 204 f.; Russo 259 (who, however, regards *both* plays as Dionysian).

not just that they have a wider appeal, but that they appeal specifically to *Ionians*—citizens of the states allied to Athens, who would be in town in large numbers for a variety of official and personal reasons. The philosophy and science in *Clouds*, the ridicule of imperial officials in *Birds* 1021 ff., would have appealed to them particularly; and in *Peace* there is mention of Ionians in the audience (45 ff.), a joke based on an Ionian dialect word (929 ff.), and a graceful compliment to the lately deceased Ion of Chios (835 ff.). There is nothing Ionian about *Lys.* Certainly there were non-Athenians to whom *Lys.* might have appealed. But they were not the allies; they were the enemy—and whatever may have been the case in 421, it is hard to imagine Peloponnesians and Boiotians in the Athenian theatre in 411. I do not therefore think we can deduce anything from the general theme of *Lys.* about the festival at which it was produced.

And *Th.*? We should remember that Euripides was an international celebrity. The welcome extended by King Archelaos not only to Euripides but to the much younger, less experienced and far less distinguished Agathon is impressive evidence of the prestige which Athenian tragedy had won throughout the Greek world. So a play devoted largely to tragic parody would be certain to appeal to a cosmopolitan audience—particularly as many of that audience had actually seen the plays parodied.⁴³

As is natural in two plays produced in close succession, *Lys.* and *Th.* have common themes, and each play contains passages which remind us of the other; but these do not seem to help in establishing priority. To Russo,⁴⁴ the references to Euripides' hostility to women at *Lys.* 283 and 368 are anticipations of *Th.*, rather as *Acharnians* 300 anticipates *Knights* or, I would suggest, *Birds* 556–560 anticipates *Lys.*; to Schmid 205 n. 1, on the other hand, they are 'offenbare *Anspielungen auf Th.*' It is hard to avoid subjectivity here; it is not as if there were a passage in one play that was unintelligible without a knowledge of the other, in the way that the parabasis of *Wasps*⁴⁵ presupposes acquaintance with *Knights*, *Clouds* and another play now lost.

The third, fourth and fifth classes of evidence have helped us little. I now wish to turn to the sixth class: the political, military and diplomatic conditions, movements, prospects and attitudes reflected in the plays.

First, the question of the political institutions in force in Athens at the time of production. These institutions did not to our knowledge change between the Lenaia and Dionysia of 411, so they make the difference only between production (of *Th.*) in 411 and in 410. Three matters have been though relevant here: the Assembly curse; the role of the proboulos; and the powers of the boule.

(a) Wilamowitz 349 points out that the Assembly curse, reflected in *Th.* 331–372, was not in use in early 410; it could, however, be argued that the audience would still be familiar with it and that it was worth including for its comic possibilities, and I would not like to make this an argument for altogether excluding the date 410 for *Th.*, even if we were certain that the use of the curse had not been restored on the establishment of the government of the Five Thousand.

(b) Rogers⁴⁶ notes that in *Th.* what seems to be the same function performed in *Lys.* by a proboulos is assigned to a prytanis; but this does not prove that the probouloi were no longer in office, for the business (sacrilege) with which the prytanis has to deal is something which there is no reason to believe was within the competence of the probouloi. Our evidence about their powers is pretty vague, speaking of 'advising on current affairs as occasion may arise', of 'deliberating on matters in the national interest', and of convoking boule and assembly;⁴⁷ but there is no indication that before the return of

⁴³ *Helen* and *Andromeda* had been produced the previous year, *Palamedes* in 415, all at the City Dionysia, for the evidence strongly suggests that Euripides never produced at the Lenaia: see Russo 290–94 and T. B. L. Webster, *The Tragedies of Euripides*, ch. 1. *Palamedes* is guaranteed as Dionysian by the didascalical notice preserved by Aelian *Var. Hist.* ii 8, which states that it was part of a tetralogy.

⁴⁴ Russo 298 f., holding that *Lys.*, though produced along with *Th.* at the City Dionysia, was 'progettata' and presumably partly written before *Th.* was begun.

⁴⁵ *Wasps* 1029–47; cf. D. M. MacDowell's notes on 1029, 1038, 1044.

⁴⁶ Rogers, ed., *Thesmophoriazusae* p. xxxiv.

⁴⁷ Thuc. 1.3; Diod. xii 75; *Bekkeri Anecd.* i 298.

Peisandros in late May 411 they concerned themselves with anything but the war effort.⁴⁸

(c) Rhodes⁴⁹ observes that Euripides' relative is condemned to death (*Th.* 938, 1109) by decision of the boule (943), which, as far as we know, did not ordinarily have such power, but which may, according to Rhodes, have acquired additional powers under the regime of the Five Thousand. The situation, however, is exceptional. The day is a festival day, on which ordinarily no public business would take place and neither courts nor boule nor assembly would meet (79). Nor has this fact been forgotten: indeed six lines after the mention of the boule the chorus remind us of the sanctity of the day, which is honoured (albeit involuntarily) even by Pausan (949), and perform songs and dances appropriate to the feast. Evidently the sacrilege was considered so grave by the prytaneis when Kleisthenes and the women reported it to them (654, 764) that they called an extraordinary meeting of the boule—as the law allowed them to do⁵⁰—which, the evidence being clear and the offence being what is now called an offence of strict liability (for the man's presence in the Thesmophorion was itself sacrilege, and no plea of innocent intent, inadvertence, or the like would be admissible), ordered the immediate punishment of the culprit. It might have been more regular, perhaps, to order his arrest and trial by an ordinary court; but that would have been inconvenient dramatically.

The boule was often after 410 invited by speakers before it to pass sentence of death, though at that time it certainly could not legally do so;⁵¹ in other words, the existence of legal limits to its powers was no guarantee that it would not exceed them, and in such a clear case as the present one objections to its action were most unlikely. It is easiest to assume that, if in *Th.* the boule pass a sentence of death, their action is one that would have been ruled illegal had anyone bothered to object. Nor does Rhodes himself claim that the powers assumed for the boule in this play prove it to have been produced in 410.

The next point to be considered is one that, by Aristophanic scholars at any rate, has rarely been given its due weight.⁵⁵ In *Th.* there is an almost complete lack of reference to political personalities, and a complete lack of reference to those involved in the oligarchic conspiracy. *Lys.*, on the other hand, is a highly political play; it advocates the ending of the war, when the avowed object of the proponents of oligarchy was to wage war more effectively; and in v. 490, in a passage that, as we have seen, could easily have been cut, Peisandros is disparaged—not, to be sure, disparaged as an oligarch, but disparaged none the less in a way no oligarch is in *Th.* Now, between the Lenaia and the Dionysia,⁵⁶ a campaign of political murder had been begun by the oligarchs. The boule and the assembly were completely cowed, believing the conspiracy to be far vaster than it actually was; anyone who spoke out against the oligarchs was disposed of, and the assassins were never found or brought to justice (Thuc. 65.2–66.5). Thus, if *Lys.* was produced at the City Dionysia, we must assume that Aristophanes deliberately put his head on the block and invited the oligarchs to chop it off, and they, for whatever reason, did not do so.

⁴⁸ And constitutional reform, if we accept (as I would not) the harmonisation of Thucydides and the *Athenaion Politeia* proposed by Lang, 'The Revolution of the 400', *AJPh* 69 (1948) 272–89 (not to be confused with the 1967 paper cited in note 23).

⁴⁹ *The Athenian Boule* 185 f.

⁵⁰ Cf. the law referred to by Dem. xxiv 29: *μη χρηματίσειεν οτι αν μη περι της εορτης η̄*. It is not quite clear which festival the law relates to, but there is no reason to believe that the same principles did not hold for all festivals. The sacrilege committed in *Th.*, of course, was most emphatically *περι της εορτης*.

⁵¹ Rhodes, *The Athenian Boule* 180.

^{52–54} (No notes).

⁵⁵ An exception is H. van Daele, who in his introduction to *Th.* in the Budé Aristophanes (p. 11, n. 1) remarked upon the improbability that a 'pièce

à thèse politique' should have been produced at the City Dionysia 'en pleine période d'effervescences, de suspicions et de violences'. The historians tend to be more perceptive on the matter.

⁵⁶ Peisandros concerted tactics with the hetaireiai before leaving Athens, making arrangements 'to avoid further delay' (*ωστε μηκετι διαμελλεσθαι*, Thuc. 54.4); and the next we hear of events at Athens (65.2) is the assassination of Androkles which marked the start of the reign of terror. It has thus been generally and rightly assumed that this occurred not long after Peisandros' departure; and even Lang (*AJPh* 88 (1967) 181), who places the 'first assembly' later than anyone else, says that by the City Dionysia 'politics were (had to be?) studiously avoided in favour of literary escapism'—and that though she mistakenly places the Dionysia in March instead of April. For a possible objection based on *Th.* 356 ff., see the Appendix.

Now far be it from me to suggest that Aristophanes was devoid of courage. But when we have two plays by the same author, produced within at most a year of one another, during a period part of which was filled by a reign of terror (that part including one dramatic festival), one of the plays being highly political and the other non-political: it would require very strong evidence indeed to assign the highly political play to the period of the reign of terror, and such evidence is just not forthcoming. Further, there is courage and courage. It is one thing, as Aristophanes had done before in his battles with Kleon, to risk legal prosecution. It is quite another to risk being murdered, particularly if the killer would go unpunished; it is well known to what (to us) bizarre lengths Athenian law went to ensure that no one died unnaturally without somebody or something being punished for it. Aristophanes survived all the political upheavals of the years 411–403; it is very, very hard to credit him with the suicidal recklessness that it would have taken to put on a play like *Lys.* at the City Dionysia of 411.

There is therefore the strongest of presumptions that *Lys.* was produced at Lenaia 411, either before or just after the 'first assembly' addressed by Peisandros. In itself this does not determine the dating of *Th.*; but on the one hand the political reticence of the play, and on the other the entire absence (apart from the disputed passage 808 f.) of any reference to the extraordinary political and military events of the summer of 411, tell very strongly in favour of City Dionysia 411,⁵⁷ and, as we have seen, other types of evidence also on the whole favour this date.

It remains to show that there is nothing in the situation reflected in the plays that is inconsistent with these conclusions about their date; the arguments on the other side have been most fully presented by Gelzer, and I shall follow the order in which he presents them.

Gelzer claims (col. 1468.57 ff.) that *Th.* presupposes that the 'illusion' of Persian help conjured up by Peisandros at the 'first assembly' had not yet passed away. This is correct, and it is also correct, on anybody's chronology, that by the City Dionysia there was *in fact* no longer any chance of that help being forthcoming. But was this known in Athens? There is no reason to suppose that it was, and every reason to suppose that it was not; for it was obviously in the oligarchs' interest to conceal as long as possible the fact that the prospective benefits for whose sake the Athenian people had been asked to change their constitution had vanished into thin air. And would Peisandros and company have spent such a long time (at least six weeks, at most eleven or twelve⁵⁸) cruising round the Aegean, setting up oligarchies and collecting troops (Thuc. 65.1), if they had thought there was a serious risk of the truth becoming generally known in Athens? Recall, too, that even if some Athenians outside the circle of conspirators were to discover what had happened, they would be unlikely to dare to pass the information on, for it was a time when no man trusted his neighbour (Thuc. 66.3–5). I see, therefore, no decisive reason to reject the view that the failure of the negotiations was not generally known even when, at the end of May, Peisandros returned to Athens.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ This is admitted by Gelzer (1467.67–1468.2). Dr P. J. Rhodes has suggested that Aristophanes' silence might be explicable if in 410 'feelings [were] so strong that Ar. thought it better to play safe'; but for one thing this does not account for the fact that even about less sensitive events (such as naval victories) the silence is deafening, and for another, *if Th.* was produced in 410, far from 'playing safe' Aristophanes attacks the oligarchic coup and the leading democrat Kleophon in the same breath (805–9). (Rhodes argues in effect that that passage could have been added shortly before production, when tensions had eased; the plausibility of this suggestion must be judged in the light of the other evidence, positive and negative, presented in this paper.)

⁵⁸ Busolt puts the breakdown of the negotiations before the end of February, and Peisandros' arrival

in Athens in late May; we cannot tell how long it was before he left Samos, but that does not matter to the point I am making—whether in Samos or going round the islands, the oligarchs were in no hurry. Lang, *AJPh* 88 (1967) 179, has Peisandros leaving Samos in the second week of April and reaching Athens in the last week of May.

⁵⁹ This is Lang's view in both her 1948 and 1967 articles. In the latter, in reply to the criticisms of C. Hignett, *A History of the Athenian Constitution* 364, she points out (p. 179) that 'even if news of the third treaty between Sparta and Tissaphernes had reached Athens before Peisander's return the deception could still have been carried out, since it must have been as clear to onlookers as it was to the signers that Spartan–Persian treaties at this time had little real effect and had constantly to be replaced. Until news came of strong Persian support to the Spartans

Gelzer's next three arguments (1468.65–1469.19) are very weak. I am not clear why the reference (*Th.* 836 ff.) to 'wicked trierarchs and bad steersmen' and to Hyperbolos in contrast with Lamachos should tell in favour of the Lenaia. As far as I can make out, the argument is that this indicates a special interest in Samos, where both the navy and Hyperbolos were at the time. But there is similar interest in *Lys.*, where indeed Samos is named (313), as it is not in *Th.* I am equally bemused when it is suggested that the mention of Peisandros in *Lys.* fits *better* with that play being produced at the City Dionysia; and when Gelzer concludes 'in die Zeit der mehr latenten innenpolitischen Gefahr vor der erneuten Agitation des Peisandros passen die freieren politischen Anspielungen der Lysistrate', this is unexceptionable—provided the phrase I have emphasized is replaced by 'vor dem Terror der Oligarchen'. Then indeed there was 'latent danger'; there is nothing very latent about a knife in one's back.

Gelzer brings further arguments to bear in his section on *Lys.* (1474 f.). His 'proof' (1474.21–36) that *Lys.* postdates the 'first assembly' is based on a misunderstanding of the crucial passage (cf. p. 113 and note 17 above) and in any case, as we have seen, would not prove that the play postdates the Lenaia. Then is it really true (Gelzer 1475. 8–11) that 'dagegen fehlen hier . . . Anspielungen auf die im Februar [oder März] gescheiterten Verhandlungen mit den Persern und auf Alkibiades'? Certainly there is no explicit reference to Alkibiades (though I shall be suggesting presently that he was far from being out of Aristophanes' mind at the time). But the Persians are referred to rather often in *Lys.*, directly or indirectly: at 285 we hear of the trophy of Marathon, at 653 of τὰ Μηδικά, at 675 of Artemisia who fought at Salamis, at 1133 of 'enemies with a barbarian army';⁶⁰ above all, at 1247 ff., Aristophanes chooses to crown the reconciliation of Athenians and Spartans with a song about Artemision and Thermopylai. Thus every battle of the Persian Invasions is remembered in the play, with the exception of Plataia, where the Boiotians, who are to be included in the general Hellenic concord (35, 40, 86 ff., 697), were rather too prominent on the wrong side. Indeed, there is much more about the Persians in *Lys.* than there is in *Th.* But we should not make this an argument for the relative dating of the plays. The allusions fit any period when Athens and Sparta were each hoping for Persian support against the other, instead of doing what Aristophanes (a true 'Kimonian' as de Ste Croix⁶¹ happily terms him) thinks they ought to be doing, namely combining to resist the encroachment of Persian power.⁶²

'Das Friedenthema,' says Gelzer finally (1475.28–36), 'hatte nach dem Scheitern der Verhandlungen mit den Persern . . . eine erneute Aktualität erhalten, und A. scheint hier wie im Frieden . . ., auch die aktuelle Situation, wie sie sich kurz vor der Aufführung entwickelt hatte, berücksichtigt zu haben.' But since the peace-theme is the heart of the play,

Peisander and his colleagues could even claim that Tissaphernes had made the third treaty in order to keep the Spartans quiet and unsuspecting while he waited for the Athenians to achieve the degree of oligarchy he had set as the price of his help'. And such strong Persian support was never given either before or during the ascendancy of the Four Hundred.

⁶⁰ From this last reference K. J. Dover, *Aristophanic Comedy* 170, thinks he can infer that *Lys.* is more likely to have been produced at the Lenaia, for in that case 'the reference to barbarian enemies is one about which the Athenians could feel self-righteous'; an idea which is found in the scholion on the passage. But such a reference, gratifying to Athens and a reproach against Sparta, is exactly what is *not* wanted in the context. The body of Lysistrata's speech is composed of three well-marked sections, divided by comments (mostly irrelevant) from her addressees: (a) criticism of Athenians and Spartans κωμῆ (1129) for waging a Greek civil war (1128–35); (b) criticism of Spartans for forgetting how they were once 'saved' by Kimon (1137–1146);

(c) criticism of Athenians for forgetting how Sparta helped them to overthrow Hippias (1149–56). The line about barbarian enemies comes in (a), and it would destroy the carefully maintained balance of the scene if at this point Lysistrata were to make a one-sided jibe at the Spartans; it must be a thrust at a spot where *both* sides are vulnerable. By itself, therefore, this passage does not provide the mileage Dover wants from it. Incidentally, although the passage proves that at least some Athenians were hoping to enlist Persia as an ally, it does not prove that the play is later than the 'first assembly'; for such hopes must already have existed before that assembly, seeing that nobody, when challenged by Peisandros, claimed to have any hope of σωτηρία *except* by persuading the King to change sides (*Thuc.* 53.2–3).

⁶¹ G. E. M. de Ste Croix, *The Origins of the Peloponnesian War* 358.

⁶² Just as ten years previously in *Peace* (possibility of joint Athenian–Spartan hegemony, 1082; danger of Persian domination if war continues, 108, 406 ff.).

this can be an argument for dating the play to the City Dionysia only if we assume that the whole idea of the play, both conception and execution, took shape in the interval of at most a few weeks between the news of the failure of the negotiations (granting, improbably as I believe, that the news was known at Athens) and the City Dionysia; in which case it is hard to see how Aristophanes (or rather Kallistratos⁶³) could have been granted a chorus the previous summer for a play not merely unwritten but unplanned. If on the other hand it had been in Aristophanes' mind for some months to write a play of the general type of *Lys.*, the fact (if it is a fact) that its theme had unexpectedly become particularly topical by the time of the City Dionysia is not evidence (unless Aristophanes had second sight) that it was not produced at the Lenaia. Further, Gelzer's argument is based on a false premise and a false parallel. For Aristophanes the importance of making peace did not vary inversely with Athenian chances of success in the war: it mattered as much shortly after the victories at Pylos and Arginousai⁶⁴ as at other times. And though *Peace* was certainly highly appropriate to the situation at the time of production, there had been no fundamental change in that situation since both parties had turned decisively towards peace after the battle of Amphipolis (cf. Thuc. *v 14.1).

A striking difference between *Lys.* and *Th.* is in their attitude to tyranny. Wherever the notion appears in Aristophanes' earlier plays it is a boggy-word used by the radicals to smear their opponents, often associated with accusations of philolaconianism; and *Lys.* falls exactly into this pattern. Expressly or by implication, 'tyranny' means the tyranny of Hippias, which had ended as a reality in 510 and as a threat in 490.⁶⁵

In *Th.*, as has before now been noted,⁶⁶ things are very different. The chorus pray and curse against tyranny with real feeling (338 f., 1143 f.); and Gelzer, surely rightly, associates this with fears of a tyranny of Alkibiades.^{66a}

Now if the reader has agreed with the argument up to this point, in particular that the ordinary Athenian still believed that his city had a chance of securing Persian support through Alkibiades, he will agree that fears of a tyranny of Alkibiades are not out of place at the City Dionysia of 411. But why do we hear nothing of these fears in *Lys.*?

There are three possible explanations. One is that *Lys.* was in fact produced at the City Dionysia: we have seen what difficulties that hypothesis leads to. The second is that it was produced before the decision was taken to negotiate with Alkibiades. The third is that *Lys.* reflects the feelings and expectations of the period directly after the 'first assembly'. At that time, even if Alkibiades returned, there seemed no reason to fear that he would return as tyrant; all he had demanded was some form of oligarchy, or as Peisandros had put it (Thuc. 53.1) 'not the present form of democracy'.

The second explanation cannot be excluded; but I favour the third. For the possibility of Alkibiades' return is not ignored in *Lys.* Several passages of the play evince a remarkable interest in events of some years previously. When the Proboulos enters, it is thirty-four lines before we hear what he has come for; first he launches into a long tirade nominally on

⁶³ Hypothesis I to *Lys.*, *sub fnem.*

⁶⁴ *Knights* 792-809 (Kleon prolonging war to divert attention from his own crimes), 1388-95 (Demos presented with *σπονδαὶ τριακοντούτιδες*); *Frogs* 1531-3 (if Athens acts sensibly she can save herself from suffering and battle).

⁶⁵ *Wasps* 464 ff., 473 ff. (mention of Brasidas), 488 ff. (mention of Hippias 502); *Birds* 1074 f.; *Lys.* 616 ff. (Hippias 619, Spartans 629). Cf. also *Knights* 447 ff. ('Your grandfather was a bodyguard to Hippias' wife').

⁶⁶ As by Gelzer 1468.37 ff. Dover, *Aristophanic Comedy* 171 f., supposes that when Aristophanes says tyranny he means oligarchy; but the singular τὸν τύραννον at *Th.* 339 confirms what we would expect from a consideration of Aristophanes' references to tyranny in other plays—that he means the rule of one man such as Hippias. No doubt democratic

politicians were eager to misrepresent oligarchic movements as plots to establish a tyranny; the hatred of tyranny in popular consciousness was far stronger, and besides, plotting tyranny was a legal crime and advocating oligarchy probably was not (cf. note 82). But Aristophanes had for years, right up to *Lysistrata*, laughed at the politicians for doing precisely this; are we to suppose he now does it himself?

^{66a} Individually each passage can be explained away (338 f. as part of the standard curse, 1143 f. as, in Rogers' words, 'a mere ordinary democratic compliment'); but why two of them, and why is this attitude to tyranny taken only in this play? The metrical incongruity of 1143 f. with its context is also relevant: 'only the bacchiac line, the cry to Athena, arrests the quick [prosodiac] movement and strikes a note of sudden gravity' (A. M. Dale, *The Lyric Metres of Greek Drama*² 166 f.).

the indiscipline and immorality of women, but actually, to begin with, about something quite different:

. . . I heard it once in the assembly. Demostratos, curse him, was saying we should sail to Sicily, and this woman was dancing and crying 'Alas for Adonis!'; Demostratos recommended enrolling hoplites from Zakynthos, and this half-drunk woman on the roof said 'Lament for Adonis!' But the abominable, god-hated Cholozyges bulldozed on with his speech. (390-7)

The real point is obviously that the decision to send troops to Sicily was accompanied by evil omens: that somebody at such a moment should mention the death of the young and handsome Adonis was an obvious κληδών when thousands of young men were about to be sent to fight. And as everybody knew, the prime advocate of the expedition had been Alkibiades. There is also a briefer reference later on (589 f.) to young men being sent out as hoplites, cut short by the Proboulos who asks Lysistrata 'not to recall past wrongs'. There will hardly have been anyone in the audience who had not lost a relative in the Sicilian disaster; and we can be sure that in the 'first assembly' Alkibiades' responsibility for that disaster was not overlooked by those who spoke against his recall.

Eventually, when the women's sanctions have begun to bite, Spartan ambassadors arrive at Athens and are presently met by their Athenian opposite numbers. Both are in a permanent state of frustrated erection owing to the women's strike; so much so that the chorus-leader is alarmed for their safety (1093 f.); 'If you're wise you'll put on your himatia, to make sure none of the Hermokopidai sees you'. The mutilation of the Hermai was now four years old, but we can be sure that it too was not forgotten in the assembly debate. Alkibiades had not been accused of having participated in it, but he had been accused of profanation of the Mysteries—as the Athenians were powerfully reminded in the 'first assembly' (Thuc. 53.2); and the two acts of sacrilege were widely believed to be part of one great anti-democratic conspiracy (Thuc. *vi 28.2).

Only one other event of the previous few years is recalled in *Lys.*, but to my mind it clinches the argument that Aristophanes in this play is insinuating, drip by drip, the message that Alkibiades ought not to be recalled. Lysistrata says to the Proboulos:

All through the last war,⁶⁷ by our own self-control, we endured whatever you men did; for you wouldn't let us say a syllable. But we certainly weren't satisfied with you! We were very well aware of what you were up to, and often in the house we'd hear that you'd mismanaged something of great importance. Then, inwardly grieving, we'd smile and ask you, 'What did you decide today in the assembly to inscribe on the stele about the peace-treaty?' 'What's that to you?' the husband would reply. 'Shut up!' And I shut up. (507-515)

In 419/8 Athens repudiated the peace treaty of 421 by inscribing beneath it 'The Spartans have not kept their oaths'; a repudiation which was decided upon, so we are told, 'on the advice of Alkibiades' (Thuc. *v 56.3).

In short, at the time of *Lys.* the poet was concerned to present Alkibiades as a person who had offended the gods (and with whose recall they might therefore be angry) and whose advice to the Athenians had been consistently bad and had consistently led to disastrous consequences. He expected that if recalled Alkibiades would resume the position he had held in the state between 420 and 415, not that he would try to attain absolute power. But he regards the whole matter as of secondary importance compared with the imperative necessity of peace, and so it is only alluded to at these few points in the play and Alkibiades is never named.

But as week after week passed without any news from the ambassadors sent to treat with Alkibiades and Tissaphernes, Aristophanes' suspicions will have burgeoned. Alkibiades' political demands had to all intents and purposes been accepted by the people when they

⁶⁷ MSS, with slight variations, τὸν μὲν πρότερον πόλεμον καὶ τὸν χρόνον, which must be wrong; no emendation is convincing, and the translation is highly tentative.

empowered the ambassadors to make what terms they thought best.⁶⁸ So what could have caused the delay, if not that Alkibiades had raised his price, and with the approval of Tissaphernes (if not indeed of the King himself) was demanding absolute power? Was not the mysterious murder of his old enemy Androkles,⁶⁹ and perhaps already of others too, ominous in this connection? Aristophanes was not everybody's ideal democrat, as de Ste Croix has shown;⁷⁰ but he would have agreed wholeheartedly with Haimon⁷¹ that a πόλις under the absolute rule of one man is no true πόλις. (Quite apart from anything else, what under a tyranny, does a comic poet do?)

Aristophanes' view of the situation was totally mistaken. By April the prospect of an alliance with Persia and of the return of Alkibiades no longer existed; the πόλις was under threat from a quite different direction. This ignorance on Aristophanes' part, which he shared with the great majority of his audience, may have saved him from a very tricky dilemma of conscience; for it meant that he did not have to take any attitude at all to the threat of oligarchy. To champion democracy openly was suicide. To support oligarchy must surely have been uncongenial for the man whose remedy for demagoguery was 'we must educate our masters' and whose hero hates aristocracy so much that he detests a man whose mere name reminds him of it.⁷² But real oligarchy did not seem to be a threat. The bogus proposal for a citizen body of about 5000⁷³ may have seemed to Aristophanes a mistake, but it was at least much less of a mistake than the rigid, narrow oligarchy that had previously seemed a possibility. Indeed, when the proposal actually came into force after the fall of the Four Hundred, it was totally unacceptable to the oligarchs themselves (Thuc. 92.11), and won the approval of people (like Thucydides, 97.2) who were not extremists of any kind. And nobody outside the plot knew in April that any project but that for the 5000 existed. So what we find Aristophanes doing in *Th.* is abstaining from all criticism of the 5000 plan and from all disparaging reference to the conspirators and to anyone in Athens who *might* be associated with them (which accounts for the extreme paucity of references to Athenian politicians in *Th.*). He attacks only the Persian alliance and the recall of Alkibiades, and even these sallies are veiled behind semi-ritual utterances by the chorus; Alkibiades is not named here any more than he had been in *Lys.*⁷⁴ Aristophanes had 'made his protest', and in such a way too that I shouldn't be surprised if the public were totally unaware that he had done anything of the sort. He had no hope of influencing events, except at a personal risk which was greater than he was prepared to take.

Thus it seems virtually certain to me that *Lys.* was written for the Lenaia, and *Th.* for the City Dionysia, of 411; and I would also argue that the political references in the plays are most easily accounted for on an early dating of the 'first assembly', though they do not absolutely necessitate this. Both plays are consistent with what seems for many years to have been Aristophanes' political creed: abroad, peace, to be followed by a league of all the Greek states under the joint leadership of Athens and Sparta, which should be prepared for a possible renewal of the struggle against Persia; at home, preferably a democracy tempered by deference, which should listen to the advice of the well-born, rich and educated;⁷⁵ and under no circumstances tyranny, above all Persian-backed tyranny, which Athens had risked all at Marathon to avoid—though in 406/5 circumstances became such as to make Aristophanes feel that the return of Alkibiades (now free of the Persian connexion), with all its dangers, might be the least of evils.⁷⁶

⁶⁸ Thuc. 54.2.

⁶⁹ Thuc. 65.2; the murder was surely before the Dionysia, cf. note 56.

⁷⁰ G. E. M. de Ste Croix, *The Origins of the Peloponnesian War*, Appendix XXIX.

⁷¹ Soph. *Ant.* 737.

⁷² *Knights* 1098 f., where Demos entrusts himself to the Sausage-seller *γερονταγωγείν κἀναπαιδεύειν πάλιν*; *Birds* 125 f., where the speaker may be Peisetairos rather than Euelpides (cf. B. Marzullo in *Philologus* 114 (1970) 181 ff.).

⁷³ I do not wish to be understood as taking

up any position on the details of this proposal.

⁷⁴ I do not know whether it is also relevant that the play is set at a festival of Demeter and Kore, the very deities whom Alkibiades had offended by his profanation of the Mysteries; probably not, since the comic opportunities offered by a secret women's festival are a sufficient explanation for this—indeed these opportunities were so tempting that Aristophanes later wrote another *Thesmophoriazusae*.

⁷⁵ On the last point cf. *Frogs* 718 ff., and on the whole subject de Ste Croix, *loc. cit.*

⁷⁶ *Frogs* 1432.

APPENDIX: THE MEANING OF *Thesmophoriazusae* 356 ff.

The chorus curse all women who

- (1) ἐξαπατῶσιν παραβαίνουσί τε τοὺς
ὄρκους τοὺς νενομισμένους
κερδῶν οὐνεκ' ἐπὶ βλάβῃ, 360
- (2) ἢ ψηφίσματα καὶ νόμον
ζητοῦσ' ἀντιμεθιστάναι . . .

Each of these clauses has been taken to allude to the oligarchs. Of the first it has been said⁷⁷ that its words 'at a time when the oligarchs' plans were no longer secret . . . can hardly not refer to plans to change the constitution, and they not only exhort people to stick to the existing order but also suggest that the reformers have corrupt motives'. To this it may be answered (1) that the clause is expressed in very general terms; (2) that a similar curse was presumably uttered at real assemblies in the spring of 411, which did not stop those assemblies taking all and only the measures that the oligarchs wanted them to take; (3) that 360 excludes from the curse all who act sincerely in the national interest, even in violation of their oaths, and the clause would thus be a singularly ineffective exhortation against the oligarchs, since their professed claim, which no one had been able to refute, was that theirs was the only way to avoid defeat and disaster; (4) that on these grounds the clause is best taken to refer simply to councillors, magistrates and perhaps jurors who corruptly violate the law, but (5) if it does have a (very heavily veiled) constitutional reference this is probably to the danger of a tyranny (of Alkibiades) as in 338 f., but being, like the earlier allusion, in familiar and conventional language, would probably pass unnoticed by the audience, in sharp contrast to (for example) the graphic passages on the repudiation of the peace treaty, and on the decision to sail to Sicily, which were quoted above from *Lysistrata*.

The meaning of the second clause, 361 f., depends on that of ἀντιμεθιστάναι, which is used transitively only here. Aristotle uses its passive to mean 'change places',⁷⁸ and so the meaning here has been thought⁷⁹ to be 'change decrees into law and law into decrees'. Such an interpretation, however, presupposes a sharp distinction between νόμοι and ψηφίσματα which at this date is probably anachronistic.⁸⁰ It is preferable to take ψηφίσματα καὶ νόμον as a general expression for 'legislative enactments' and ἀντιμεθιστάναι as meaning 'change into their opposites, turn back to front, put into reverse'.⁸¹ If this, or something like it, is correct, it would appear that this part of the curse is directed against those who make proposals in the assembly which violate existing legislation (and which are therefore open to challenge by γραφή παρανόμων). And the publicly known plans to change the constitution probably were not contrary to any existing legislation.⁸² There may also,

⁷⁷ By Professor Andrewes (personal communication), to whom I again express my thanks.

⁷⁸ Cf. *LSJ* s.v.

⁷⁹ Dover, *Aristophanic Comedy* 170 f., who tries by a rather strained interpretation to apply the clause to the oligarchs.

⁸⁰ See J. Schreiner, *De corpore iuris Atheniensium* (Diss. Bonn 1913) 16; M. Ostwald, *Nomos and the Beginnings of Athenian Democracy* 2; P. J. Rhodes, *The Athenian Boule* 49.

⁸¹ One may compare the use of μεταστρέφειν and ἀντιστρέφειν in similar senses, e.g. *Ar. Ach.* 537, *Arist. An.Pr.* 59b4 (cf. sense 5 of ἀντιστρέφειν in W. D. Ross's note on *ib.* 25a6).

⁸² It seems likely that until the summer of 410 the only Athenian law for the protection of the constitution was the law against tyranny cited by *Arist. Ath. Pol.* xvi 10; the decree of Demophantos (*Andok.* i 96-8; first prytany of 410/09) broadened the terms

of the old law to include any kind of κατάλυσις τῆς δημοκρατίας, and increased the penalty from ἀτιμία to death, when events had shown that this was necessary. See M. Ostwald, 'The Athenian Legislation against Tyranny and Subversion', *TAPhA* 86 (1955) 103-28. This view is confirmed by the curious fact that in Aristophanes the expressions τυραννίς and κατάλυσις τοῦ δήμου (with their cognates) are in 'complementary distribution', the former occurring only before the decree of Demophantos (except for *Pl.* 124 and *fr.* 357, which relate to Zeus and to the mythical Thoas), the latter only thereafter (*Ec.* 453, *Pl.* 948). If Athens made κατάλυσις τοῦ δήμου an offence in some of the allied states, that proves nothing about the legal position in Athens itself. Nor does the suspension of the γραφή παρανόμων at the Kolonos assembly (*Thuc.* 67.2) prove that constitutional changes in an oligarchic sense were contrary to law; a γραφή παρανόμων did not need

once again, be a heavily veiled reference to the recall of Alkibiades—*δεινὸν . . . εἰ τοὺς νόμους βιασάμενος κάττεισι*, his enemies had said at the ‘first assembly’ (Thuc. 53.2); but here as before there is nothing to indicate to the audience that the significance of the passage is other than purely conventional.

Aristophanes need not therefore in this passage be supposed to be expressing opposition to the 5000 project—the only constitutional project of which he can have known—and his opposition to the recall of Alkibiades, though it may be there, is not brought into the open here any more than elsewhere in the play.

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to be justified in order to be effective at least in delaying the implementation of the proposal impugned until its legality had been judicially confirmed, and delay would be fatal once the true nature of the oligarchs' scheme was known (on this cf. Hignett, *A History of the Athenian Constitution* 276, 359–60).