

Aristophanes Frogs 819

Commentators have always had to resort to conjecture to explain the expression σκινδαλάμων παραξόνια satisfactorily, for the ancient explanations make nonsense. But though Van Herwerden's παραξόνα, adopted by Wilamowitz (*Griechische Verskunst* 352) in conjunction with Blass' σμιλευματοεργού, is now considered less improbable, the received text should have preference, if it can be explained reasonably and more convincingly than by Taillardat (*REG* 1948) and Radermacher, both of whose explanations suffer from the weakness that they assume the association of subtlety (σκινδάλαμοι) and noisiness, a most improbable conjuncture.

I suggest that a far more likely association for subtleties is the word forensic; and that the word παραξόνιος, a most characteristic Greek adjectival formation (*Debrunner, Griechische Wortbildungslehre*, § 51, § 147) was used here by Aristophanes as the approximate equivalent of δικανικός, the reference being to the ἀξονες set up in the Stoa Basileios, pre-eminently a place of judgement (*RE s. v. 'Stoa'*). The expression then means 'forensic subtleties', the construction being of the type of *strata viarum* (cf. Norden on *Aen.* vi 633).

The well-known forensic tendencies of Euripides harmonise well with this explanation (Peace 534; Frogs 775, with Radermacher's note, and the schol. ad loc. explaining the popularity of E. 's forensic skill with the τοιχώρυχοι). So does Aristophanes' tendency to indicate the courts obliquely by allusion to court appurtenances, as implied in this explanation: *Ach.* 692 γέροντ' ἀπολέσαι πολὺν ἄνδρα περι κλεψύδραν (cf. *ib.* 683; *Wasps* 92 sq., 124, 321, 349, 386, 552; *Birds* 1694; frg. 210 K.). Further, the expression σμιλεύματα τ' ἔργων with which the words σκινδαλάμων παραξόνια are linked, is an Ironisierung of the terminology of sophistic rhetoric (Radermacher; cf. frg. 609 K.), and so, harmonises with the above interpretation in view of the close connection of sophistic rhetoric with the courts (cf. *Birds* 1694—1705; *Wasps* 421; *Knights* 1375 sqq., where the idle young discuss a court case in a burlesque of sophistic jargon). The only other example of the use of the word σκινδάλαμοι in Aristophanes has forensic implications: at *Clouds* 130, Strepsiades, whose sole aim is to acquire the forensic skill to get rid of his debts, views the learning of the necessary σκινδάλαμοι with misgiving.

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