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## Out-Foxing the Wolf-Walker: Lycambes as Performative Rival to Archilochus

Lycambes, the most famous of Archilochus' whipping boys, is everywhere upstaged in the surviving iambic texts and *testimonia*. This paper seeks to reconstruct something of Lycambes' voice and its role in the Archilochean tradition. I begin with a reconsideration of Archilochus' "first epode" and argue that Lycambes is styled as an older public rival to Archilochus who questions the role of the poet's *iambos*. The preliminary results of this section are then strengthened by drawing upon two relevant episodes in the later ancient reception of Archilochean poetics: the sniping between Aristophanes and his older rival Cratinus and the Mnesiepes Inscription's tale of the uproar surrounding Archilochus' first performance. Lycambes emerges from this study as a character constructed to question the value and status of the iambist within the social space of contemporary Paros. As such, his criticisms afford Archilochus the opportunity to trumpet his claim to the very cultural capital that Lycambes strives to deny him. More than just a private enemy, Lycambes raises aesthetic and ethical debates that can still be heard throughout the iambographic tradition.

### LYCAMBES GETS CAPPED

The *vita* tradition surrounding Archilochus tells us that he and Lycambes came into conflict over a broken marriage contract. In this section I argue that Archilochus' first epode admits a second, complementary layer of signification. Namely, I suggest that in the realm of public prestige Lycambes is presented as an older rival who mocks the poet's voice. Such a confrontation places an aesthetic and ethical debate at the center of the iambic universe. Lycambes does

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not just turn his back on Archilochus; he also flouts the young poet's standing in the community by publicly rejecting Archilochean poetics. In the following sections we will see that this understanding of Lycambes fits well into later iambic encounters where questions of poetics and public standing are regularly at the root of abusive displays. And as in the archaic material, these iambic quarrels are often couched in terms of friction between generations.

The opening lines of Archilochus' first epode begin to map out this dynamic by presenting the poet's words as a public response to an older man:

Πάτερ Λυκάμβρα, ποῖον ἐφράσω τόδε;  
 τίς σὰς παρήειρε φρένας  
 ἧς τὸ πρὶν ἠρήρησθα· νῦν δὲ δὴ πολὺς  
 ἀστοῖσι φαίνεαι γέλως.

fr. 172 West

Father Lycambes, what is this you've come up with?!  
 Who has taken away your wits,  
 which used to be sound? Now indeed you seem  
 altogether ridiculous to the townspeople.<sup>1</sup>

Here we see Archilochus lash out at a Lycambes who is older, mentally unhinged, and the object of public mockery. This initial gambit, then, begins to style Lycambes as a performer, since whatever he has contrived or planned, *ephrasô*, the general public has responded with laughter.<sup>2</sup> This means that Archilochus wants us to understand Lycambes' behavior as enacted upon the stage of public

1. All translations, unless otherwise noted, are my own.

2. Some may assume that the laughter in fr. 172 is a direct result of the perjury described in fr. 173:

ὄρκον δ' ἐνοσφίσθης μέγαν / ἄλλας τε καὶ τράπεζαν.

You have turned your back on a great oath / sworn by salt and table.

Certainly West's consecutive numbering of these fragments suggests such a reading, and there is some justification for this, especially Origen *Contr. Cels.* 2.21, which explicitly claims that fr. 173 derives from Archilochus' invective against Lycambes, and Dio *Or.* 74.16, which indicates that the oath had been sworn to contract a marriage agreement. None of this, however, provides any indication of the original arrangement of the epode. Furthermore, I am not convinced that these passages should be analyzed in terms of one another. In particular, I feel that perjury (especially an instance involving a *megas horkos*, "great oath") was not the sort of social transgression that would naturally elicit laughter from the locals. Hesiod tells us that any god who breaks a *megas horkos* must spend one year in a coma and another nine years excluded from the company of the other divinities (*Th.* 793–803); Achaean speakers in the *Iliad* regularly connect the ultimate doom of Troy to the violation of the oath sworn in Book 3 (e.g. 4.157, 4.236; cf. 7.351); and Alcaeus emblemizes his anger against Pittacus over the civil strife on Lesbos through mention of his enemy's perjury (fr. 129.21–24). The latter two examples have particular relevance for my reading of Lycambes: the Iliadic oath at 3.299 includes the stipulation that anyone who breaks the sworn pact will forfeit the lives of his children, a detail perhaps echoed in the story of the Lycambids' suicides; and Alcaeus' poem shares certain affinities with iambic poetry (see Andrisano 2001) and targets an enemy known as a poet in other sources (Diog. Laert. 1.68). It should also be noted that in their editions of Archilochus Lasserre 1950, Treu 1959, and Tarditi 1968 place the perjury fragment toward the end

perception. Whether Lycambes willingly stepped into that crucible of scrutiny or Archilochus has poetically dragged him into the spotlight against his will, Lycambes has entered the world of social performance; he exists, for us, in that arena in which a man's standing in the community can rise or fall through the collective response to his actions and behavior. Richard Martin has shown that it was largely in these displays of public contestation that both Homeric heroes and the Seven Sages constructed and promoted their standing within their respective communities.<sup>3</sup> A similar dynamic informs these lines of Archilochus: his iambs portray a confrontation in which the speaker vaunts his own position by undermining that of a rival.

At this point we should keep in mind that Lycambes' laughable failings derive solely from Archilochus' own pleading efforts in that same contentious showcase of bravura and ambition. Whether such an interchange can be shown to be historical or a mimetic game is, at the level of poetics, immaterial. Lycambes, if he existed at all, may not have been as witless and risible as Archilochus asks us to believe. We are not yet (and may never be) in a position to decide whether Lycambes will turn out to be a Thersites or a Cleon. The inability of the former to present himself and his opinions in a positive light in *Iliad* 2 shows the consequences of overreaching one's grasp;<sup>4</sup> and the latter's election to an Athenian generalship in the immediate aftermath of Aristophanes' pillorying of him in *Knights* cautions that the poetics of attack may succeed as poetry (Aristophanes won the prize for his play) but fail to ruin the standing of its target.<sup>5</sup> All we can say for the moment is that Archilochus is coaxing us to join in the laughter, and the blunt eloquence of this coerced ridicule seeks to divert us from considering too closely what Lycambes actually has done. As Theodor Adorno knew, "He who has laughter on his side has no need of proof."

But Archilochus also lets us know that Lycambes is more than just an old fool whom he can publicly lambaste. The epode gives him a voice that rivals that of the iambist himself. While various *testimonia* suggest that Lycambes' delusion and the popular laughter at his expense are all related to the breaking of the marriage arrangement, Archilochus' version of the fable of the fox and the eagle (fr. 172–84) suggests a more reciprocal, competitive dynamic. The fable has regularly been read as a window into an earlier stage in the relationship between Archilochus and Lycambes based on the fable's opening focus on the

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of the epode as a retrospective on the speaker's charges against Lycambes rather than as a direct explanation of fr. 172.

3. Martin 1989 and 1993.

4. For the more positive characterization of Thersites outside the *Iliad* see, most recently, Rosen 2003 and Marks 2005.

5. Such dire confrontations within an oral culture are alive and well even today. The contentious smack-talk between rap stars Ja Rule and 50 Cent was so bitter and efficacious that not only did Ja Rule's popularity and record sales plummet for a time, but each star has accused the other of inciting violence against him. For a fascinating account of the very personal, very catty, and very clever repartee between *taarab* singers in Tanzania, see Askew 2002.

agreement between the two animals to establish friendly relations. By reading the fox as Archilochus and the eagle as Lycambes, Elizabeth Irwin and Christopher Brown have argued independently that the fable in its Archilochean context hinges on issues of human fertility that connect back to stories of the cancelled marriage.<sup>6</sup>

If one accepts the idea that Archilochus' poetry can be better understood through the lens of the *vita* tradition's story of the broken marriage pact, then this reading makes abundant sense. Yet even so it fails to offer a sufficient explanation for a striking Archilochean innovation in the fable: the Lycambean eagle mocks the Archilochean fox. In the surviving Aesopic version of this tale, the eagle does no such thing and, after initially agreeing to live in harmony with the fox, is portrayed simply as a bird of prey without any human traits, such as speech or an interest in gloating. This important adaptation opens the door to understanding Lycambes not just as a laughable old codger, but also as someone who performs his rejection of Archilochean poetics in an invective voice of his own. In the poet's version of the fable, the fox (evidently speaking to herself) describes the eagle as making light of (*elaphrizôn*) her anger, frustration, and inability to take revenge for the death of her young:<sup>7</sup>

ὄρᾱς ἴν' ἐστὶ κείνος ὑψηλὸς πάγος,  
 τρηχὺς τε καὶ παλίγκοτος;  
 ἐν τῷι κάθηται, σὴν ἐλαφρίζων μάχην.  
 fr. 176

Do you see that high crag,  
 Steep and inaccessible?  
 He sits on it scoffing at your assault.

At this point the eagle/Lycambes has temporarily trumped the fox's/Archilochus' poetic voice. Issues of fertility may well be important here, but we should not ignore the striking image of the speaker's alter ego upstaged by the highly visible (*horais*, "do you see?") performance of his enemy.

How are we to understand this new twist on the tale? The idea of inter-species harmony disappears as soon as the eagle has snatched up the young foxes, and so the eagle's mockery enters the story only after its bond with the fox has already been severed. Furthermore, such derisive thumbing of the nose at a helpless

6. Brown 1997: 65–66 and Irwin 1998: 179–82. Van Dijk 1997: 144, in his valuable study of fables in a vast array of classical literature, offers a different reading and puts the emphasis on the inevitable punishment of perjury. Yet the fable does not demand a single, exclusive interpretation and, consequently, I see nothing wrong with maintaining all of these readings as viable, complementary alternatives.

7. The idea, now generally accepted, that the fox speaks these lines to herself was first proposed by Mette 1961. This identification is not certain. Brown 1997: 62n.68 seems to favor the idea that the eagle speaks these lines tauntingly to the fox following Meineke's emendation of *kathêtai*, "he sits," to the first-person *kathêmai*, "I sit." On either interpretation, however, the eagle mocks the fox.

opponent is out of keeping with the depiction of the eagle up to this point (or the typical characterization of birds of prey more generally in fable narratives.) Rather, the eagle's behavior, enacted from a position of presumed safety because of its physical elevation, seems to be a contemptuous dismissal of the fox's assault, which has been shown by Irwin to be explicitly poetic in fr. 177.<sup>8</sup>

When we consider this reading of the fable in conjunction with the story of the broken marriage pact, Lycambes begins to look not only like an obstacle to Archilochus' love interest, as the *testimonia* would lead us to believe, but also like someone who smugly rejects Archilochus' poetry. The eagle's taunting of the poetic fox makes abundant sense if we accept that Lycambes is portrayed as challenging the iambist's poetry with an abusive performance of his own.<sup>9</sup> The first epode, then, may dramatize a conflict in which the speaker lashes out with an aggressive riposte in an attempt to leapfrog over his opponent to a higher standing within the community. Archilochus' response to his older rival's mockery is cast as an Aesopic fantasy in which the poetic voice of the temporarily subordinate speaker (Archilochus is younger; the fox is lower) finds ultimate victory through his efficacious words.

The issue of age is reinforced here by the implications of the epode's first word, *pater*, "father."<sup>10</sup> Not surprisingly given its prominent position, this word raises complex interpretive possibilities and works simultaneously in two different semantic directions. In other contexts it can be used as a general honorific term, as at *Odyssey* 8.145 where Athena, disguised as a Phaeacian girl, calls Odysseus *xeine pater*, "welcomed sir," but, as has been noted, in fr. 172 it is obviously ironic or insulting inasmuch as it recalls the familial relationship that nearly existed between the two men.<sup>11</sup>

8. Irwin 1998: 181–82 compares Archilochean and Hesiodic uses of fables and concludes that Archilochus' fox is speaking poetry and, in particular, Hesiodic poetry. The fox's poetry, then, has more authority than the eagle understands; cf. Hesiod *WD* 202–12, and Steiner 2007.

9. It is interesting to note that the eagle is also a traditional symbol of Zeus. While birds of prey are frequent players in fables and we should not casually assume that such a creature stands for a figure outside the metaphorical world of animals, it is curious that Archilochus seems to be associated with complexes of god-hero antagonism as outlined by Nagy 1979: 289–300. Archilochus was both killed by someone nicknamed Corax, a name that has Apolline associations, and avenged by Delphic pronouncements; he may also have been discredited through some Dionysiac influence only to be restored and elevated through Dionysus' and/or Apollo's will (see below); given the fact that an Archilochean fable may be far more complex than its (later) "Aesopic" counterpart, might there not be an element of such antagonism with Zeus as well? Zeus is the eagle who destroys the fox's family, but also the divine power to which the fox appeals for justice. It should also be remembered, in this vein, that Archilochean poetry, just like lamentations for Achilles, has connections with Zeus' Olympia as hinted at by Pindar (*Ol.* 9.1–4) and discussed in the *scholia*.

10. This note of generational conflict reappears in the Mnesiepes Inscription, discussed below, in which Lycambes is explicitly described as (at least) a generation older than Archilochus. As Lycambes joins Archilochus' father on an embassy to Delphi, Archilochus is still a young boy herding his father's cattle.

11. Carey 1986: 60; Brown 1997: 55–56. Both argue that *pater* is particularly relevant since the biographical tradition makes clear that Lycambes is attacked in his capacity as a father.

I suspect, however, that the irony works at a deeper poetic level as well. The combination of the word *pater* with a proper name is ubiquitously associated in archaic poetry with only one figure: Zeus. This pairing occurs dozens of times in Homer (even without including the instances in which Zeus is referred to with some circumlocution rather than his actual name), is frequent throughout archaic poetry, and appears four times in Archilochus (fr. 25, 122, 177, 197). In fr. 197 someone laments, “Father Zeus, I have had no marriage!” This statement is most easily interpreted as referring to the broken marriage promise and may, therefore, derive from the same anti-Lycambid cycle of poetry as the first epode. Fr. 177, which is regularly considered to be part of the first epode, is a prayer for justice apparently spoken by the Aesopic fox and opens with an invocation of Father Zeus:

ὦ Ζεῦ, πάτερ Ζεῦ, σὸν μὲν οὐρανοῦ κράτος,  
 σὺ δ' ἔργ' ἐπ' ἀνθρώπων ὄρῳς  
 λεωργὰ καὶ θεμιστά, σοὶ δὲ θηρίων  
 ὕβρις τε καὶ δίκη μέλει.

Zeus, father Zeus, heaven's power is yours;  
 you see the deeds of men  
 dastardly and lawful, and the violence and justice  
 of beasts is your domain as well.

From both the wider archaic context and the more immediate connection between fr. 172 and 177 (and perhaps fr. 197 as well), it would appear that to say “father Lycambes” creates a satirical resonance with “father Zeus.”<sup>12</sup> While no mortal can hope to live up to such a lofty comparison, we might imagine a Priam or an Agamemnon delighting in this type of association as the terrestrial representative of Zeus' heavenly paternity. For Lycambes, however, the lexical resemblance merely highlights his shortcomings.

When Archilochus addresses Lycambes in this way, then, he erodes the age-based hierarchy that places the older man above the younger in terms of public standing.<sup>13</sup> The term *pater* is a particularly effective form of ironic address from a younger speaker, both because it challenges the authority naturally accorded to the older man by society and because, in fr. 177, the Archilochean fox calls upon the real *pater*, Zeus, to render judgment against the Lycambean eagle; Father Zeus trumps papa Lycambes. Furthermore, Archilochus' strategy for supplanting his

12. This jarring connection between Zeus and Lycambes might be paralleled by a similarly subtle comparison between the Archilochean fox and Zeus. Both characters are addressees of the word *horais*, “you see,” in fr. 176–77 and thus share a subjective view of events. The Archilochean fox “sees” where the eagle is; Zeus “sees” what the eagle has done; and Archilochus' audience “sees” who Lycambes really is. The eyes of everyone are turned against Archilochus' enemy while the witless Lycambes does not see what a mess he has gotten himself into.

13. Martin 1989: 23–26 offers a close reading of how the older Nestor asserts, articulates, and manipulates such age classifications in his words to Diomedes in *Il.* 9.

older rival's public standing hinges on the decline of Lycambes' *phrenes*, "wits." This dilapidation makes the word *pater* a subtle invective tool as it transforms the respect due to an elder honored for wisdom into the laughter due to a doddering old fool. Moreover, in this reading the abusive barbs attached to calling Lycambes *pater* can be explained without relying upon or contradicting the authority of the *testimonia*'s tale of a dissolved engagement.

One more word in fr. 172 may advance the age-based dimension of Archilochus' attack on Lycambes in the first epode, though the evidence is admittedly thin: *êrêrêstha*, from *arariskô*, "join closely, put together," can be understood as coloring Lycambes with subtle hues of both a skilled verbal adept and an unhinged fool. On the positive side, the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* uses *arariskô* to describe the process of poetic composition:

οὕτω σφιν καλῆ συνάρηρεν ἀοιδή.  
*Homeric Hymn to Apollo* 164

Their beautiful song was put together in this way.

Gregory Nagy has even suggested that the name "Homer" derives ultimately from the same root as *arariskô* and evokes "he who fits [the song] together."<sup>14</sup> Combining these two points creates the possibility that Lycambes was not merely a competent public figure but clever, eloquent, or even poetic prior to the gaffe alluded to in fr. 172.

The negative connotations of *arariskô* derive from associations with the only combination of a form of this verb with someone's *phrenes* in archaic literature outside of fr. 172. As Odysseus leaves behind the magical world of Circe's island he laments the fate of the young Elpenor, who fell to his death because he foolishly chose to sleep off the evening's bender on top of a roof. Odysseus describes the youth as having *phrenes* that are not *arêrô*s, "not well-ordered" (*Od.* 10.553). Early medical lore makes clear that one's *phrenes* normally grow apace with the natural increase of the body.<sup>15</sup> As such, it is lamentably understandable that the youngest member of Odysseus' crew should demonstrate such fatally bad judgment, but the older Lycambes has no excuse for his senselessness. The coincidence of age distinctions and foolish behavior in both poems hints at a Lycambes who is a parody of the unfortunate Elpenor and may even taunt that Lycambes too has plunged headlong to his demise. Thus, inasmuch as these faint semantic overtones are heard, the effect of *arariskô* is split between positive and negative connotations. Yet Archilochus marshals

14. Nagy 1979: 296–300, especially 296, 9n.2 for a discussion of the Indo-European background.

15. Democedes fr. 3 (Diels-Kranz): ἀυξανόμενου τοῦ σώματος συναύξονται <καὶ αἶ> φρένες, "As the body grows, so grow the *phrenes*." Cp. Hdt. 3.134. *Phrenes* in this instance surely refers to one's mental capabilities rather than the physical part of the body known as the *phrên*, since an assertion that the diaphragm grows with the body is pointlessly obvious.

these divergent associations to ensure that everything redounds to Lycambes' detriment by consigning the suggestion of his verbal talent to the past (he *was formerly* talented) and effectively negating that talent in the present (his wits *are now* unhinged). Archilochean invective stakes its success on controlling the perception of its rival.

As a final twist to this fable of competition, Archilochus' claim to victory may be emblemized in the name Lycambes. The mention of iambic names stirs up old debates over the historicity of named characters within Archilochus' corpus, and while many commentators are once again persuaded that Lycambes was a real, historical person, the matter is certainly not settled in any definitive way.<sup>16</sup> Rather than advocating one side or the other, I will draw upon the idea, proposed by Maria Bonanno some years ago, that Lycambes is a nickname.<sup>17</sup> In light of my suggestion that he is a verbal rival of Archilochus, it is important to emphasize the relevance of the word *iambos* as a perceived semantic element in Lycambes' name.<sup>18</sup> As the victim of Archilochus' iambics, and especially if his critical voice exists only within Archilochus' poetry, Lycambes is importantly situated within the social negotiation at work in that poetic universe. As a wolf, *lykos*, he is, as Gernet has shown, an outsider on the basis of Indo-European associations with wolves as symbols of ostracized loners.<sup>19</sup> His name, then, could suggest a character who has become an outsider specifically through the power of *iambos*. This type of malicious sobriquet need not preclude the possibility of a real historical figure skulking behind the name; nor should it imply any specific ritual or dramatic context.<sup>20</sup> As a perjurer and a personal enemy, Archilochus' target was ripe for a harsh attack, but as someone who challenged the very power

16. Carey 1986 is most often cited as the best case against West 1974: 27, who argues that Lycambes is a stock character whose name derives from "a traditional entertainment with some (perhaps forgotten) ritual basis." Brown 1997: 40–41 reinforces many of Carey's arguments: "In light of the large number of *redende Namen* in Greek, the central argument concerning names is specious."

17. Bonanno 1980. Cp. Gentili 1982: 24n.51. The basis for this line of reasoning in modern scholarship derives from a rhetorical question posed by West 1974: 26: "Is it not remarkable that the same element *-amb-* appears in the name of a figure who plays a recurrent part in the iambi of the most celebrated exponent of the genre?" Such speculation runs starkly against the opinion of Burnett 1983: 22 who sees the connections between *iambos* and Lycambes as an unfortunate coincidence that made him "a ready target for an abusive poet who liked to exploit animal fables as a mode of attack."

18. Most commentators who have dissected Lycambes' name have placed the emphasis on the importance of *-amb-*, "step," rather than on the larger poetic concept of *iambos* (a concept of which Archilochus was well aware in light of fr. 215: *καὶ μὴ οὐτ' ἰάμβων οὔτε τερπωλέων μέλει*, "I don't care about *iamboi* or pleasures"), e.g. West 1974: 26–27; Nagy 1979: 242. This approach emphasizes the idea of a "wolf-walker" in the name. Although strictly speaking *iambos* is not likely the root of Lycambes' name (if it were, we would expect *Lykiambos*), I feel that it is quite probable that this connection was felt on some level, and I see no reason to assume that a name so central to Archilochus' poetics should privilege one set of associations to the exclusion of the other.

19. Gernet 1981, cp. Nagy 1979: 242n.4. Brown 1997: 56 makes the point, suggested to him by S. R. Slings, that the tone of the word *pater* that begins fr. 172 "effectively treats Lycambes as a stranger and so puts him outside the community."

20. On the intriguing connections with wolf rituals, see Gernet 1981 and Burkert 1983: 84–93.

of the poet's abusive weapon, it is fitting that Lycambes' name should bear the titular scar of *iambos*.<sup>21</sup>

If his associations with a master of abuse have left their mark on Lycambes' very name, might we find poetic reverberations of their bitter confrontation in later, similarly hot-tempered encounters? In the next section I show how the model of Archilochus and Lycambes vying with one another for public standing fits well with many later examples of what may loosely be termed iambic encounters.

#### PERFORMATIVE RIVALRIES FROM ARCHILOCHUS TO MNESIEPES

Thus far I have suggested that Archilochus has styled Lycambes as an older figure who challenges the place of iambic poetry in Parian society through the eagle's mockery of the fox. In this section I briefly survey narratives involving three of the poets most closely associated with *iambos* in the years between Archilochus and Mnesiepes: Hipponax, Cratinus, and Callimachus. In so doing, I will suggest that Lycambes' antagonistic performance fits surprisingly well with much of what we find in later iambic encounters.

The best early example of this, which does not involve specifically verbal criticism but which may thereby demonstrate something of the flexibility and range of the archaic concept of performance, is preserved in the biographical tradition of Hipponax. According to the *testimonia* (as always, late and deserving of healthy suspicion), Hipponax's *iambos* bursts forth in response to Bupalus' parodic sculpture of him.<sup>22</sup> The sources record no reason for Bupalus' hostile art other than Hipponax's ugliness. Although much of Hipponax's biography appears to derive from the same traditions that produced Archilochus' *vita*, this episode of *ad hominem* attack in response to an unflattering sculpture seems to have little to do with accounts of Archilochus' career.<sup>23</sup> Yet it may be that both poets presented themselves as responding to aesthetic critiques that played out before their respective communities. Their retaliatory iambic attacks represent the well-deserved punishment for undeserved affronts.<sup>24</sup>

21. For a sampling of the fascinating scholarship on the manipulation of names in invective traditions, see Rosen 1988a for the suggestion that Hipponax's Bupalus can be understood as a play on *bous* + *phallos*, "bull dick"; Zanetto 2001 for name games in Aristophanes; and, a bit further afield, Ward 1973: 132 for the Old Irish tradition of *ail* poetry, which is based on derisive manipulations of names and nicknames.

22. The relevant *testimonia* can be found in Degani 1983.

23. Acosta-Hughes 2002: 32–35 has discussed themes of ethical and aesthetic criticism in Hipponax's poetry and their importance for Callimachus' choice of Hipponax as a model for his *Iambi*. Hays 1994 interprets Callimachus' choice of Hipponax as a reflection of an anxiety about Ptolemaic patronage.

24. The *Life of Aesop* records a quip in the spirit of Hipponax to Bupalus when the hideously ugly Aesop says, "Don't look at my appearance but examine my soul" (*Vita G* 26).

A century after Hipponax, Cratinus produced a comedy called *Archilochoi*, a play with obvious connections to archaic *iambos*. The piece is too fragmentary to analyze with great confidence, but the phrase *hoion sophistôn smênos anediphêsate*, “such a swarm of sophists you have gone after” (*CGF* 2), seems to indicate that the audience witnessed some sort of verbal wrangling about literature or public speaking. Given Cratinus’ reputation for harsh abuse and the likelihood that Archilochus and his followers formed the chorus, it is quite possible that a confrontation between *literati* and blame poets figured prominently. Ralph Rosen even suggests that the performance involved a contest of poetics and that Archilochus speaks in response to a previous critical speaker.<sup>25</sup> Again, poetic abuse stations itself within the realm of responsive aesthetic critique and public debate.

Cratinus’ swarm of sophists may, in turn, have inspired Callimachus’ jealous philologists mentioned in the *Diegesis* to *Iambi* 1 (*schol.* fr. 191, col. 5, line 3). It is presumably this same group that is compared to “flies around a goatherd or wasps from the ground or Delphians leaving a sacrifice” (26–27) in the poem itself.<sup>26</sup> Callimachus’ waspy philologists seem to buzz like Cratinus’ sophists, and both categories of public figures refer to experts whose reputations proceed from their ability to perform their knowledge with pleasing flair and panache. Moreover, both Alexandrian philologists and Athenian sophists work in an oral agonistic context in which high status was often achieved by capping a rival with a stinging riposte. Although Callimachus famously tries to avoid the full impact of iambic aggression by choosing not to sing the “battles of Bupalus,” the pattern of using *iambos* against verbal challengers is the same.<sup>27</sup> Acosta-Hughes has suggested that Callimachus adopted the Hipponactean rather than the Archilochean model of *iambos* for the very reason that Hipponax was more intimately involved with matters of aesthetic criticism, and it may be that by Callimachus’ day the *vita* tradition may have already etiolated the Archilochean motifs of verbal rivalry in favor of the more personal story of the broken marriage.<sup>28</sup> Whatever the explanation, it is curious that Cratinus’ Archilochus, who clearly engaged with literary issues, seems largely to have disappeared in the post-classical world.<sup>29</sup>

25. Rosen 1988b: 42–48.

26. The wasp is a typical iambic animal as seen in Gaetulicus’ epigram (*Anth. Pal.* 7.71). As Gaetulicus warns passersby against stirring up wasps from Archilochus’ tomb we may hear an echo of the Callimachean wasps that rise up from the ground in a poem featuring Hipponax brought back from the dead.

27. On the attempt to eschew iambic vitriol, Barchiesi 2002: 57 argues: “It is Callimachus who is dragged towards the poetics of the iamb, not the poetics of the iamb which become mild.”

28. Acosta-Hughes 2002: 32–35. Degani 1973 sees Callimachus’ rejection of Archilochus in favor of Hipponax as more of a literary issue, but it is clear from Degani’s discussion that for the *poetae docti* matters of poetics entailed significant ethical choices.

29. Cratinus’ Archilochus, who serves as one personified argument in a debate over poetics, can also be found in Pindar (*Pyth.* 2.52–56) where *iambos* appears as part of a meditation on poetics, specifically the relationship between praise and blame. For the most recent discussion of Archilochus in this Pindaric ode, see Brown 2006.

This list of iambic confrontations could easily be extended well beyond the Hellenistic period, but my aim here has been to be illustrative rather than exhaustive.<sup>30</sup> The brief examples that have been mustered dealing with Hipponax, Cratinus, and Callimachus all support the plausibility of reading an element of competitive performance as a prominent aspect of the *iambikê idea*. This chorus of cantankerous voices suggests that for three hundred years iambic performance tradition included heated confrontations over matters of aesthetics and poetry. Yet in none of these depictions of poetic thrust and parry can we see the detailed strategies of both contestants. All of the poetic rivals, straw men or otherwise, have been relegated to sharing Lycambes' virtual silence. And like Lycambes these other rivals all seem to have struck the first blow only to endure the iambist's furious and definitive counterattack. In the next section, however, I explore a situation in which we hear from both players in this ongoing game.

#### ARISTOPHANES AND CRATINUS

Of the poets surveyed in the previous section, one became involved in an ongoing rivalry that provides a close and valuable comparison with Archilochus' rhetorical strategy in his epode against Lycambes. In the parabasis of his *Knights*, Aristophanes launches a series of attacks against rival poets that amounts to both a distorted history of the comic genre and a bid to assert his own preeminence within that history. In stepping over or brushing aside the most recent generation of playwrights, he has this to say about Cratinus:

εἶτα Κρατίνου μεμνημένος, ὃς πολλῶ ῥεύσας ποτ' ἐπαίνῳ  
 διὰ τῶν ἀφελῶν πεδίῳ ἔρρει, καὶ τῆς στάσεως παρασύρων  
 ἐφόρει τὰς δρυὺς καὶ τὰς πλατάνους καὶ τοὺς ἐχθροὺς προθελύμους·  
 ἄσαι δ' οὐκ ἦν ἐν συμποσίῳ πλήν· “Δωροῖ συκοπέδιλε”,  
 καὶ “τέκτονες εὐπαλάμων ὕμνων”· οὕτως ἦνθησεν ἐκεῖνος.  
 Νυνὶ δ' ὑμεῖς αὐτὸν ὀρώντες παραληροῦντ' οὐκ ἐλεεῖτε,  
 ἐκπιπτοσῶν τῶν ἠλέκτρων καὶ τοῦ τόνου οὐκέτ' ἐνόητος  
 τῶν θ' ἁρμονιῶν διαχασκουσῶν· ἀλλὰ γέρων ὦν περιέρρει,

30. Some prominent examples include various Horatian poems, Ovid's *Ibis*, Lucian's *Pseudologistes*, and Julian's *Misopogon*, which all invoke Archilochus and/or Hipponax to authorize and empower their attacks and all explicitly cast their abuse as responses to rival performers. Horace's *Ep.* 10 is modeled on the first Strasbourg epode (Hipp. fr. 115 West), and its target may be the same bad poet mentioned by Virgil in *Ecl.* 3.90; *Ep.* 6 sees Horace assimilate himself to Archilochus and Hipponax to direct an attack at an “ignoble dog,” who is typically understood to be a rival poet. For both poems, see Mankin 1995. For a discussion of stinky Maevius' identity as Vergil's rival, see Harrison 1989. For the debate over the authorship of the first Strasbourg epode, see most recently Brown 1997. In *Ibis* Ovid claims that “Ibis” slanders him throughout the Forum (13–14) and some have even identified “Ibis” as a rival poet; Lucian's target is a sophistic performer who has publicly mocked him as part of a squabble over Attic usage; Julian's invective erupts in response to skits and anapestic ditties of the people of Antioch who pilloried him on the festival of the Kalends of January. I will study many of these texts and contexts in a forthcoming book-length study of the later iambographic tradition.

ὡσπερ Κοννᾶς, στέφανον μὲν ἔχων αὔον, δίψῃ δ' ἀπολωλώς,  
ὄν χρῆν διὰ τὰς προτέρας νίκας πίνειν ἐν τῷ πρυτανείῳ,  
καὶ μὴ ληρεῖν, ἀλλὰ θεᾶσθαι λιπαρὸν παρὰ τῷ Διονύσῳ.

*Knights* 526–36

Then he remembered Cratinus, who once gushed with great praise, flowed through the naïve plains, and, sweeping them from their roots, carried oaks and plane trees and his enemies headlong; and there was nothing to sing in symposia except “fig-sandalled Bribery” and “Crafters of well-wrought songs”; so greatly did he flourish. As it is, you don’t take pity on him, although you see him in the grip of dementia, with his pegs falling out, his lyre out of tune, and his strings hanging loose. Instead, the old man goes around town, like Konnas “with a withered garland and dying of thirst,” who for his victories of old should be drinking in the Prytaneion and not babbling but spectating, fresh-faced, next to Dionysus.<sup>31</sup>

This amusingly pitiful caricature of an older rival exactly parallels the strategy of marginalization used by Archilochus in fr. 172. Cratinus is old, *gerôn*, like Lycambes who is called *pater*. Aristophanes and Archilochus both draw our attention to the advanced age of their adversaries in order to set the stage for a changing of the poetic guard. Both Cratinus and Lycambes had been successful figures in the public eye. To highlight their bygone greatness the upstart poets each use a temporal reference to limit the older man’s best days to the safely irrelevant past (Aristophanes: *proteras*, 535; Archilochus: *to prin*, fr. 173.3). These backhanded compliments construct Cratinus and Lycambes as ineffectual shadows of their former, younger selves. Aristophanes and Archilochus attack their older rivals by emphasizing the contrast between their earlier talent and their current, inescapable decrepitude.

Beyond these clear parallels, however, lies the more tantalizing possibility that both texts are impugning their targets’ manhood. Aristophanes’ language paints an overall picture of slackness and softness that surely contains some phallic double-entendres, and his insulting tone clearly seeks to abuse Cratinus as broadly as possible, from his professional to his personal dereliction. Aristophanes says that Cratinus “had a youthful flowering,” *ênthêsen* (530); now, however, he no longer has “his sinewy-stretched stiffness” in him, *tonou . . . enontos* (532); and now that he is an “old man,” *gerôn* (533), he is “dry and withered,” *hauon* (534). Archilochus mentions the *tenontes*, “sinews,” of someone’s penis in fr. 252, and

31. Trans. Ruffell. Aristophanes uses the word *parasyrôn*, “sweeping away.” Forms of this verb are uncommon in the early period, which makes it noteworthy that “Longinus” uses it in an unfavorable description of Archilochus: Ἀρχιλόχου πολλὰ καὶ ἀνοικονόμητα παρασύροντος, “Archilochus who sweeps along many themes jumbled together” (*De subl.* 33.5). This similarity in diction certainly suggests that “Longinus” had Aristophanes’ critique of Cratinus in mind as he penned this passage. This is an important point because Cratinus represents a critical point of contact between *iambos* and Old Comedy. See Rosen 1988b: 38–58. For the argument that *iambos* and Old Comedy are more distantly related, see Bowie 2002.

this word is closely related to Aristophanes' *tonos*, "string, tendon."<sup>32</sup> Casting the net more widely, it is worth adding that in two of Archilochus' references to penises that preserve any context at all, he describes one that "rises like a flood," *eplēmuren* (fr. 43), much as Cratinus' poetry is described by Aristophanes as a rushing torrent, and one that has broken sinews, *tenontes* (fr. 252), a scenario suggestive of both Cratinus' slack strings in Aristophanes and the Parian impotence described in the Mnesiepes Inscription. Archilochus also describes Zeus sending a *kakên hauonên*, "terrible dryness," to some unidentified group in fr. 230. The line appears in the *Etymologicum Genuinum* without context, but if it were connected with the story of fertility crisis on Paros described by Mnesiepes then we might be able to hear a more explicit allusion in Aristophanes' words. While none of this points conclusively toward a sexual reading, taken together his specific images broadly hint that Cratinus' droop is more than literary. Furthermore, just as the Archilochean fox had done in fr. 176, Aristophanes invites us to add a visual image to this verbal description: *nuni d' humeis auton horôntes*, "but now you see him" (531). Whether he leaves the audience to imagine such a scene in the mind's eye or provides some visual cues on stage, we should not expect such a worn-out figure to sport anything other than the typically flaccid phallus of similar comic characters.<sup>33</sup>

While Archilochus makes no overt mention of Lycambes' male member being slack, he most certainly attacks Lycambes' manhood more generally. The numerous descriptions of Archilochus' sexual relations with Lycambes' daughters (most fully detailed in the Cologne Epode, fr. 196a) are the best evidence for this. Lycambes may have cancelled the marriage, thereby depriving Archilochus of potential offspring, but Archilochus depicts himself as able to indulge his lust with both Neoboule and her sister without any regard for their father. The girls' sexual availability highlights and proves their father's inability to assert his masculinity. Lycambes' helplessness to defend and protect the purity of his daughters from the

32. Both words derive from the verb *teinô*, "to stretch." Callim. *Iamb.* 9 (= fr. 199 Pf.) and Pl. Com. fr. 173.19 use *neuron*, "string, tendon," to refer to the penis. *Neuron* has obvious close connections with Latin *nervus* which, at Hor. *Ep.* 12.19, refers to the penis as noted by Henderson 1991: 116. Although Aristophanes does not use this word, the basic concept of the string in tension and a potent or erect penis is relevant, just as Odysseus' ability to string the bow (i.e. put tension back into the slack string) symbolizes a rejuvenation of his martial and marital potency (cp. *Priapeia* 68 for such a phallic reading of Odysseus' bow). Sidwell 1995: 69n.41 posits that Cratinus' recognizable caricature on stage may have included the red-tipped, flaccid phallus. Again, this point does not prove the phallic nature of Aristophanes' comments in *Knights*, but it does further crowd the scene with circumstantial associations that point in a phallic direction.

33. Sidwell 1995: 61, speculating that Aristophanes' portrayal of Cratinus did not originate from some earlier *onomasti* characterization, writes that "[since] 'eyes are better than ears,' it seems more likely that the attacks [on Cratinus] involved representation of the poet on stage in caricature." His argument is equally relevant here. Taplin 1993: 43–44 hesitantly reopens the debate over so-called "Berlin Drinker" vase and the possibility that it depicts Cratinus and Comedy in a scene from *Pytine*. The balding (but beardless) man is drunk and flaccid, but Taplin's hesitancy is well justified despite my eagerness to see the figure as Cratinus.

sexual aggression of Archilochus' poetic persona forms an important dimension in the contestation between the two men. Portraying himself strutting his manhood under the nose of an ineffectual Lycambes, Archilochus asserts a graphic virility for his poetry that his sorry rival cannot match.

While Aristophanes' attack on Cratinus may resemble Archilochus' invective against Lycambes on some points, we are, in the case of the later pair of rivals, in a position to hear how the older man responded to the challenge. In the year after the production of the *Knights* Cratinus staged his *Pytine*, "Wineflask," which took first prize, while Aristophanes came in third with his *Clouds*. The play is an elaborate riposte to Aristophanes' caricature of him in which he owns, rather than refutes, allegations of drunkenness and turns them into a *tour de force* of Dionysiac inspiration. Cratinus caps Aristophanes by casting himself as the lawful husband of the personified Comedy, relegating Aristophanes to the position of an adulterer. As Ruffel has noted, this depiction of Aristophanes likely looks back to *Acharnians* 849–50 where Cratinus was painted the *moikhos*, "adulterer."<sup>34</sup> Moreover, Cratinus seems to have heard some of the sexual connotations in *Knights* discussed above, since his retaliatory self-characterization in the *Pytinê* includes a strong emphasis on sexual virility, as both the husband of Comedy, the lover of a similarly personified Drunkenness, and an active pursuer of young boys (*schol. Ar. Eq.* 400).<sup>35</sup> Following the suggestion of Sidwell that Cratinus (the character) underwent some sort of rejuvenation during the course of the play, we might understand a complete reversal of the attack against his manhood: the character who is as flaccid and withered at the beginning of the play as Aristophanes had described him in *Knights* regains both his authorial vitality and his manly virility during the course of events.<sup>36</sup> The seniority system that Aristophanes (like Archilochus) had sought to overturn has been twisted against the younger man. Cratinus concedes to Aristophanes the more mature position but only in order to transform himself into a randy and rambunctious upstart who screws his way to the top of the comic world. In this sense, Cratinus both outdoes Aristophanes' self-portrayal as the latest and greatest and adopts what I have suggested was the Archilochean role of sexual he-man.

Connections with Archilochean poetics in the *Pytine* go well beyond this rather atmospheric point: whereas Aristophanes had adopted an Archilochean discourse strategy to attack a Lycambes-like older rival, Cratinus seems to have

34. Ruffel 2002: 156.

35. The relevant evidence is discussed by Ruffel 2002. For the possibility that Cratinus, (the character in the play, not the poet) might have been dallying with young boys, see also Rosen 2000: 29 and Sidwell 1995: 64–65.

36. Sidwell 1995: 65. Sexual rejuvenation is a common trope in early iambic poems, e.g. Hipp. fr. 78 and 92. Archilochus also uses a surprising number of curative words, though the context is not always sexual, and in fr. 67 the sexual "cure" that is mentioned likely has more to do with foreplay than therapy. This sense of rejuvenation may, of course, be part of the same literary tradition at work in, for example, Callimachus' rejuvenation in his *Aetia*.

taken on something of an Archilochean persona in order to style himself as the ultimate victor in a public performative rivalry. Cratinus announces this identification with Archilochus through a direct quotation:<sup>37</sup>

ὦ λιπερνῆτες πολῖται, τὰμὰ δὴ ζυνίετε  
[ρήματα].

Cratinus fr. 211 PCG

⟨ὦ⟩ λιπερνῆτες πολῖται, τὰμὰ δὴ συνίετε  
ρήματα.

Archilochus fr. 109

O indigent citizens, understand my words!

In the *Knights* Aristophanes had portrayed Cratinus as too old and washed up for the stage in a manner similar to Archilochus' attack on Lycambes' *phrenes*. The older poet here counters this maneuver by announcing his disdain for such an equation and turns the tables on his younger challenger by claiming for himself the power of Archilochean poetics. In adapting to his needs the rhetorical force of archaic *iambos*, Cratinus lives up to his ancient reputation for being the most abusive of the Athenian comic poets. The move also seems to have been rather successful since, as Ruffell and Sommerstein have noted, Aristophanes never returned to the type of demagogic comedy of the *Knights*.<sup>38</sup>

More importantly, however, Cratinus appropriates a specific slice of the Archilochean persona. Having been attacked by Aristophanes as a drunk, Cratinus presents himself in the *Pytine* as someone filled with Dionysiac inspiration. In so doing he reinterprets the grounds for Aristophanes' charge of poetic bankruptcy and aligns himself with the Archilochean tradition of Bacchic creativity. Cratinus' most famous quip from the *Pytine* looks back at Archilochus' persona as the leader of a drunken dithyramb:

ὕδωρ δὲ πίνων οὐδὲν ἄν τέκοι σοφόν.

Cratinus fr. 203 PCG

You won't compose anything clever by drinking water.

ὡς Διωνύσου ἄνακτος καλὸν ἐξάρξαι μέλος  
οἶδα διθύραμβον οἴνωι συγκεραυνωθεὶς φρένας.

Archilochus fr. 120

for I know how to take the lead in the dithyramb, the lovely song  
of lord Dionysus, my wits thunderstruck with wine.

37. Aristophanes (*Pax* 603) and Eupolis (fr. 392.1–2) also adapted this same Archilochean line, as discussed below.

38. Sommerstein 2000: 437–38 and Ruffell 2002: 162. Ruffell goes on to show that the rivalry was not over despite Aristophanes' change of tactics: "The central conceit of *Wasps*, a mad old man and the attempts of a family member to cure him, can itself be seen as capping *Pytine*."

The professional antagonism between Aristophanes and Cratinus represents one of the earliest discernible instances of the performance of a public and poetic rivalry (not counting, of course, those embedded in a narrative such as the Homeric poems).<sup>39</sup> Their jockeying for preeminence is particularly apt in a discussion of Archilochus and Lycambes as public figures who challenged each other for social prominence, since both Aristophanes and Cratinus appropriate certain elements of the Archilochean poetics used against Lycambes. It also allows us a chance to hear from both parties in a way that reminds us that competitive, invective literature conspires to silence its opposition. If Lycambes existed at all outside the world of Archilochus' *iambos* he may well have had a Cratinian response of his own. With Cratinus' appropriation of the Archilochean poetics of wine as part of his response to Aristophanes we are in a position to deal with the Mnesiepes Inscription's tale of Archilochus' premier performance that was deemed to be "too iambic."

#### THE MNESIEPES INSCRIPTION

Mnesiepes' story, which is attested no earlier than the third-century inscription but which may derive from Archilochus' own words, begins early in Archilochus' poetic career and describes Apollo's oracular pronouncement that Telesicles' son would become renowned in song, *aidimos* (E1 col. II, 50–52).<sup>40</sup> At a festival, *têi d' heortêi* (E1 col. III, 17), Archilochus improvised, *autoskhedias* (20), certain verses and taught them, *didaxanta* (22), to a group of his companions, *para tous hetairous* (30). The inscription then inserts fr. 251, which includes references to grapes, *omphakes*, figs, *suka*, and Dionysus *Oipholios*, "the Fucker." It was apparently this epithet that the audience did not understand, *ou katanoêsantas* (39), and which someone deemed too iambic, *iambikôteron* (38).<sup>41</sup> The inscription gives

39. The tales of rivalry between Pindar and Bacchylides also fit into this pattern, though the evidence hardly supports claims of any personal animus. More speculatively, Aristotle provides an interesting list of several rivalries involving famous philosophers, poets, and politicians (f. 75 Rose = Diog. Laert. 2.46). The earliest examples state that Syagrus and Cercops each quarreled, *ephiloneikei*, with Homer and Hesiod, respectively. It would, however, be dangerous to extrapolate from these bare rumors full-blown personal animosities of the sort apparent in Archilochus' invectives against the Lycambids.

40. The inscription preserves several fragments that are considered genuine, and it claims (through language such as *phasin*, "they say," *paradedomena*, "what had been handed down," and *tade paradedotai te hêmin hypo tôn arkhaiôn*, "these stories have been handed down to us by former generations") to be recording a much older tradition.

41. A similar phrase is used in the Dublin Papyrus, in which the daughters of Lycambes are connected with something *amet' iambôi*, "immoderate in his *iambos*" (P.Dublin inv. 193a, 6). Again the idea of iambic excess seems to be connected (the text is extremely fragmentary) with an unpleasant scene in Archilochus' *vita* that involves Lycambes' family. The passage is made more intriguing by the reference to a *lithos politês*, "community's stone," which could be a reference to the Parian Marble.

no clear indication of who panned Archilochus' poetry, though Diskin Clay has recently suggested that this verdict was directed from a conservative element in the audience toward a younger generation, who were shocked by what they perceived to be a racy and even raunchy display.<sup>42</sup> Some sort of trial ensued, and Archilochus was chastised or exiled. The men of Paros then experienced a bout of impotence, *astheneis eis ta aidolia* (43–44), which was cured only when, at the instruction of Delphi, the poet was reinstated and given the honor due to a *therapôn* of the Muses.

The inscription seems to describe the introduction of Dionysiac poetry to Paros, and as such it has many parallels to other stories of Dionysus' *adventus*.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, there are similarities with the accounts of Archilochus' death in which someone nicknamed Corax, the Raven, dispatched Archilochus (again bedeviled by an Aesopic bird) in a manner that he believed to be fair (he killed the poet in battle) but which incurred a divine sanction against him (he was not permitted to enter the sanctuary at Delphi); this Corax is only freed from the stigma when he initiates cultic worship for the dead warrior-poet. The schematic progress of the narrative is strikingly similar to that found in the Mnesiepes Inscription. Domestic (festival) and foreign (military) contexts both present Archilochus as a figure who performs roles that are initially misunderstood and that demand a retrospective reassessment from those with whom he interacts.

As in several of the narratives discussed above, the issue of age distribution seems to have contributed to the problems that arose at this disastrous festival performance. Lycambes is mentioned earlier in the inscription as the companion of Archilochus' father on an official delegation to Delphi and thus seems to be roughly a generation older than Archilochus and a leading figure in the community. This suggests that Mnesiepes' Lycambes was part of the older generation who condemned Archilochus' poetry; and the companions, *hetairoi*, to whom Archilochus taught his song were probably contemporaries of the young poet.<sup>44</sup> A local boy turned poet with a new lyre, which he gained through channels hardly believable or respectable, performs a new type of poetry with his fellow youth. Like an archaic form of Beatlemania, Archilochus' performance appeared to be an affront against all propriety to those who did not understand, especially the older generation. In their negative response we see something of the critical dynamic that exists between performer and audience, and we can get a sense of how much an innovative performer had to lose when stepping into the public limelight.

We might gain further insight by following Clay's suggestion that fr. 109 is closely related to Mnesiepes' tale:<sup>45</sup>

42. Clay 2004: 16–22.

43. See Clay 2004: 19–20 for a discussion of these parallels.

44. As noted by Clay 2004: 22.

45. This paragraph closely follows the argument made by Clay 2004: 21–23.

ὦ λιπερνῆτες πολῖται, τὰμὰ δὴ συνίετε  
ῥήματα.

O indigent citizens, understand my words!

The fragment's vocative address to the citizenry in general and the plea that they understand his words certainly fits with the inscription's narrative of misunderstood public address. Furthermore, while we have already seen that this fragment was appropriated by Cratinus in his *Pytine*, adaptations of it by Aristophanes and Eupolis open further interpretive possibilities. In Aristophanes' *Peace*, Hermes addresses the chorus of farmers which has just sung of grapes and figs (both of which are mentioned in Archilochus fr. 251 which was deemed "too iambic"):

ὦ σοφώτατοι γεωργοί, τὰμὰ δὴ συνίετε  
ῥήματ'....

*Pax* 603–604

O wisest of farmers, understand my words!

The connection between this line and grapes and figs strengthens the association with the inscription and fr. 251. The same can be said of Eupolis' version, which is addressed to the audience and deals explicitly with the issue of the youth enjoying a form of song of which some (presumably older) members of the audience disapprove.

ἀλλ' ἀκούετ', ὦ θεαταί, τὰμὰ καὶ ξυνίετε  
ῥήματ'· εὐθὺ γὰρ πρὸς ὑμᾶς πρῶτον ἀπολογήσομαι.  
\* \* \*

Ὅ τι μαθόντες τοὺς ξένους μὲν λέγετε ποιητὰς σοφούς,  
ἦν δέ τις τῶν ἐνθάδ' αὐτοῦ μηδὲ ἐν χειρὸν φρονῶν  
ἐπιτιθῆται τῇ ποιήσει, πάνυ δοκεῖ κακῶς φρονεῖν,  
μαίνεται τε καὶ παραρρεῖ τῶν φρενῶν τῷ σῶ λόγῳ.  
ἀλλ' ἐμοὶ πείθεσθε πάντως. μεταβαλόντες τοὺς τρόπους  
μὴ φθονεῖθ' ὅταν τις ἡμῶν μουσικῇ χαίρη νέων.

fr. 392 *PCG* (= Stobaeus 3.4.32)

But hear, o audience, and heed my words; for first I will present my defense to you straight away . . . on what grounds you consider the foreign poets clever, but if one from around here not a whit less talented devotes himself to poetry, this seems like an exceedingly bad idea; he's crazy; lost all his wits by your account. But listen to me and change your ways: don't be jealous when one of our youth enjoys such poetry.

This passage is complex in that it juggles two variables relating to poetry presented in Athens: the origin of the poets themselves (non-Athenian vs. Athenian) and the relationship between audience age and poetic preference. Although the matrix is not set out in detail, it is clear that the young people are described as having a marked preference for the local style of poetry (including Eupolis), while the older

set lean toward the non-Athenian poets. While we know nothing about the date for this fragment it is clear that Eupolis here is boasting of the support he claims from the younger part of his audience in a way that brings us back to the nexus of age, public performance, and poetic tastes. Eupolis imputes to the audience the opinion that any talented local poet has lost his wits (*phrenes*, as in Archilochus' attack on Lycambes in fr. 172), and his words combat this unfair bias. In the final line of this fragment Eupolis seems to be easing the tension by asking that his audience avoid *phthonos*, the insidious envy that can lead to further social conflict.<sup>46</sup> Even though the very mention of such a destructive force may increase tensions in some circumstances, this rhetorical move must be contextualized within the competitive format of Athenian comedy. Surely Eupolis' ultimate goal was to unite the entire audience in their thunderous applause for his play.

The Mnesiepes Inscription and the adaptations of Archilochus fr. 109 by Cratinus and Eupolis all involve intergenerational conflict. If fr. 109 can be read as a defense of misunderstood poetics (as Clay suggests and as Eupolis' variant explicitly is), then it participates in the pattern of misunderstanding, conflict, reassessment, and resolution that pervades Mnesiepes' story and the accounts of Archilochus' death. It is possible, then, that Mnesiepes placed the negative verdict on Archilochus' poetry in the mouth of Lycambes by having him say that it was *iambikôteron*. This suggestion accords well with the argument set out above that in his own poetry Archilochus had styled Lycambes as a performative rival as well as a personal enemy. I will close, then, by offering a reading of Mnesiepes' narrative in light of this hypothesis, though emphasizing that my reconstruction likely reflects more about how Mnesiepes' community understood the Archilochean tradition than it does about Archilochus' lost poetry.<sup>47</sup>

Applying the principle of Chekhov's Gun, we can speculate that Lycambes is presented early in Mnesiepes' account, because he had a role to play later in the story.<sup>48</sup> On their way to Delphi Telesicles and Lycambes seem to have been relative equals, so to see his peer advanced by the god's favor would likely have fostered resentment. If Lycambes had already promised his daughter in marriage to Telesicles' son, then the shocking performance of Archilochus' *iambos* offers an understandable explanation for the dissolution of that agreement. Since the interpre-

46. See Kurke 1991 and Bulman 1992 for important discussions about the workings of *phthonos* in Pindaric praise poetry; the problems associated with *phthonos* could appear in a range of literary contexts, e.g. Thuc. 6.16, Pl. *Ap.* 18d2. For the Thucydidean context we eagerly await D. G. Smith, "Phthonos in Thucydides" (forthcoming).

47. Lefkowitz 1981 argues that much of a poet's ancient *vita* derived from an overly biographical reading of the poet's words. It is difficult to imagine, however, that the Mnesiepes Inscription does not include some amount of elaboration beyond what was available in the Archilochean poems. Mnesiepes himself may suggest as much with the word *pepragmateumetha* (E1 col. II, 22–23), which can imply either "elaboration" or "systematic study."

48. Chekhov wrote several variations of this idea, but they all follow this basic model: "If in the first act you have hung a pistol on the wall, then in the following one it should be fired. Otherwise don't put it there."

tation of oracles often involves competitive performances, Lycambes could easily have been lured into opposing Telesicles and Archilochus in order to promote an interpretation of events that was more favorable to himself and his own family.

If Lycambes was a leading voice in the opposition to Archilochus' Dionysiac performance recorded by Mnesiepes, then we can imagine a connection between the eagle's mockery, *elaphrizôn*, of the Archilochean fox's voice in the first epode and the opinion that Archilochus' song was "too iambic." The older competitor in the public sphere sought to rally support for the view that this upstart had gone too far and deserved to be reprimanded. Such a judgment is both ethical and aesthetic since being "too iambic" implies a normative, acceptable mode; it also suggests that this anti-Archilochean speaker knows what *iambos* is and seeks to use that knowledge aggressively to define and marginalize the poet.<sup>49</sup> Yet as public opinion swung back in favor of Archilochus, Lycambes became isolated. Archilochus' unmaning of his older critic by having his way with both of Lycambes' daughters (poetically, if not in reality), recalls the impotence of all the Parians that resulted from their initial condemnation of Archilochus and his new poetry.

Once the community had adopted a new attitude, a *nea boulê*, toward his *iamboi*, Archilochus was able to enact his revenge through his former fiancée, Lycambes' daughter Neoboule. Just as the fox prays to Zeus for a justice that comes through the destruction of the eagle's offspring, so Archilochus took aim at his rival's children. Besmirched and disgraced through attacks like that of the Cologne epode (fr. 196a) Lycambes was defeated. Having staked his claim publicly as an opponent of Archilochus and his poetry, he was not granted the pardon given to the wider community once it had reconsidered and accepted (on Delphic recommendation) the power of the Archilochean *iambos*.

In ancient Greece, to release a communal disaster such as a plague, *loimos*, or a crisis of fertility, *astheneis eis ta aidouia*, frequently required a scapegoat, ideally a leading member of society.<sup>50</sup> So, while Archilochus' mind was "drenched with wine" through Bacchic inspiration (fr. 120), Lycambes' wits, *phrenes*, were stolen away making him ridiculous, *gelôs* (fr. 172), and rendering him as vulnerable as Patroclus at his moment of death.<sup>51</sup> With Lycambes unable to overcome the

49. A problem arises here with the tension between someone (Lycambes or otherwise) knowing what is "too iambic" and Archilochus' role as the *prôtos heures*, "inventor," of iambic poetry: if he is the "founder" of the genre, then no one can know what it means to be *iambikôteron*. Yet Mnesiepes' narrative seems to be more concerned with the local and personal relevance of Archilochus' career rather than with the origins of the genre. I am very grateful to Don Lavigne and David Smith for valuable discussions about the implications (for the speaker, for Archilochus, for the audience, for Mnesiepes, for *iambos*, etc.) of the fascinating word *iambikôteron*.

50. Parke 1958 offers an intriguing but highly speculative reconstruction of the fragmentary oracular response to the Parians' crisis that focuses on their desire for a *loimou lusin*, "release from plague." Clay 2004, however, does not follow Parke's reconstruction.

51. Immediately before Patroclus' death Folly steals away his wits: *ton de atê phrenas heile*, *Il.* 16.805.

universal laughter now directed at him, the foxy Archilochus recalls his enemy with a nickname that shows him to have been turned into a lone wolf by the power of Archilochean *iambos*.

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