

THE THIRD LIFECYCLE OF PHILOKLEON IN ARISTOPHANES' WASPS

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I. Introduction

The mutability of Philokleon's generational identity in Aristophanes' *Wasps* is well established.¹ Critics routinely write of his 'rejuvenation' in the second half of the play, and it is in the scene with the *αὐλητρίς* ('*aulos*-girl'), Dardanis, that the old man most explicitly plays the part of an irresponsible youth waiting for his son (in the role of father) to die.² However, inversions and perversions of generational identity pervade the whole play.³ Even before Philokleon has undergone his liberating transformation at the symposium, the educational roles of father and son are reversed as Bdelykleon schools him in the proper way to behave in polite society.⁴ More subtly and extensively, Bowie has shown how the three *agones* in which Philokleon unsuccessfully engages during the first half of the play correspond to the three stages of an Athenian male citizen's life: *ephebeia*, maturity in the hoplite phalanx, and old age in the jury.⁵ However, critics have not observed

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1. Menu (1992), 169f.: 'la comédie joue-t-elle constamment, à l'endroit de Bdélycléon et de Philocléon, sur les interférences, voire les inversions, entre le réel et le délire quant à l'âge et au statut des deux protagonistes: jeune / vieux, fils / père, initiateur / initié.' See also esp. Byl (1977), 64f., Bowie (1987), (1993), 78–101, Crichton (1993), Slater (1996), Orfanos (1999).

2. Rejuvenation: Whitman (1964), 156–61, Vaio (1971), 343, Sommerstein (1977), 268, Lenz (1980), 38–40, Henderson (1991), 81f., Purves (1997), 18, Silk (2000), 425–9, Boulic (2009), Biles (2016), 136, Payne (2016), 13f., Farmer (2017), 148, Papanthanasopoulou (2019), 268 n.47, Morosi (2020), 119f. Dardanis: Ar. V. 1341–87, esp. 1352f.: ἐγὼ σ' ἐπειδὴν οὐμὸς νιὸς ἀποθάνη, ἢ λυκάμενος ἔξω παλλακίην, ὃ χοιρίον. ('I, when my son dies, will buy your freedom and have you as my concubine, my pussy.')

3. Lenz (1980), 32: 'Der normale Hergang einer Erziehungskomödie, daß ein Alter einen im vollen Saft der Jugend stehenden Jungen erzehlich dämpfen will und nicht recht kann, ist hier in sehr komischem Rollentausch auf den Kopf gestellt.' Zimmermann (2007), 78: 'Das ganze Stück...ist eingespannt in ein typisch dionysisches Grundmuster, in das Konzept der verkehrten Welt—der Sohn erzieht den Vater, der Alte übertrifft die Jungen an Vitalität.'

4. Slater (1996), 41: 'Bdelycleon is now playing the father, tutoring a son who is about to attend his first symposium.'

5. Bowie (1993), 81: 'the *agones*...follow the normal sequence of the stages of human life, from youth to age: the first surrounds Philocleon with the imagery of youth and the *ephebeia*, the second

that Philokleon goes through another, parallel journey from youth through maturity to old age in the three ‘iambic scenes’ where he is confronted by the victims of his outrageous behaviour on his way home from the symposion.⁶ This article will show how Aristophanes constructs this third lifecycle (counting Bowie’s *agones* and his literal maturation before the play’s action begins) before considering its implications for the wider characterization of Philokleon and in particular the final scene.⁷

The mapping of the three iambic scenes onto the three ages of an Athenian male is most clearly signalled by the way in which each of his antagonists addresses or identifies Philokleon at the opening of their respective entrance speeches. In the first or second line of each successive speech, he is referred to respectively as *νεανίας* (‘young man’, 1333), *άνήρ* (‘man’, 1390), and *γέρον* (‘old man’, 1417).⁸ Although none of these words is especially marked in itself, in sequence they inevitably evoke the three principal stages of a man’s life, particularly in a play so preoccupied with those stages. The sequence of life-stages, with some variations and often preceded by boyhood, is attested in various texts from Hesiod onwards, perhaps most clearly in Philo’s *On Joseph*, where he describes the average man as ‘the one-time baby, after that a child, then an adolescent, then a lad, and in turn a youth, then a man, and finally an old man’ (ὁ ποτὲ βρέφος καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα παῖς, εἴτ’ ἔφηβος, εἴτα μενράκιον, καὶ νεανίας ἀδελφός, εἴτ’ άνήρ, καὶ γέρον ὑστατον, *Jos.* 22 = 127 *CW*).⁹ In this context, the three words’ positioning at the very opening of each scene programmatically establishes Philokleon’s persona for that scene, so that the scenes themselves trace an arc from youth through maturity to senescence.

sees him as a mature hoplite and the third as a juror, a job much associated with the older generation’, introducing the extended discussion from 81–93.

6. I use the term ‘iambic scenes’, sometimes called ‘episodic scenes’ (*episodische Szenen*, *scene episodiche*), throughout in the specific sense of the short, post-parabasis scenes in which the protagonist confronts and triumphs over a series of minor adversaries, and not to refer to all scenes in spoken trimeters, as in e.g. Marshall (2014). Philokleon’s brief runs of trochees and iambic dimeters at 1326–31 and 1335–40 do not affect the applicability of the term. On such scenes, see Gelzer (1976), 9–11, Kaimio et al. (1990), 59–61, Grava (1999), Spatharas (2008), Pellegrino (2017).

7. On exodoi in Aristophanes, see Pirrotta (2016), Auger (2017). On that of *Wasps*, see section V below, with further bibliography.

8. All three passages are quoted and discussed at greater length below.

9. Cf. the more extensively subdivided list at Ar. Byz. fr. 1.12 Nauck: ὁ δὲ μετὰ ταῦτα μενράκιον ἢ μενράξ, εἴτα νεανικός, εἴτα νεανίας, εἴτα άνήρ μέσος, εἴτα προβεβηκός, ὃν καὶ ὀμογέροντα καλοῦσιν, γέρον, εἴτα πρεβύτης, εἴτα ἐσχάτογῆρος. (‘The person after this is a lad or boy, then a youth, then a young man, then a middle-aged man, then an old man, advanced in age, whom they also call a sprightly old man, then a senior, then one in extreme old age.’) The tripartite post-puberty sequence (with μενράκιον and πρεβύτης in place of their respective virtual synonyms νεανίας and γέρον) is preserved rather closer in time to 422 BCE at X. *Smp.* 4.17: ἐπεὶ ὡσπερ γε παῖς γίγνεται καλός, οὕτω καὶ μενράκιον καὶ άνήρ καὶ πρεβύτης. (‘[S]ince, just as a boy is beautiful, so is a lad, a man, and an old man.’) Cf. Arist. *Rh.* 1339a: ἡλικία δ’ εἰσὶ νεότης καὶ ἀκμή καὶ γῆρας (‘the times of life are youth, prime, and old age’). On the ages of Greek man, see esp. Garland (1990), 1–16, Davidson (2006).

Although Aristophanes' iambic scenes can give the superficial impression of being a random, unconnected set of primarily low-comedy sketches, they tend in fact to be carefully arranged and structured into a significant sequence. Gelzer has shown how the many iambic scenes in *Birds* form a tripartite sequence moving from the foundation rites of Nephelokokygia to its completion to the impact of that completion.¹⁰ Grava too has demonstrated, with regard to Dikaiopolis' encounters with the Megarian and Boiotian merchants and other characters in *Akharnians*, that 'the purposes for which these iambic scenes have been inserted into the dramatic fabric show a complexity superior to what may appear at first sight', for 'the section has a very complex structure, since it consists of parts that each have several functions.'¹¹ Similarly the iambic scenes in *Wasps*, apparently random and unconnected, are structured around Philokleon's third lifecycle, one scene for each stage from νεανίας to ἀνὴρ to γέρων. In each case, as we shall see, this persona is enacted in the course of the scene.

On one level, as has already been suggested, this movement runs parallel with the three age-related *agones* that Bowie has identified in the first half of the play. However, the differences are equally important. Philokleon is defeated by Bdelykleon in each of the pre-parabasis *agones* and, with each defeat, he is stripped successively of his identity as youth, man, and old man, until he is finally reduced to the absence of identity which enables him to declare with total accuracy, οὐδὲν εἰμι' ἄρα ('I am nothing', 997).¹² In marked contrast to this sequence of defeats, but typically for an Aristophanic hero in iambic scenes, Philokleon *wins* each of his three *agones* against his three accusers (as well as against Bdelykleon) and is thus able to *maintain* each of his identities, overlaying them upon each other. Passing through the lifecycle from νεανίας to ἀνὴρ to γέρων does not here mark his relinquishing of each but rather his paradoxical embodiment of all three at the same time, an embodiment which reaches its climax in the exodos. Following his rejuvenation, Philokleon is not 'nothing' but everything.

In addition to verbal cues, the visual dimension stresses the paradox of Philokleon's multigenerational status. His distinctive mask of a comic old man stands in jarring contrast to his louche, young-man-about-town costume of

10. Gelzer (1976), 10: '[Aristophanes] does not simply tack the sketches on to each other, but uses two fair-sized choral interludes...split the series up into three sections: the first (801–1057) deals with the foundation ceremony...; the second uses four messengers to give preliminary reports on the completion of the project (1118–1312); the third section then gives us a picture of the effects of this foundation on men and gods (1335–1719).'

11. Grava (1999), 35: 'Gli scopi per cui queste scene giambiche sono state inserite nel tessuto drammatico manifestano una complessità superiore a quanto possa apparire a prima vista. La sezione presenta una strutturazione molto articolata, poiché essa consta di parti che rivestono ognuna più funzioni'.

12. Bowie (1993), 93. Slater (1996), 36f. Bowie's argument that this stripping of identity puts Philokleon in the position of an ephebe ready for initiation through a *rite de passage* into manhood is attractive, but not directly relevant to the iambic scenes or essential for this argument. On initiation in *Wasps*, see also Menu (1992), Jedrkiewicz (2006), 84. Sommerstein (2009b) is sceptical about initiation but not about the play with ages. On the further implications of Philokleon as οὐδὲν, see Boulic (2009).

Spartan slippers and Persian cloak, a dissonance which was explicitly set up in the scene where Bdelykleon redresses his father (1122–68).¹³ However, it is the contradiction between the old man's mask and his sometimes athletic, always disorderly physical activity that most strongly conveys visually his paradoxical status as both young and old. On a basic level, the contradiction generates the humour of incongruity, as an old man behaves in a way appropriate to a different generation. However, in combination with the other elements of these scenes, it also gives visual reinforcement to the conceit that Philokleon is all three of νεανίας, ἄνθρωπος, and γέρον. This sense that Philokleon is legion has significant points of contact with Silk's reading of him:

Philocleon seems to transcend the bounds of an individual, as if he were indeed himself the centre of some larger organism. Perhaps, even, he is a kind of one-man community... In his person, it is as if the possibilities of life, not of a specified individual life (because he is 'larger than life' in that sense of 'life'), but of life itself, have been sensuously conveyed, which is to say that in his recreative figuration something of an inclusive vision is implicit.¹⁴

However, it is time to look at the three scenes, and in particular their programmatic opening speeches, in more detail.

II. Philokleon the νεανίας

In the first iambic scene, an unnamed man rushes onstage immediately after Xanthias' narration of the symposion and Philokleon's entrance with the *aulos*-girl, Dardanis:

ἦ μὴν σὺ δώσεισ ἀὔριον τούτων δίκην
 ἡμῖν ἄπασι, κεί σφόδρ' εἶ νεανίας.
 ἄθροοὶ γὰρ ἥξομέν σε προσκαλούμενοι.

(V. 1332–4)

I warn you, you will pay the penalty for these things tomorrow
 to all of us, *even if you are a very young man*.
 For we shall come en masse to summons you.¹⁵

The anomalous nature of this description is amply demonstrated by the unease it has caused among commentators and critics, and the strategies it has forced them

13. On the significance of costume in this scene: Bowie (1993), 93f., McGlew (2004), 27f., Compton-Engle (2015), 67–74, Telò (2016), 27–55.

14. Silk (2000), 255.

15. The text of *Wasps* is Wilson's OCT (2007); all translations are my own.

to adopt to explain it.¹⁶ Sansone even suggests emending *νεανίας* to the more literally true *νεανικός* ('like a young man').¹⁷ MacDowell adopts a characteristically and sensitively naturalistic approach by suggesting that it is a genuine case of mistaken identity prompted by the accuser's understandable inference from Philokleon's antics.¹⁸ Biles and Olson reject such an approach to Aristophanes' dramaturgy but are equally keen to normalize the scene by emphasizing that Philokleon is acting not *as* but *like* a young man.¹⁹ Van Leeuwen is likewise particularly careful to insist that neither actual rejuvenation nor mistaken identity are in question, but only youthful behaviour.²⁰ Lenz arguably comes closest to embracing the scene's paradoxical quality, noting that 'the assignment of youth to Philokleon, which twists the actual realities, is straightaway accepted by him and played with further in his reply.'²¹ Each of these interpretations is, in its own way, correct. It is Philokleon's lawless behaviour which makes him appear to be a youth and this appearance is focalized through the fallible perceptions of the accuser, though the audience's perception of this (perhaps young) actor playing an old man playing a youth is no more reliable. However, in the non-naturalistic, anti-realistic world of Aristophanic comedy—and even in *Wasps*, which lacks giant dung-beetles or talking birds, elderly jurors have real stings and dogs make prosecution speeches—these factors do not explain away Philokleon's actual rejuvenation but rather establish it.²² As Bowie puts it, '[t]his joke about his rejuvenation, so often repeated, cannot be merely farcical. We are dealing with a true rolling back of the years for Philokleon.'²³ Or, in Hutchinson's more succinct formulation, 'Philokleon now behaves like a *νεανίας*, and is one'.²⁴

However, the rejuvenation is neither simple nor final. It is notable that Bowie's splendid discussion immediately leaps from the Dardanis episode to the exodos,

16. Sidwell (1995), 70: 'he is (oddly) called *νεανίας*'.

17. Reported at Biles and Olson (2015) *ad loc.*

18. MacDowell (1971) *ad loc.*: 'Farcically, Philokleon's wild youthful behaviour has made the man believe that he is really young, despite his aged appearance.' Similarly, Sommerstein (1983) *ad loc.*: 'the victims of this riotous reveller are unaware that he is in fact an old man.'

19. Biles and Olson (2015) *ad loc.*: 'Philokleon is acting as recklessly as young men—esp. drunk young men—were often thought to do'.

20. Van Leeuwen (1893) *ad loc.*: 'idem quod κεί σφόδρα νεανιεύει, non enim est iuuenis senex neque ceteris esse uidetur, sed iuuenem se gerit iuueniliter lasciuens.'

21. My translation of Lenz (2014) *ad loc.*: 'Die Zuschreibung von Jugend an Philokleon, die die realen Gegebenheiten verdreht, wird von Philokleon alsbald akzeptiert und in seiner Antwort fortgespielt.'

22. On anti-realism, see esp. Silk (2000), 212–17, Ruffell (2011). Stings: καὶ κέντρ(α) ἔχουσιν, 420, with Biles and Olson (2015) *ad loc.*: "'They've actually got stingers!' ...contrast 225–9, where Bdelycleon's description of the chorus' weapons is most easily taken as metaphorical', citing Denniston (1950), 320, for the connotations of καί. Philokleon's dual, or tripartite, generational status is also paralleled in Compton-Engle's (2015) analysis, 128f., of 'the duality between human chorus member and animal costume...in *Wasps*, where both the human and the animal qualities of the wasp chorus are kept operative throughout the play.' The Dog's speech (with interruptions): 907–30.

23. Bowie (1993), 95.

24. Hutchinson (2011), 67.

omitting the further developments and complications that accrue in the intervening iambic scenes. It is true that the initial exchange with the first accuser seems not only to assert Philokleon's new status as a rejuvenated νεανίας, but to reinforce it by rejecting his earlier status as a γέρων:

ἰηῦ ἰηῦ, ‘καλούμενοι’.
 ἀρχαῖά γ’ ὑμῶν. ὄρα γ’ ἴθ’ ὡς οὐδ’ ἀκούων ἀνέχομαι
 δικῶν; ἰαβοῖ αἰβοῖ.
 τάδε μ’ ἀρέσκει· βάλλα κημούς. οὐκ ἄπει;
 ποῦ ’ετ’ ἠλιαστής; ἐκποδῶν.

(V. 1335–40)

Ha ha! ‘To summons.’

Your stuff is ancient! Don’t you know that I can’t stand even to hear about trials? Eee-ew!

This is my kind of thing; to hell with voting urns. Won’t you get lost? Where’s the juror? Get away!

Philokleon’s total rejection of jury duty marks a volte face from his previous status as an obsessive φιληλιαστής (‘trial-lover’, 88), his ‘cure’ from his madness, and with it a rejection of his associated status as an old man.²⁵ His claim that the accuser and his companions are doing or saying ἀρχαῖα is a comically incongruous insult for an old man to aim at (presumably) younger interlocutors. Starkie compares it to Strepsiades’ expressed surprise in *Clouds* that his son Pheidippides ‘[is] a lad and [has] old-fashioned ideas’ (παιδάριον εἶ καὶ φρονεῖς ἀρχαῖκά, *Nu.* 821).²⁶ The parallel will be an important one for Philokleon’s later, more paradoxical assertion that the old are younger than the young, but here his assertion is bolder though less complex: Philokleon rejects his status as an old man and adopts wholesale the persona of a youth berating the outmodedness of his elders.

This reinvention of himself as the νεανίας his accuser has called him goes hand in hand with the rejection of what had been his persona in the earlier part of the play: the accuser’s ἀρχαῖα are the old-fashioned things associated with the old men among whom Philokleon no longer counts himself, but they are also his ‘former’ (LSJ ἀρχαῖος 3) persona as old man and juror.²⁷ From being fixated on trials, he can no longer bear even to hear about them and his insatiability has turned to disgust, expressed with the quintessentially Aristophanic

25. On the issue of Philokleon’s cure, see esp. Sidwell (1990), Ruffell (2018). On the interrelatedness of juror and old man: Bowie (1993), 81.

26. Starkie (1897) *ad loc.* Cf. Sommerstein (1983) *ad loc.*

27. Cf. Biles (2016), 134: ‘Philokleon’s violence and verbal abuse of innocent victims in the streets emphasizes his renouncement of the law courts. This point is impressed on us at the scene’s outset when the old man brushes off legal threats and even scoffs at symbols of the courtroom he had idolized so recently’.

αἰβοῖ.²⁸ His penultimate jibe, ποῦ 'στ' ἠλιακτής; (1340), does primarily serve as 'a rhetorical question implying "There's no juror here" and underlin[ing] the lack of recourse to justice that the accuser can expect.'²⁹ However, it also draws attention to the fact that Philokleon-the-juror, indistinguishable from Philokleon-the-old-man, is not here.³⁰ At this stage, Philokleon's rejuvenation does seem to be straightforward and radical.³¹ He is now a νεανίας and becoming that has entailed total renunciation of his status as a γέρον. Even for the ultimate recreative-discontinuous character, this is a radical metamorphosis.³² It should be noted, however, that unlike his previous ephebic phase in the first of Bowie's *agones*, here in this brief *agon* with the accuser Philokleon is victorious and as a result not stripped of his status as a νεανίας.

Indeed, so far from being stripped of his youthful persona, Philokleon develops it to considerable comic effect in the ensuing scene, with Dardanis and later Bdelykleon. Furthermore, he superimposes a second identity upon it. His persona is no longer purely that of a νεανίας, with Bdelykleon as the corresponding γέρον. It is in this scene that the paradox of his status as simultaneously νεανίας and γέρον is established, and it will be maintained through to its climax in the final scene. *Pace* Rusten, it is not quite the case that '[t]hese roles [sc. Philokleon as νεανίας, Bdelykleon as γέρον] are not discarded until 1379f., when Bdelykleon calls his father back to reality and Philokleon begins to show a preference for age over youth'.³³ Throughout Philokleon's speech to Dardanis, the audience is never permitted to forget (quite apart from the aforementioned visual dimension, which modern readers of the play all too easily forget) that he is a γέρον as well as a νεανίας, and conversely he retains his youthful vigour and violence even when asserting the superiority of age in the fist-fight with his son. The gloriously comical incongruities of Philokleon's speech and in particular its inversion of what would at least later become the standard comic relationship between strict father and unruly son have been often and well discussed. The incongruity of an old man speaking in these terms can be taken as a comedic end in itself, or even as tinged with pathos.³⁴

28. For the nuances of αἰβοῖ here and elsewhere in Aristophanes, see Levine (2016), esp. 94: 'The old man used to love lawsuits, but in his current frame of mind the idea of them is disgusting. This expletive shows how completely the old man has changed from loving lawsuits to detesting them.'

29. MacDowell (1971) *ad loc.*

30. Biles and Olson (2015) *ad loc.* catch the double sense but see the reference to Philokleon's status as primary: 'The point is not just that Philokleon is no longer one himself, but that no legal aid is available to protect his victims.'

31. Slater (1996), 42, notes further how βάλλε κημοῦς ('to hell with voting urns', 1339) contrasts with Philokleon's erotic graffiti in praise of voting urns at 99.

32. On Philokleon as recreative-discontinuous character: Silk (2000), 246–55.

33. Rusten (1977), 160.

34. Vaio (1971), 344 n.41: 'Wine releases new energy and permits the re-enactment of some youthful tricks, but the bitter reality is visible to all, and much of Philokleon's boasting must be interpreted as humor because incongruous with the real state of affairs.' Cf. Rothwell (2019), 11: 'it may be that Philokleon is a self-deluded alazon when it comes to his own potency, because it is entirely possible that the audience could see the old man's limp, dangling phallus.'

However, in this scene, the incongruity is not primarily based on the gap between appearance and reality.³⁵ Rather it is a means of expressing the paradox of Philokleon's dual status. It is not so much that he is acting like a νεανίας while, in Vaio's 'bitter reality', he is 'really' a γέρων, as that he embodies both age-statuses at the same time.

The distinctive feature of the elderly Philokleon's play with the persona of a reckless youth is that it always keeps both identities in view simultaneously. This is most clearly evident when he talks about waiting for the strict Bdelykleon to die:

ἐὰν γένη δὲ μὴ κακὴ νυνὶ γυνή,
 ἐγὼ σ' ἐπειδὴν οὐμὸς υἱὸς ἀποθάνη,
 λυκάμενος ἔξω παλλακὴν, ὦ χοιρίον.
 νῦν δ' οὐ κρατῶ ἴγ' ὅ τῶν ἐμαυτοῦ χρημάτων·
 νέος γὰρ εἰμι. καὶ φυλάττομαι σφόδρα·
 τὸ γὰρ υἷδιον τηρεῖ με, κάσσι δύσκολον
 κἄλλως κυμινοπριτικοκαρδαμογλύφον.
 ταῦτ' οὖν περὶ μου δέδοικε μὴ διαφθαρῶ·
 πατήρ γὰρ οὐδέεις ἔστιν αὐτῷ πλὴν ἐμοῦ.

(V. 1351–9)

But if you're not a bad girl to me now
 I, when my son dies,
 will buy your freedom and have you as my concubine, my pussy.
 Now, I don't have control over my own property.
 For I'm young. And I am heavily guarded.
 For my little son keeps watch on me, and he is grumpy
 and, another thing, a cress- and cumin-peeling skinflint.
 So when it comes to these things, he's anxious about me in case I'm
 corrupted.
 For he has no father but me.

The casting of Bdelykleon in the role of the strict father led Crichton to the attractive and ingenious formulation that 'Philocleon as young rake is actually the grandson of Philocleon as old juror'.³⁶ Attractive though it is, it does not fully capture the paradox that Aristophanes conjures. It would have been perfectly possible for Philokleon to inhabit the role of the νεανίας so completely—in keeping with his total rejection of the role of γέρων in the confrontation with the first accuser—as to refer to Bdelykleon as his actual father. We might compare the

35. Sonia Pertsinidis (*per litt.*) notes the contrast with Theophrastos' ὀψιμαθής ('late-learner', *Char.* 27), where the humour and absurdity arise from the old man's failed attempts to act like a youth, most relevantly in his komastic assault on a *hetaira's* door (27.9). Notably, there it is the old man who is beaten up and who then summons his rival to court.

36. Crichton (1993), 68.

situation in Plautus' *Casina* (720–59) where the roles of master and slave are reversed between the *senex amator* Lysidamus and his slave Olympio.³⁷ Although this is part of the larger (doomed) ruse to give Lysidamus sexual access to Casina by marrying her to Olympio, it is not a scene of impersonation which would require strict adherence to roles but rather 'some horseplay', as Konstan puts it,³⁸ which is clearly demarcated by acknowledgments that the real slave–master relationship is still in place. Nevertheless, for the course of the brief horseplay, Lysidamus fully and straightforwardly (if ironically) adopts the role of slave (*seruos sum tuos*, 'I am your slave', 738) and assigns that of master to Olympio (*opsecro te, | Olympisce mi, mi pater, mi patrone*, 'I implore you, my Olympiokins, my father, my former master', 738f.), while the latter likewise speaks of his master as a slave (*quid mi opust seruo tam nequam?*, 'What need do I have for so worthless a slave?', 741).

Philokleon could easily have spoken in the same terms of what he would do when οὐμὸς πατήρ ἀποθάνῃ ('my father dies') or about the watchful eye of his πατρίδιον ('little father'), casting himself as the only υἱός that Bdelykleon has.³⁹ The incongruity would have remained intact and indeed offered a sharper dissonance between the discrete categories of νεανίας and γέρων, between the illusory persona that Philokleon adopts and the reality established by his costume and the action of the play so far. By choosing instead to employ the *topoi* associated with a dissolute son talking about his strict father, but using language that acknowledges that this is in fact a father talking about the son (οὐμὸς υἱός; τὸ γὰρ υἷδιον), Aristophanes obliterates the distinction between νεανίας and γέρων. Philokleon is acting as a youth—or in Hutchinson's formulation, 'he is one'—at precisely the same moment as he is acknowledging his status as an old man. His waiting for his son to die is not a son's action displaced onto a father, since a son does not have a υἱός. Rather it is a filial action that only a father could perform, the paradoxical essence of youthful old age and senescent adolescence. Philokleon is νεανίας and γέρων in one.

This paradoxical coexistence of νεανίας and γέρων recurs during—and indeed is the key element of—Philokleon's victory over Bdelykleon at the end of this scene. If the elderly component of Philokleon's character in the scene with Dardanis has been neglected by scholars, then his continuing youthfulness in the confrontation with Bdelykleon has been similarly overlooked. Rusten's assertion that 'Philokleon begins to show a preference for age over youth' in this sequence identifies its key feature, but obscures the two facts that, except for the brief exchange with the first accuser, he never really stopped valuing old age, and that his youthful character is maintained even here. The key lines

37. On the slave–master reversal here, see Segal (1987), 113f., Moore (2011), 113, Richlin (2017), 210f.

38. Konstan (2014), 9.

39. The examples are intended to convey the sense of what Aristophanes could have written, but of course some recasting of word order or diction would be required to render the phrases metrical.

are those in which Philokleon uses against Bdelykleon one of the very anecdotes that his son had taught him as repartee for the symposion, combining the verbal victory with a violent physical re-enactment of it:⁴⁰

Φι. ἄκουσόν νυν ἐμοῦ.
 Ὀλυμπίασιν, ἥνικ' ἔθεώρουν ἐγώ,
 Ἐφουδίων ἐμαχέσατ' Ἀσκώνδα καλῶς
 ἤδη γέρων ὄν· εἶτα τῇ πυγμῇ θενῶν
 ὁ πρεσβύτερος κατέβαλε τὸν νεώτερον.
 πρὸς ταῦτα τηροῦ μὴ λάβηρ ὑπώπια.
Βδ. νῆ τὸν Δί', ἐξέμαθέε γε τὴν Ὀλυμπίαν.

(V. 1381–7)

Phil. Listen to me.
 At Olympia, when I was a spectator,
 Ephoudion fought well against Askondas
 even though he was already an old man. Then striking with his fist
 the older man knocked down the younger.
 Accordingly, watch out that you don't get black eyes.
Bdel. By Zeus, you thoroughly learnt about Olympia at least.

Philokleon's emphasis on Ephoudion's age and the carefully pointed antithesis between older and younger in line 1385 do indeed assert a preference for age over youth, but they do so by foregrounding the paradoxical quality of age's victory and the fact that it is achieved by acting in a youthful manner. The concessive force of the participial phrase ἤδη γέρων ὄν clearly implies the antithesis that, 'even though he was already an old man', he fought well *as one would expect a young man to*. Even to articulate that 'the older man knocked down the younger' presupposes an assumption that the roles would normally be the other way round. Philokleon's *paradeigma* Ephoudion behaves as a νεανίας at the very time that his status as a γέρων is being stressed, just like Philokleon the old-young lover. When Philokleon imitates that *paradeigma* by knocking down the νεώτερος Bdelykleon, he is a γέρων behaving as a νεανίας, not only in his unexpectedly superior physical prowess, but because the action itself—in the context of the Dardanis scene and through evocation of the previous year's *Clouds*—becomes that of a πατραλοία ('father-beater'), the father-cum-son and aged νεανίας beating the son-cum-father and youthful γέρων.⁴¹

40. Kaimio et al. (1990), 61: '[Philokleon] makes fun of the lessons of civilized conversation given to him by his son...and tells the story of the victorious old pancratiast while punching his son to the ground'.

41. Slater (1996), 42: 'Striking his adult son is startling even by Greek standards, but there is an added frisson in that Philokleon has portrayed himself as the son: he has become in effect another Pheidippides.... a πατραλοία beating his own father.'

The first iambic scene closes with a further expression of Philokleon's paradoxical dual status, as Bdelykleon observes that, like a child, his father has 'thoroughly learnt his lesson' (ἐξέμαθε), but a lesson that is about how an old man can behave like a youth.

III. Philokleon the *άνήρ*

The second iambic scene follows immediately, as the bread-seller, Myrtia, enters and addresses her summons-witness, Khairephon:

ἴθι μοι παράκτηθ', ἀντιβολῶ, πρὸς τῶν θεῶν.
 ὁδὶ γάρ *άνήρ* ἐστὶν ὅς μ' ἀπώλεσεν
 τῇ δαδὶ παίων, κάξέβαλεν ἐντευθενὶ
 ἄρτους δέκ' ὀβολῶν κάπιθήκην τεττάρων.

(V. 1388–91)

Come and stand by me, I beg you, by the gods.
 For *this is the man* who did for me,
 striking me with a torch, and threw off from this
 loaves worth ten obols and a tray-cover worth four.⁴²

Philokleon's status as *άνήρ* is not delineated in this scene by an association with hoplite warfare, as it is in Bowie's second *agon*.⁴³ Rather, Philokleon is an *άνήρ* as the unmarked, normative, default centre of a patriarchal society and even universe, a mature citizen male human, set in opposition to (or perhaps more accurately, having set in opposition to him) his gendered, political, and zoological others, without the delimiting and diminishing specification of youthful immaturity or enervated senescence.⁴⁴ Like Hermippos' Thales, he is human not beast, man not woman, Greek not barbarian, and more specifically he is Athenian citizen, not metic or foreigner.⁴⁵ These characteristics, these instances of being safely on the right side of a polarity, also mark a stage of maturation and set

42. I follow Wilson (2007) in printing Dobree's conjecture τεττάρων for the MS τέτταρας and translating ἐπιθήκη accordingly. However, retaining the paradox and translating 'four loaves in addition' (with MacDowell [1971] and Biles and Olson [2015]) would not affect the argument.

43. Bowie (1993), 86f. It is worth noting, though Bowie does not draw attention to it, that forms of *άνήρ* are also used in that earlier scene to emphasize the status of the 'combatants': the slaves as 'hoplite men' keeping watch at the 'passes' (άνδρες ὀπλίται, 360), Philokleon acting 'like a man' when he decides to gnaw through the net (ταῦτα μὲν πρὸς άνδρός, 369), the chorus demanding that Xanthias let 'the man' go on pain of violent attack (τὸν άνδρ', 428).

44. Cf. Roisman (2005), 11: 'From the age of thirty on, free adult males stood at the pinnacle of the social and political hierarchy of Athens; younger adults ranked lower, as did older men.'

45. D.L. 1.33: πρῶτον μὲν ὅτι άνθρωπος ἐγενόμην καὶ οὐ θηρίον, εἶτα ὅτι άνήρ καὶ οὐ γυνή, τρίτον ὅτι Ἕλληνα καὶ οὐ βάρβαρον. ('First, that I was born a human being and not a beast, then that I was born as man and not a woman, and third that I was born a Greek and not a barbarian.')

him apart from the androgynous liminality of the ephebe and the political limbo of the unenrolled child, or even the qualified civic status of the youth in his twenties.⁴⁶

Philokleon's status as man-not-woman is most clearly established by his opposition to and victory over the female bread-seller, Myrtia, the sole woman among the three complainants, one of just two female characters in the whole play and the only one with a speaking part. The audience is subtly but repeatedly reminded of her femininity, though mere readers of the play must as ever remember that her gender is also obvious to spectators from her mask and costume. Verbal reminders are provided incidentally by Philokleon's reference to her as *ταύτη* ('this woman', 1395) and addressing of her *ὦ γύναι* ('o woman', 1399), and more markedly by her own use of 'an oath used in comedy exclusively by women', *μὰ τὼ θεῶ* ('by the two goddesses', 1396).⁴⁷ Perhaps most marked, however, is her self-identification as the daughter of citizen parents: *Μυρτιάς ἡ τῆς Ἀγκυλίωνος θυγατέρος καὶ Σωστράτης* ('Myrtia, the daughter of Ankylion and Sostrate', 1396f.).⁴⁸ Commentators have rightly identified Myrtia's anxiety to establish her citizen status and the way in which her attempt to do so is ironically undermined by the reference to Ankylion, apparently a stock figure notorious for incestuous or other transgressions. However, they have overlooked how the basis of Myrtia's anxiety and the failure of her attempt to allay it are also underlined by the anomalous form of her self-identification, as if she were a citizen male.⁴⁹

Sommerstein is of course correct that, in Greek comedy, '[w]omen name themselves and each other freely, even when addressing men' and 'that there is a tendency in Aristophanes...to identify women indirectly by naming their male relatives' so that 'the evident implication is that so far as men outside the family were concerned, a married woman's only identity was as somebody's wife'.⁵⁰ However, Myrtia is here establishing her own identity, using her own name and those of her parents rather than her husband. If we exclude the special case of the anthropomorphized trireme, Nauphantes, daughter of Nauson (*Ναυφάντης γε τῆς Ναύσωνος*) at *Knights* 1309, the closest and

46. Cawthorn (2008), 96: 'The ephebe has only recently separated from the feminine (in both the form of the maternal and the feminine within, since the child, *pais*, is considered feminine in this culture).' Beaumont (2000), 47: 'By the time he attained his twentieth year, the young male was certainly in biological terms, and in many civic and legal respects, regarded as a man. Nevertheless, in certain civic aspects and in social terms, he was not deemed to have passed completely through the dangerous liminal developmental stage of youth until he was 30.'

47. Biles and Olson (2015) *ad loc.* and cf. Macdowell (1972) *ad loc.*, Willi (2003), 189, all comparing *Ec.* 155–8.

48. Wilson (2007) prints Richards' conjecture *γενομένης* for the MS *θυγατέρος*, but the rarity of the form is insufficient grounds for emendation and *γενομένης* is colourless. Nevertheless, the following argument still stands if *γενομένης* is printed.

49. Kloss (2001), 108f., identifies the incongruity ('unpassend') of Myrtia's form of self-introduction but stresses its association with social class ('Myrtia darf sich ihrer unbedeutenden Herkunft rühmen') rather than civic status. This is certainly part of the picture but by no means all.

50. Sommerstein (2009c), 44–6.

perhaps only parallel is Kritylla in *Thesmophoriazousai*. When Kritylla identifies herself as Κρίτυλλά γ' Ἀντιθέου Γαργηττόθεν ('Kritylla, [wife/daughter] of Antitheos from Gargettos', *Th.* 898), whether Antitheos is the name of her (dead, 446) husband or father,⁵¹ her inclusion of the demotic is clearly marked and anomalous, so that 'in the spirit of the women's assembly, she appropriates the male form of *état civil*.'⁵² Lenz and Sommerstein have rightly stressed that the naming of both parents establishes Myrtia's full citizenship, but while they are also correct in seeing this as an assertion of her civic right to be protected from ill treatment, it simultaneously throws into relief the limitations of those civic rights vis-à-vis the 'fuller' full citizenship of an adult male.⁵³ As a woman and hence a citizen with only partial citizen rights, Myrtia is not permitted to give evidence in court and is thus reliant on a male κλήτηρ ('summons witness') to bear witness to her summoning of her attacker. That attacker, Philokleon, is set in sharp contrast as both ἀνὴρ and πολίτης.

It is not only Myrtia whose diminished gender and citizenship status throw Philokleon's role as ἀνὴρ into relief. Her (or Aristophanes') choice of Khairephon as summons-witness has puzzled critics.⁵⁴ While the full implications of that choice may continue to elude modern readers and audiences unfamiliar with aspects of his reputation which have been lost over time, his depiction in this scene throws marked and surely significant emphasis on his pallor:

Φι. καὶ εὐ δὴ μοι, Χαίρεφῶν,
γυναικὶ κλητεύεις ἐοικῶς θαψίνῃ
Ἴνοϊ κρεμαμένη πρὸς ποδῶν Εὐριπίδου;

(V. 1412–14)

Phil. And are you of all people, Khairephon,
acting as summons-witness against me for a woman, like pallid
Ino hanging before the feet of Euripides?

The precise relevance of the allusion to Euripides' *Ino* and in particular the substitution of the playwright himself for one of his characters (probably Athamas) is also elusive and the recent papyrus discoveries of fragments from the tragedy

51. Husband: Austin and Olson (2004) *ad loc.* Father: Zeitlin (1981), 187, Silk (2000), 284, Kanavou (2011), 148. Willi (2003), 170, and Sidwell (2009), 274, allow for either possibility.

52. Austin and Olson (2004) *ad loc.* Pace Willi (2003), 170, '[t]he complete naming pattern for a woman consists of her first name, her husband's (or father's) name in the genitive, and the deme to which she belongs through her husband (or father): for instance, Κρίτυλλά γ' Ἀντιθέου Γαργηττόθεν', this is not a representative example but the *only* instance where an Aristophanic woman includes the deme; all others have only the husband's or father's name.

53. Lenz (2014) *ad loc.*: 'Mit der Nennung beider Eltern gibt sie zu verstehen, dass sie Vollbürgerin ist und Rechte geltend machen kann.' Sommerstein (1983) *ad loc.*: 'Myrtia names both her parents to prove that she is a citizen, not lightly to be insulted or injured.'

54. e.g. Biles and Olson (2015) *ad* 1408: 'why he in particular accompanies Myrtia in preparation for serving as her witness in court is unclear.'

have unfortunately shed no new light on it.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, it is clear that his notorious pallor, which is also mentioned in *Clouds* and *Birds*, in this scene at least is closely associated with effeminacy, providing as it does the principal point of comparison with the tragic heroine Ino. As Taaffe puts it, '[h]is pale skin suggests effeminacy. At best, his masculinity would be compromised and the authority of his testimony weakened. At worst, the witness might be mistaken for a woman and so not be able to testify in court.'⁵⁶ Philokleon emphasizes not only Myrtia's need, as a woman, for a summons-witness (γυναικὶ κλητεύει), but the unsuitability for the job of Khairephon of all people (ὀ δὴ)⁵⁷ as one whose effeminacy renders him the civic as well as the sexual equivalent of a woman. In the agonistic context of the iambic scene, both emphases presuppose the superiority—and the fact that it *can* be presupposed reinforces that superiority—of Philokleon as man and full citizen.

However, it is not only in gender and politics that Philokleon's status as ἀνήρ is set above Myrtia's. Thales' first polarity of human and beast is also brought to bear as Philokleon uses an anecdote about Aesop and a dog to attempt to silence his accuser.

Αἴσωπον ἀπὸ δείπνου βαδίζονθ' ἐσπέρας
θραεῖα καὶ μεθύσει τις ὑλάκτει κύων.
κᾶπειτ' ἐκεῖνος εἶπεν, ὦ κύων κύων,
εἰ νῆ Δί' ἀντὶ τῆς κακῆς γλώττης ποθὲν
πυροῦς πρίατο, σῶφρονεῖν ἄν μοι δοκεῖ.

(V. 1401–5)

As Aesop was walking home one evening from dinner,
a certain insolent and drunken bitch barked at him.
And then he said, 'O bitch, bitch,
if, by Zeus, if in exchange for your wicked tongue, from somewhere
you were to buy wheat, I think you'd be showing sense.'

In employing an Aesopic fable ostensibly to defuse a hostile situation, just as with the Sybarite tales he uses with his next accuser (1427–40), Philokleon is either incompetently or, more probably, wilfully and mischievously misapplying his son's earlier advice that these are perfect techniques to 'turn the matter [of drunken violence] into a joke so that [the victim] lets [him] off and leaves'

55. On P.Oxy. 5131, see esp. Finglass (2014) and (2016).

56. Taaffe (1993), 37. Cf. Sommerstein (1983) *ad* 1413: 'the point is that with such a complexion he might be thought to be a woman, in which case he would not be allowed to give evidence in court of the serving of the summons'.

57. Denniston (1950), 207: 'Particularly in the case of σὺ (especially in questions), the emphasis is often ironical, contemptuous, or indignant in tone.'

(κᾶτ' εἰς γέλων | τὸ πρᾶγμ' ἔτρεψας, ὅστ' ἀφείδ' ἀποίχεται, 1260f.).⁵⁸ Where Bdelykleon envisaged the reconciliatory effect of communal laughter, his father weaponizes the Aesopic to render his opponents the objects of derision so that they leave the field of battle and let him off by defaulting.⁵⁹ Myrtia herself recognizes his tactic as she immediately responds 'Are you also deriding me?' (καὶ καταγελῶς μου;, 1406), the καὶ indicating that this verbal assault is in addition and parallel to his earlier physical one. As well as offering Myrtia something that is 'a subtle but undeniable misrepresentation of the facts and offensive at the same time',⁶⁰ Philokleon makes the further unexpected move of interpreting his son's formulation 'some funny Aesopic story' (λόγον...τινα, | Αἰσωπικὸν γέλοιον, 1258f.) not as a beast fable entirely populated by anthropomorphized animals, but as a story featuring Aesop himself that sets up a sharp distinction between the human and the animal. It is this aspect of the λόγος that contributes to Philokleon's depiction as ἀνῆρ in this scene.

Animal imagery, often connected to Aesopic fable, is famously pervasive throughout *Wasps* and is most frequently associated with Philokleon himself.⁶¹ In the course of the play he is described as or compared to (often by himself) a non-specific 'beast' (κνώδαλον, 4), limpet (105), bee (107 *bis*, 366), jackdaw (129), mouse (140, 204), donkey (189, 1306, 1310), horse (192), sparrow (207), weasel (363), and of course wasp (430).⁶² This 'multifaceted human-animal identity of Philokleon', as Miles terms it,⁶³ makes it all the more marked that in the confrontation with Myrtia he firmly identifies himself with the human Aesop against the female dog who transparently stands for his opponent. The detail of having Aesop walking home from a feast, as Philokleon was from the symposion, clearly identifies the two, even if he more tentatively

58. Pertsinidis (2009), 213: 'Bdelykleon explicitly advises Philokleon to tell fables in order to amuse and pacify any potential complainant'.

59. Cf. Jedrkiewicz (2006), 82: 'Ad uso di questi interlocutori furibondi, il vecchio riesce ad usare i *geloia* esopici e sibaritici in modo perfettamente rovesciato: invece di ammansire, esaspera ancor di più.' Biles (2016), 135: 'Philocleon throughout the later scenes demonstrates his mastery of the verbal strategies of the intellectual elite...with the difference that he deploys them according to his own rules, in blatant disregard for all social conventions and fears of repercussions.' Halliwell (2020), 126: 'Bdelykleon...is someone who wants to avoid or defuse conflict. But this only cues his reprobate father to borrow and parody his son's impulse to appeasement for his own sarcastic purposes.' Similarly Zanetto (2001), 68f. *Contra* Biles and Olson (2015) *ad* 1258–61: 'Philocleon's own clumsy attempt to put Bdelykleon's advice into practice (1393–1414, 1427–41), only exacerbates his troubles.' Sonia Pertsinidis (*per litt.*) suggests that the close connection of fable to *iambos* may contribute to Philokleon's aggressive deployment of them. Cf. Zanetto (2001), 68–70, on *iambos* and Aesopic tales in this scene and, on the connection more broadly, Hawkins (2014), 89–93.

60. Van Dijk (1997), 190f.

61. Animals and the Aesopic in *Wasps*: Whitman (1964), 162–5, Rothwell (1995), Kloss (2001), 106–15, Jedrkiewicz (2006), Pertsinidis (2009), Schirru (2009), 56–70, Hall (2013), 289–94, Payne (2016), Miles (2017).

62. The appendix of animal-related jokes and references in the play at Miles (2017), 226–9, is a useful resource, to which I am indebted.

63. Miles (2017), 223.

transfers his own insolence and drunkenness onto the dog. The identification of Myrtia with the dog, however, produces a rather more complex effect than merely providing ‘an excuse for him to shout “You stupid bitch!” in the woman’s face’, though that is undeniably part of the old man’s intention.⁶⁴ On one level, it dehumanizes her, exploiting the culturally constructed superiority of ἄνθρωπος over θηρίον, Αἴσωπος over κύων, to assert Philokleon’s superiority over Myrtia. Yet its very assimilation of the bitch to the bread-seller—most jarringly in ‘Aesop’s’ suggestion that the ‘dog’ buy wheat⁶⁵—activates that complex of associations which equates ideas of the canine and the feminine. As Franco puts it, ‘[t]he symbolic overlap between dog and woman [was] a perfect training ground for exercising ideological strategies that maintained feminine subordination.’⁶⁶ Myrtia is demeaned, not so much because she is constructed as dog rather than woman, but because dog and woman are constructed as equivalents. Her overlapping statuses as γυνή and κύων emphasize the antithetical and superior status of Philokleon as ἀνὴρ.

Throughout the scene, Philokleon’s status as the ἀνὴρ that Myrtia initially calls him is reinforced by setting him in polar opposition to the femininity, animality, and limited citizen status of Myrtia as well as to Khairephon’s effeminacy. The paradox of his triple status as νεανίας, ἀνὴρ, and γέρον is foregrounded less than in the preceding scene. Nevertheless, being depicted as a mature man with full citizen rights and powers while simultaneously behaving with the wanton outrageousness of a youth and wearing the headpiece (and presumably employing the gait and gestures) of an old man maintain the audience’s sense that he is all three.

IV. Philokleon the γέρον and his ‘Death’

The third and final accuser—another man—addresses Philokleon as an old man, bringing his tripartite lifecycle across the three iambic scenes to its logical conclusion:

οἴμοι κακοδαίμων. προσκαλοῦμαί σ’, ὦ γέρον,
ὑβρεως.

(V. 1417f.)

Oh poor me! I summon you on a charge, *old man*,
of wanton assault.

64. Reckford (1987), 276.

65. Van Dijk (1997), 191: ‘Aesop’s *réplique finale* clearly applies to the bread seller, not to the bitch.’

66. Franco (2014), 159.

Finally, Philokleon is identified, not as a νεανίας or ἀνήρ, but as the γέρων as which his costume and backstory also designate him. However, this acknowledgment of his old age is immediately undercut by its juxtaposition with an accusation that jarringly reasserts his youth.⁶⁷ ὕβρις was closely connected with youth, as in the famous Sophoklean fragment:⁶⁸

ὕβρις δέ τοι
οὐπόποθ' ἦβης εἰς τὸ κῶφρον ἴκετο,
ἀλλ' ἐν νέοις ἀνθεῖ τε καὶ πάλιν φθίνει.

(S. fr. 786 Radt)

ὕβρις, I tell you,
never reaches the moderation of maturity
but flowers in the young and in its turn fades.

In setting out the qualities of old age, Aristotle specifically differentiates the ὕβρις of youth from the κακουργία ('malice') of the elderly (*Rh.* 1390a), while, at the other end of the age spectrum, Xenophon marks it out as a tendency which develops when males undergo the transition from being παῖδες ('boys') to μαιράκια ('lads', often equivalent to νεανία; *Lac.* 3.1f.). Plato describes Ktesippos as good and noble in nature 'except that he was a ὕβριςτις on account of being young' (ὄσον μὴ ὕβριςτις διὰ τὸ νέος εἶναι, *Euthd.* 273a). Most pertinently for Philokleon, Agathon's servant in *Thesmophoriazousai* reacts to one of Mnesilokhos' characteristically outrageous insults by wryly commenting, ἦ που νέος γ' ὦν ἦσθ' ὕβριςτις, ὦ γέρον (*Th.* 63). As Austin and Olson unpack the implications of the particles, 'You must certainly have acted outrageously when you were *young*, old man, [if you're acting this way *now*]!'⁶⁹ The implicit incongruity of a γέρων acting as a ὕβριςτις leads the servant to infer that Mnesilokhos must *a fortiori* have been a ὕβριςτις when he was a νέος and at the age when such ὕβρις is to be expected.

Back in *Wasps*, the incongruity of the old man's hubristic behaviour is emphasized already in Xanthias' (Philokleon's slave) narration of the symposium at 1299–325. The notion that behaviour rather than years is the determinant of life-stage is introduced when the chorus justify calling Xanthias παῖ ('boy', but

67. Biles and Olson (2015) *ad loc.* are correct that ὕβρεος is 'placed emphatically at the head of the line to emphasize the gravity of the matter', but its incongruity is emphasized alongside its gravity and the surprise, verging on *para prosdokian*, intensified by the enjambment.

68. On the connection of youth and *hybris*, see Dover (1974), 103, MacDowell (1976), 15, Fisher (1992), esp. 97–9 (citing this fragment at 97), and index s.v. 'youth', Cairns (1996), 24f., 31. Note esp. Fisher (1992), 97: 'The terms specifically formed to denote behaviour characteristic of youth, *neanikos* and *neanikeuesthai*, are often found in association with *hybris*, indicating such violent, thoughtless and reckless behaviour that harms and insults others'. On the motif in tragedy, see Sommerstein (2012), Shipton (2018), 47–9, 54f.

69. Austin and Olson (2004) *ad loc.*, italics original.

also ‘slave’), ‘for it’s fitting to call someone who takes a beating “boy”, even if he’s an old man’ (παῖδα γάρ, κᾶν ἢ γέρων, | καλεῖν δίκαιον ὅτις ἂν πληγὰς λάβῃ, 1297f.). At the symposium, Philokleon was ‘by far the most outrageous’ (ὑβριστότατος μακρῶ, 1303), even against some very disreputable competition, and ‘thoroughly insulted’ (περιὑβρίζεν, 1319) the whole company. The incongruity of an old man’s behaving in this way is indicated lightly by Xanthias’ introduction of him as ὁ γέρων (1299) and more pointedly when Lysistratos addresses him ὦ πρεσβῦτα (1309) before noting his similarity to a *nouveau riche* Phrygian or a donkey in a chaff-heap. Most marked of all is Xanthias’ description of how the old man beat him νεανικῶς, not just ‘vigorously’, but ‘like a young man’, with Philokleon also inverting the slave’s age too by calling him παῖ παῖ (1307).⁷⁰

This is not, of course, to say that mature men are never accused of ὕβρις or of being ὑβρισταί. MacDowell is absolutely correct to declare that the ‘usual view is that it is in the teenager or the young man that *hybris* is most often found...[b]ut *hybris* can exist in old men too; youth or age is not part of the definition of *hybris*’.⁷¹ Nevertheless, it is striking how often the association with youth is still made even when the ὑβριστής is not a young man. Two of the closest, as well as among the most famous, parallels for Philokleon’s humiliating physical assault are to be found in Demosthenes’ speeches against Konon and Meidias. Both are men in later middle age, Konon a little over fifty (D. 54.22), Meidias a little under (D. 21.154), but both are repeatedly accused of and associated with acts and displays of ὕβρις.⁷² However, far from this being treated as something the jury might normatively expect fifty-year-old men to indulge in, even here the association of ὕβρις with youth is emphasized. Meidias’ act of ὕβρις against Demosthenes is one of the two ‘crowning acts he put on the entirety of his youthful pranks’ (κεφάλαι’ ἐφ’ ἅπασι τοῖς ἐαυτῷ νενεανιευμένοις ἐπέθηκεν, 21.18) and he chose this option rather than acting as *khoregos* in competition with Demosthenes as a way to ‘manifest his youthful intemperance’ (ἐνεανιεύσατο, 21.69). The incongruity of an older man’s behaving in a manner associated with the young is even more pointed in the case of Konon, who, unlike youths who can be afforded indulgence, performs his act of ὕβρις, as a man ‘who is over fifty, in the presence of younger fellows and these sons of his, and [acts] not to steer them away or prevent them, but himself is the leader and foremost and most loathsome of them all’ (ὅτις δ’ ἐτῶν μὲν ἔστιν πλειόνων ἢ πεντήκοντα, παρὸν δὲ νεωτέρους ἀνθρώπους καὶ τούτοις υἱεῖν, οὐχ ὅπως ἀπέτρεψεν ἢ διεκώλυεν, ἀλλ’ αὐτὸς ἡγεμὼν καὶ πρῶτος καὶ

70. With Biles-Olson (2015) *ad loc.*: “‘vigorously’...but also anticipating the rejuvenating effect Philokleon’s immersion in the symposium has on him’.

71. MacDowell (1976), 15.

72. D. 54.1, 2, 11, 13, 24, 37, in addition to fourteen instances of ὑβρίζω and one of ὑβριστής. The thirty-seven instances and ninety-four of its cognates in D. 21 are catalogued and discussed in Rowe (1993).

πάντων βδελυρότατος γεγένηται, 54.22).⁷³ While ὕβρις can be associated with tyrants, barbarians, the wealthy, and others with no particular reference to age, it is clear that, when age is an issue, as it is with Philokleon, Konon, and Meidias, the sense that such behaviour is the province of the young and incongruous in the old is never far from the surface and very frequently breaks through.

So it is when the third accuser juxtaposes his address of Philokleon as γέρων with the accusation of ὕβρις. In case the audience misses the crucial word, Bdelykleon immediately and despairingly repeats it, incredulously asking if this youthful crime is really what the accuser is charging an old man with (ὕβρεως, ‘wanton assault’, 1418).⁷⁴ As in all three iambic scenes, the incongruity generates humour, but it also expresses the paradox of Philokleon’s dual (or triple) status, an old man who is also sufficiently a youth that he possesses both the vigour and the arrogance to commit the quintessentially youthful crime of ὕβρις.⁷⁵

Despite this persistence of his νεότης into the γῆρας of his accelerated third lifecycle, there are initially signs that Philokleon may be showing a degree of mellowing and moderation in keeping with his age and stage.⁷⁶ When the panic-stricken Bdelykleon offers to pay the accuser compensation for his father’s misdemeanours, Philokleon offers of his ‘own free will to settle the matter’ with his victim (ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν αὐτῷ διαλλαχθήσομαι | ἐκὼν, 1421f.) and confesses to assaulting him. However, his method of ‘settling’ is once more the wilful misapplication of his son’s pre-sympotic advice, this time using two of the Sybarite tales which Bdelykleon paired with Aesopic fables (1259), to insult his accuser.⁷⁷ Unlike the aggressively masculine, anthropocentric Aesopic anecdote targeted at Myrtia, but like the inconsequential *lasisma* (story about Lasos) which follows it, the content of Philokleon’s Sybarite tales to the third accuser have little significance for the construction of his generational identity. Rather it is their aggressive quality that marks him as reverting to or persisting in hubristic youthfulness. This is even more the case if Kaimio is correct in speculating that, as with the blow to Bdelykleon that mimetically accompanied Philokleon’s narration of Ephoudion’s felling of Askondas, he here (again) strikes the accuser while narrating the breaking of the ἐχῖνος (‘jar’) by the Sybarite woman in 1435f.⁷⁸

73. Similarly, Konon’s cronies, although ‘grey-haired’ (ἐπιπόλιον), bandy ‘young-men’s talk’ (νεανικά) about perjuring themselves over acts of ὕβρις (D. 54.34f.).

74. The seriousness of the charge and its penalties is the other trigger for Bdelykleon’s reaction, as commentators note.

75. On ὕβρις in Aristophanes, see Thiery (2007).

76. On the σωφροσύνη of old age: Pl. *Leg.* 691e, Arist. *Rh.* 1390b, and cf. E. fr. 619. On σωφροσύνη in the play as a whole, and in particular Philokleon’s lack of it, see Kanavou (2016).

77. On Philokleon’s Sybarite tales, see van Dijk (1997), 191–4, Kloss (2001), 111–14, Pertsinidis (2009), 214f., Schirru (2009), 156–65.

78. Kaimio et al. (1990), 61: ‘he...tells the story of the victorious old pancratiast while punching his son to the ground...and a Sybaritan story of the breaking of a vase...when smashing the man calling him to court’.

Regardless of whether the violence is also physical or solely verbal, it demonstrates that, despite Philokleon's apparent reversion to behaviour befitting his (biological) age, this γέρων is continuing to act with the ὕβρις of a νεανίας. This continuity is explicitly flagged to the audience by how the other characters onstage react to each of the Sybarite tales. Bdelykleon responds to the first by declaring 'these acts of yours too are just like your other behaviour' (ὁμοιά σου καὶ τὰῦτα τοῖς ἄλλοις τρόποις, 1433).⁷⁹ The τρόποι of the main characters, their "manners, ways, typical patterns of behaviour"...which stand in an ambiguous relation to [their] φύσις,⁸⁰ especially Philokleon's (1002), but also Bdelykleon's (135) and the chorus' (454, 1102), and in particular the possibility of changing them (504f., 748, 1450f., 1459f.), are a major theme of the play. Although the influences that shape and the criteria that characterize such τρόποι are complex and multifaceted, age-appropriateness is prominent among them. That there were distinct τρόποι in which the young and old respectively were expected to behave can be seen from the drama of the period. Euripides' early *Peliades* includes sententious advice delivered to a young girl (Collard and Cropp suggest Pelias to Alkestis)⁸¹ about appropriate behaviour:

αἰνῶ· διδάξαι δ' ὦ τέκνον σε βούλομαι·
ὅταν μὲν ἦς παῖς, μὴ πλέον παιδὸς φρονεῖν,
ἐν παρθένοις δὲ παρθένου τρόπους ἔχειν

(E. *Peliades* fr. 603.1–3 Kannicht)

I commend you, but, my child, I want to instruct you:
when you are a child, not to think bigger than a child,
and when among maidens to have the τρόποι of a maiden

Gender roles are, of course, also in play here and Pelias goes on to talk about marriage and leaving business to men, but there is clear emphasis on age here (τέκνον, παῖς, even παρθένου) and what constitute appropriate τρόποι for the young. At the other end of the spectrum, the fourth-century Middle Comedy poet Philetairos (Aristophanes' son, according to some traditions) rebukes an old man who has been spending too much time with prostitutes: 'Because you are an old man, cease these τρόποι' (παῦσαι γέρων ὦν τοὺς τρόπους, *The Huntress* fr. 6.1 PCG).⁸² The addressee must cease his behaviour *because* he is an old

79. Biles and Olson (2015) *ad loc.* assign 1433 to the accuser, so that 'what he means is "This too is *hybris*"', with no reference to Philokleon's other actions, of which he has no knowledge. Though this would lack the pointedness of having Bdelykleon's evoking his father's consistently νεανικός behaviour despite his symbolic aging across the three iambic scenes, it nevertheless stresses the continuity of his youthful status despite his apparent senescence within this final scene.

80. Definition from Biles and Olson (2015) *ad* 133–5.

81. Collard and Cropp (2009), 61.

82. There is some uncertainty as to whether Athenaios (to whom we owe this fragment) has altered the rest of the quotation to make the speaker claim that 'dying at the same time as fucking' (ἀποθανεῖν

man, a syllogism with the implied premise that this is not the societally approved behaviour *of* an old man.

Philokleon's τρόποι had appeared to be harmonizing with the status of γέρων which the accuser had assigned to him, but this was an illusion (or a deception) and his hubristic Sybarite tales are 'just like' (ὅμοιά, 1433) his youthfully hubristic behaviour towards the first accuser, Myrtia, and her witness Khairephon in the other iambic scenes, and towards all three of his victims in the offstage rampage that preceded them. The same point is made in a slightly different way by the third accuser's response to the second Sybarite tale: 'Keep on acting hubristically, until the arkhon calls your case' (ὕβριζ', ἕως ἂν τὴν δίκην ἄρχων καλῆ, 1441). The continuous force of the present imperative, as well as the ring composition with the charge of ὕβρις that the accuser made on entrance (1418), stress that this is ongoing behaviour, 'just like' Philokleon's other τρόποι, and that he persists in acting as a νεανίας, even though the opening address established him as the γέρων that his headpiece and backstory have always made him. Once again, in the third of this second series of *agones*, he is victorious, as the third accuser leaves the arena. Instead of being successively stripped of his identities as νεανίας, ἀνὴρ, and γέρων, he has maintained each of them while paradoxically (and acceleratedly) passing through the stages of life.

Despite this victory—or perhaps as an extension of it—Philokleon's third life-cycle still comes to its natural end with a symbolic death. The pre-parabasis *agones* also ended in a metaphorical death, which some critics take as part of the initiatory process ushering him from his old life of jury-mania to his new life of ease and pleasure.⁸³ Following Philokleon's triumph in the third of the post-parabasis *agones*, Bdelykleon finally loses patience and decides to take action:

Bδ. οὗτοι μὰ τὴν Διήμητρ' ἔτ' ἐνταυθοῖ μενεῖς,

ἀλλ' ἀράμενος οἴω σε—

Φι. τί ποιεῖς;

Bδ. ὅ τι ποιῶ;

εἶω φέρω σ' ἐντεῦθεν· εἰ δὲ μή, τάχα

κλητῆρες ἐπιλείψουσι τοὺς καλουμένους.

Φι. Αἴσωπον οἱ Δελφοί ποτ'—

Bδ. ὀλίγον μοι μέλει.

Φι. φιάλην ἐπητιῶντο κλέψαι τοῦ θεοῦ·

βινούνη' ἄμα, 13.27) is or is not the sweetest thing, but this does not affect the general import of the opening imperative.

83. Auger (2008), 513: 'Conformément au schéma rituel, l'initié meurt métaphoriquement à son ancienne vie pour renaître dans la nouvelle.' Without the initiatory associations, Reckford (1977), 297: '[H]e has lost his identity. It is a kind of death.' Jedrkiewicz (2006), 70, argues for two paratragic 'morti in scena', at 752–7 and 997.

ὁ δ' ἔλεξεν αὐτοῖς ὡς ὁ κἀνθαρός ποτε—
Bd. οἴμ' ὡς ἀπολεῖς με τοῖσι κοῖσι κἀνθάροις.

(V. 1442–9)

Bdel. By Demeter, you won't stay here any longer
 but I'll pick you up and carry you—

Phil. What are you doing?

Bdel. What am I doing?

I'm carrying you inside away from here. If I don't, soon
 we'll run out of summons witnesses for the plaintiffs.

Phil. As for Aesop, the Delphians once—

Bdel. I don't care a jot.

Phil. accused him of stealing one of the god's bowls.

But he told them that the dung-beetle once—

Bdel. Bloody hell, you'll kill me with these dung-beetles of yours!

Bdelykleon's intervention takes the play full-circle and marks the failure of his attempt to cure his father as he reverts to shutting the old man up inside the house.⁸⁴ This ring composition produces in the audience a sense of false closure, though one kept in tension with their expectation of the conventional convivial finale. The action of physically 'carrying' his father 'inside' (εἶσω φέρω *c'*) serves as an inverted funereal ἐκφορά ('carrying out'). Yet, in keeping with Philokleon's multiple age-statures, it also renders the old man a babe in arms.⁸⁵ However, it is Philokleon's abortive introduction of one final Aesopic λόγος that most clearly marks his carrying indoors as a symbolic death, albeit one very different from that following the acquittal of the dog Labes in the mock-trial at the end of the first half of the play.

Although this is the first extant reference to it, scholars generally agree that the story of Aesop's death at the hands of the Delphians must have been well established and well known by 422 BCE.⁸⁶ The extreme allusiveness which Bdelykleon's interruptions impose upon his father's fragmentary recounting of the story strongly suggest that the audience would have been easily able to fill in the gaps. In revenge for telling the unpalatable truth about them, the Delphians framed and falsely accused Aesop of stealing a sacred vessel of Apollo, then dragged him from a shrine (either of Apollo or the Muses) where he had taken sanctuary. Before they executed him, he narrated a fable of how a dung-beetle took revenge on an eagle who had killed a hare, despite the beetle's offering it protection. The humble beetle kept destroying the eagle's eggs, even on the

84. Cf. Crane (1997), 223: '[Bdelykleon] is left in the same position that he occupied at the opening of the play, as his father's jailer, desperately holding Philokleon within the limits of the oikos.'

85. Hutchinson (2011), 67: 'he physically carries him against his will, as if he were a child.'

86. On Philokleon's use of the story: Rothwell (1995), 253, van Dijk (1997), 194–7, Kloss (2001), 113, Jedrkiewicz (2006), 82, Pertsinidis (2009), 215f., Schirru (2009), 95–9, Hall (2013), 292f.

lap of Zeus, showing that even the lowly can enact justice upon the mighty. Philokleon's deployment of the story is particularly complex, treating it as a sort of meta-fable, since he is implicitly comparing himself to Aesop who is in turn comparing *himself* to both the hare and the dung-beetle.⁸⁷ Scholars rightly emphasize both figures' identification with the dung-beetle and its significance for the low, Aesopic-cum-comic 'revenge' that Philokleon, like Aesop, will exact.⁸⁸ However, they tend to downplay or ignore the allegorical significance of the hare. Van Dijk neatly draws the parallel between Philokleon's being hauled offstage and Aesop's being dragged from his sanctuary (implicitly, as the hare was taken from the dung-beetle's protection), but he interprets the relationship between their subsequent fates as one of incongruous contrast: 'Aesop faces his execution, Philokleon his *exit*.'⁸⁹ However, when Philokleon has been characterized in successive scenes as going through the stages of life from νεανίας to ἀνὴρ to γέρον, and follows this by comparing himself to someone (who is in turn comparing himself to something) at the moment of their death, there is surely a strong encouragement for the audience to see this exit as a symbolic death, the conclusion of Philokleon's third lifecycle.⁹⁰

Unlike Philokleon's earlier symbolic death, defeated in three *agones* and declaring himself to be 'nothing', this death comes at a moment of total victory and, despite a temporary setback, declares that he will not only have his revenge but will live on as the dung-beetle. Ironically, it is Bdelykleon for whom this is the final exit, the theatrical death.⁹¹ Philokleon will return for the exodos but his son will not. It is tempting to take Bdelykleon's final, exasperated cry—his last line in the play—as partially literal as well as metaphorical. Just as Aesop's dung-beetle did to the eagle and its eggs, so Philokleon with his own dung-beetles will indeed not just 'bore to death' (ἀπολεῖς, LSJ 2) but actually, albeit symbolically, 'kill' (LSJ 1) him. Paradoxical to the (false) end, Philokleon completes his third lifecycle with a death that involves his being carried inside not outside, like a child not a corpse, a death that 'kills' his killer, leaving the way clear for his return, like the dung-beetle, for a grand, comic finale.

87. Hall (2013), 293: 'There are therefore no fewer than three parallel stories of subversion of superior authority going on here—Philokleon is challenging his upwardly mobile son, as Aesop challenged the Delphians, and the dung-beetle challenged both the eagle and Zeus', though she omits that Aesop (and Philokleon) are both also the hare, the victim of the eagle's initial violent injustice.

88. Esp. Jedrkiewicz (2006), 82: 'si riafferma come narratore σκαλιός in senso letterale, ossia dal repertorio scatologico: lo scarabeo ottiene giustizia bombardando di escrementi Zeus.'

89. Van Dijk (1997), 196f., quoting from 197, with original emphasis.

90. Schirru (2009), 98f., does situate the parallelism with Aesop's death within 'una serie di segni "premonitori"' of Philokleon's paratragic 'death' throughout the play, but sees the latter not as symbolic, but as one of the 'esagerazioni del vecchio' and 'il "triste fato" dell'eroe comico' as 'parodia di quello di tanti protagonisti del teatro tragico.'

91. Cf. Sommerstein (2009b), 198: 'That sequence ends with Philokleon being carried off-stage, kicking and screaming, by his son—but it is the son who then vanishes from the play'.

V. Philokleon (*re*)*redivivus*⁹²

Following a brief and elusive choral ode (1449–73), the exodos opens in a manner strikingly similar to that following the second parabasis. Just as Xanthias there narrated Philokleon’s outrageous behaviour both at the symposion and on the way home (1292–325), declaring him ‘a most baneful pest’ (ἄτηρότατον... κακόν, 1299), so the same slave here offers a briefer account of a private party that the old man has just had in the house (1474–81) and warns the audience: ‘Look! Here comes the pest’ (τοῦτὶ καὶ δὴ χωρεῖ τὸ κακόν, 1483). In the three iambic scenes which followed Xanthias’ earlier speech, Philokleon vanquished three antagonists in succession before facing an ambiguous struggle against his own son. In the exodos, he vanquishes in quick succession the three sons of Karkinos and then the father himself in a dance-fight.⁹³ The whole of the exodos can be taken as an accelerated replay of the iambic scenes. Yet while, in the earlier scenes, the complexity of Philokleon’s age-status was plotted against his third lifecycle from νεανίασ to ἀνὴρ to γέρον, here, in a fully Dionysiac dissolution of boundaries, his youth and age are paradoxically simultaneous throughout.⁹⁴ The previous iambic scenes are, then, not so much accelerated as conflated into a single assertion of Philokleon’s old-young victory over his adversaries.

The careful construction of this implicit paradox over the course of the iambic scenes gives greater piquancy and significance to the explicit paradox that Xanthias, quoting Philokleon, expresses:

καὶ τοὺς τραγωδοὺς φησὶν ἀποδείξειν Κρόνου
τοὺς νῦν διορχηζόμενος ὀλίγον ὕστερον.

(V. 1480f.)

And he says that a little later he’ll show that the tragedians
of today are Kronoses by having a dance-fight with them.

Scholars have rightly placed great emphasis on the paradoxical nature of Philokleon’s self-positioning. As Hutchinson puts it, he ‘paradoxically mixes old and young: he outdoes a younger father’s sons in dancing; he champions the old

92. Alluding to Bowie (1993), 93.

93. Payne’s suggestion (2016), 141, that ‘this dance-off turns out to be not agonistic after all, but an enactment of the integration of new and old that P[hilo]Cleon embodies in his own person’ is humane and attractive, but while it is true that Philokleon and the sons of Karkinos do seem to dance together, both in the orchestra and in procession offstage, there is still a strong sense of a victory being achieved, albeit a benign, inclusive one that incorporates rather than excludes one’s opponents.

94. On the Dionysiac in the exodos: Vaio (1971), 351, Reckford (1977), 302, MacCary (1979), 141f., Konstan (1985), 44, Menu (1992), 177f., Slater (1996), 44–9, Sommerstein (2009b), 198–202, Biles (2016), 135f., Farmer (2017), 147–53.

tragic dances, but aims to show contemporary tragic dancers as the real Κρόνοι (1480f.).⁹⁵ What has not been observed is how this paradoxical mixture of old and young has been developed in the preceding three scenes by Philokleon's transition through the three stages of life while maintaining (again, paradoxically) all three at once. It is in this context that the audience is fully able to appreciate the coexistence of old and new, aged and young, in Philokleon and the play that he in many ways emblemizes.⁹⁶

A great virtue of interpreting Philokleon's progress through the post-parabasis iambic scenes as a third lifecycle in which he maintains the status of old and young simultaneously is that it is compatible with and can contribute to many of the diverse interpretations—political, poetic, social, and ethical—of the final scenes and of the play as a whole. At the same time, that very compatibility means that it is less potent as a tool for privileging one interpretation over another and so does not in itself offer a key to unlocking the play's 'meaning', if we should want to place such restrictive shackles on this most Protean of comedies. The triumph of Philokleon over his antagonists which goes hand in hand with his 'final, defiant inversion of the laws of transience'⁹⁷ sits less easily (though it is by no means exclusive of) what might, broadly speaking, be termed pessimistic readings that anticipate mundane repercussions for his carnivalesque behaviour,⁹⁸ or even see the final scene as 'an impending outburst of tragic havoc'.⁹⁹ Certainly Philokleon's antisocial behaviour springs in large part from his combination of youthful recklessness and senile irresponsibility, so that, if we imagine the playwright and his audience as disapproving of or even despairing at that behaviour, then they would doubtless have held the same attitude towards its cause. The paradoxically old-young nature of Philokleon would then contribute to his status as one of the 'characters who egotistically, almost manically, trample over their fellow citizens [and so] can hardly count for a large audience of Athenians as normatively admirable, yet the comic momentum of their behavior seems also to exclude any moralistic disapproval of them.'¹⁰⁰

My preference—and I must stress that the case for the third lifecycle does not stand or fall with this broader interpretation of the play—is that the audience is

95. Hutchinson (2011), 67. Cf. Lenz (1980), 39, Auger (2008), 501, Wright (2013), 222, Farmer (2017), 148.

96. Cf. Biles (2016), 136: 'As a proponent of the play's poetics, Philokleon simultaneously—and paradoxically—embodies the traditional in his fondness for old poets and experimentalism in the novel forms of comic entertainment that nonetheless result from his predilections.'

97. Silk (2000), 428.

98. Henderson (1991), 82: 'beyond the wild, reeling dance of life with which Philokleon ends the play, await a hangover, court appearances, and fines for damages.'

99. Telò (2016), 109. Cf. Pirotta (2016), 47: 'Aristophanes seems to deal with Athens's hopeless political situation in the *Wasps*... it is quite obvious that this final scene of the *Wasps* cannot be read as a happy ending'.

100. Halliwell (2020), 128. Cf. Nelson (2016), 173f.: 'the qualities that make him attractive are exactly the ones that would be condemned anywhere except on the comic stage.'

encouraged to support Philokleon and his old-new worldview, whether it applies to politics, poetics, or both. Whether his victory constitutes that of radical democracy made new or a modified, representative form of democracy, whether that of comedy over tragedy, tragedy over epic, Kratinos over Aristophanes, or simply Aristophanes over all-comers, Philokleon is triumphant at the end and the paradoxical coexistence of old and new, aged and young in him reflects the traditional innovation that the play endorses.¹⁰¹

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101. Radical democracy: Hubbard (1989), 91; representative democracy: Olson (1996); comedy over tragedy: Wright (2013), Farmer (2017), 117–53; comedy over epic and tragedy: Papatathanasopoulou (2019); Kratinos: Biles (2011), 134–66; Aristophanes over Kratinos and Eupolis: Sidwell (1995), (2009), 69–75, 178–99. In general, Morosi (2020), 115: ‘Philokleon...is fighting an unnatural war against linear time and would do anything to avoid the succession...however... Philokleon’s irrational fight will end in triumph.’

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