Articles, Summaries

Andrew Scholtz


Here I argue that the politician-as-lover conceit in Aristophanes’ Knights presents us with a comic twist on the “demophilia topos,” a strategy whereby speakers would accuse opponents of seducing the people with specious claims of affection. By sexualizing the topos, Aristophanes stages demophilic politics as pederastic courtship foregrounding tensions between the eunoia (benevolence) ideal and kolakeia (flattery) scare-image in city leadership. But Aristophanes does not stop there. Demos, a virtual prostitute complicit in his leaders’ efforts to con and “bugger” him, pursues self-interest no less passive-aggressively, cynically, or covertly than they do. Hence value-reversals suggesting stasis (civic discord), along with a profoundly equivocal return to Thucydides’ “noble simplicity.”


This article concerns Aphrodite Pandemos dedications from the Greco-Egyptian trading post of Naukratis, and dating from the late-archaic to early classical period. These little-noticed dedications, the earliest attestations of the epithet, in context designates Aphrodite as “common to all” in terms her relationship to a fluid and open-ended community of devotees at the site, and, arguably, in connection to prostitution. Thus they offer evidence for non-Athenian use of the epithet early on in the history of its use. Further, the apolitical status of Naukratis in the early period (not a polis until under the Ptolemies) challenges the frequently encountered claim that “Pandemos” originally and primarily designated Aphrodite as sponsor of civic unity, an interpretation valid, perhaps, for Athens but not everywhere.


Arguing from comparative evidence, I suggest that the foot-anointing image in Anaxandrides (Protesilaus fr. 41 K-A), by highlighting the sexual element of self-betrayal in political bribe-taking, points to an Athenian aversion to accepting such practices even when they are not understood to be treasonous or the like, contra F. D. Harvey’s assessment of Hyperides 5.24–25.