Praefanda: the lexicography of ancient Greek *aischrologia*[*]

ed. by Amy Coker

Foreword

This article began life twelve years ago as a paper delivered by Professor David Bain (University of Manchester, 1971-2001) at the «Colloquium on Ancient Greek Lexicography. Faculty of Classics, University of Cambridge, 7th-9th July 2002». The Colloquium, organised in association with the Cambridge Greek Lexicon Project[1], provided a forum for the discussion of the future of dictionary-making particularly in light of the advent of electronic databases of Greek, and saw a number of reports from epigraphers and papyrologists on new evidence for Greek vocabulary. Before this paper could be published, however, David Bain died suddenly on 30th November 2004, aged 59[2].

The subject of Bain's paper – *aischrologia*, 'foul language', and specifically how language of this sort is treated by lexicographers – is indicative of the direction in which his work was moving towards the end of his life. Bain began his career with an interest in comedy and tragedy, and from the late 1970s his published works show a marked shift towards language of an obscene, or in Bain's preferred parlance 'basic', nature. A list of his works on *aischrologia* is given at the end of this article, as a lasting record of Bain's contribution to this under-examined area of the Greek language. In what follows, Bain discusses in part why these words have not been so thoroughly investigated as other fields, and his work in general reveals a keen interest in restoring many obscene words to what he sees as their proper place in philological discussion. Many of his notes on individual words or hitherto unexplained collocations appeared throughout the 1980s and 1990s in «Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik», and he was one of a number of well-known contributors to the frequent and often lively discussions of obscenities in «Liverpool Classical Monthly», often to the editor's amusement and bewilderment[3]. This essentially lexicographical work led Bain to become interested keenly in the on-going task of improving LSJ, a task which saw the production of the *Revised Supplement*, and ultimately the inauguration of the Cambridge Greek Lexicon Project itself. His piece in «Glotta» (Bain 1999c) and his review of the *Revised Supplement* in the «Times Higher Education Sup-

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[*] [A dieci anni dalla scomparsa di D. Bain, la Redazione gli rende omaggio pubblicando questo inedito, curato da Amy Coker, cui si devono *Foreword*, note a piè di pagina tra parentesi quadre, e *Bibliography of David Bain's works on Aischrologia*].

[1] The Project was launched in 1998, with Dr Anne Thompson as editor.

[2] Bain's obituary by J.N. Adams was published in «The Times» on 26.1.2005.

[3] This editor was John Pinsent, and alongside the comments Bain cites in n. 5, his astonishment at continuing discussion of *glubit* and βινεῖν is also clear in the introductions to «LCM» V/2 (1980) and V/3 (1980).

plement» (12.9.1997: *Old Greek at bargain prices*) gives an indication of the importance he placed upon establishing *aischrologia* as a fully documented subset of our inventory of ancient Greek words. A further list of *corrigenda* to his published works was originally appended to the text of this article, but will be published separately at a later date.

Bain is also known for his work on the magico-medical text known as the *Cyranides*, an interest which overlaps with one of his last publications, a 1999 contribution to a collected volume on euphemism, in which he presents a short study of the vocabulary of anatomy in medical texts (Bain 1999a). This detailed examination of obscene vocabulary for different parts of the body or bodily functions is what Bain was working on when he died. A substantial amount of material which he intended to publish as a book-length work on *aischrologia* is therefore left unpublished, and this is the book he refers to at the beginning of the section entitled *Aischrologia*: the appearance of this article marks the beginning of new work on this archive of lexicographical notes to be carried out at the University of Manchester, thus continuing Manchester's «single-minded devotion to obscenity» (see n. 5).

In revising this particular piece for publication, I have sought to preserve as much as possible of Bain's tone and humour, and have left Bain to speak largely in his own voice. References to ancient works have been updated with more recent editions (*e.g.* to Kassel-Austin numeration), and references to recent scholarship have been added where most pressing. Where I have made substantial additions to the original text they are given within square brackets and marked with AEC. Most additions will be found in the final section, on the lexicography of πέος. I do not necessarily agree with Bain's interpretation of the material he presents in this section, and have flagged my dissent where appropriate.

Many people have offered assistance of various kinds through the process of bringing this article to publication. My thanks are due to Anna Chahoud, James Diggle, Patrick Finglass, Kalle Korhonen, David Langslow, Anne Thompson, Olga Tribulato, Martin West, Alexei Zadorojnyi, several anonymous readers of previous incarnations of this text and above all Jim Adams, for advice and support in undertaking the daunting task of picking up the work of another scholar.

Introduction

τί δ' αἰσχρὸν ἦν μὴ τοῖσι χρωμένοις δοκῇ;

This essay, a revised and enlarged version of the paper delivered at the Faculty of Classics, University of Cambridge in July 2002[4], falls into three parts. I begin with a brief general discussion of the concept of *aischrologia*, 'foul language', in the ancient and medieval Greek worlds, move on to make, οὐχ ὡς ὑβριστής, some criticisms of LSJ with regard to its treatment of aischrologic words, offering in passing protreptic advice to future revisers of the lexicon, and conclude with a discussion of a particular entry in LSJ, adducing evidence neglected by or unavailable to the editors of the versions of the lexicon that have so far appeared. My provenance may induce in those with long memories a feeling of predictabil-

[4] In revising this essay for publication, I have attempted to preserve something of the informality of the paper as it was delivered.

ity regarding my choice of subject and give rise to certain expectations about the contents of the essay. Manchester Classics became notorious in the early nineteen-eighties for concentration on a single subject[5]. A glance at the record would reveal that this was a canard, but, in any case, the body of work on Greek and Latin sexual vocabulary issuing from that place during those years is certainly nothing to be ashamed of, and a great deal of it, unlike much that is and has been written on this somewhat slippery subject, will stand the test of time and be of permanent value to lexicographers.

1. *Aischrologia*

Some readers may object to the lack of theory to be found in what I say in this section and also to the apparently haphazard terminology with which I choose to categorise certain items of the ancient Greek vocabulary ('crude', 'basic', 'vulgar', 'obscene', 'low', 'objectionable', 'taboo', 'substandard', etc.). A more 'nuanced' (as they say: I wish they wouldn't) and less randomly documented argument will, I hope, eventually emerge when I discuss the problem at greater length in my projected book. I have in the course of several years of study of the topic arrived at a conclusion – admittedly a rough and ready one – as to what the true αἰσχρὰ ὀνόματα were or, at any rate, were most likely to be, and the methodology found in my 1991 and 1999 pieces[6] makes clear the criteria which I am employing in order to detect them. In effect, I have in mind words that in literature are almost exclusively confined to (or almost exclusively reflected in) a restricted range of genres or sub-genres, namely iambic poetry, comedy (both Attic and Doric), mime, satiric prose, the occasional vulgar epigram writers[7] (*e.g.* Antipater of Thessalonica, Cillacter[8], Nicarchus II[9],

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[5] A comment about Manchester made by John Pinsent, the editor of «LCM», found its way into the *This England* column of «The New Statesman» (7.1.1983, 16): «The Department of Classics at Manchester University has made a name for itself for its single-minded devotion to obscenity». Note also Peter Walsh's remark in a survey of Classics at British universities: «This liberated generation has developed an obsessive interest in the sexual behaviour and vocabulary of the Greeks and Romans, with Manchester to the fore in this respect» (P.G. Walsh, *Decline of the Roman Empire*, «Times Higher Education Supplement» XXVI/8, 1985, 15). Jocelyn's preface to J. Adams, *Il vocabolario del sesso a Roma: analisi del linguaggio sessuale nella Latinità* (it. transl. by M. Riccio Coletti-E. Riccio, Lecce 1996, or. ed. *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary*, London 1982) lists the 'Manchester School's' products up to the time of publication. See also J. Adams, *Henry David Jocelyn, 1933-2000*, «PBA» CXX (2003) 277-299.

[6] [See Bain 1991a and 1999a. AEC]

[7] By 'vulgar epigrammatists' I mean those writers of epigram who are on occasion prepared to use vulgar words.

[8] Cillacter has βινῶ (*AP* V 29,1; discussed in brief at *FGE* 114f.).

[9] Nicarchus II is notably exposed as an exponent of this sub-genre since the appearance of *P. Oxy.* LXVI 4502 edited by Peter Parsons, where we now find πυγίζω (1,5), κινῶ (7: possibly

Philodemus[10], and Strato) and the vulgar novelists[11], as well as (outside literature) inscriptions and graffiti of an informal kind. These last often, as occasionally does literature (although they occur within literature, I would include them too within the category of non-literary reflections of the words in question), contain onomastic reflections of such words. Another consideration to be borne in mind when trying to isolate αἰσχρὰ ὀνόματα is their virtual absence from or, to say the least, extreme rarity within the lexicographical tradition.

There is obviously a risk of superficiality involved in the application of the approach just outlined to the data which I shall be considering. Some of the words taken into account may well be more offensive than others and no doubt words which I omitted to mention or discuss in Bain 1991a may be submitted as potential candidates for inclusion within the category of language with which I am concerned[12]. The body of evidence available to us for substandard or low speech in Classical Antiquity is, compared to that available to the student, for example, of modern European languages, extremely limited and in many cases predominantly

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sexual, as suggested by Gideon Nisbet *ap*. Parsons, but not absolutely certainly so), παθικός (31: see Bain 1997, 81) and φίκιον (34: on φίκις and φίκιον see Bain 1978 and 1983c). It should be noted that the sub-genre I have just invented is not exactly coexstensive with another invented sub-genre, 'satiric epigram' (see on this genre J. Blomqvist, *The Development of the Satirical Epigram in the Hellenistic Age*, in M.A. Harder-R.F. Retguit-G.C. Wakker [edd.], *Genre in Hellenistic Poetry*, Groningen 1998, 45-60). There are no obvious αἰσχρὰ ὀνόματα for example in Lucillius (although he does in *AP* XI 197 allude to a word δρίλος which clearly belongs, in its metaphorical sense, to the lower register of the language: see Bain 1999b).

[10] Philodemus twice uses βινῶ in the same poem (*AP* V 126 [= *GPh* 3315, 3317]) and elsewhere almost certainly στύω, the present participle of which occurs (albeit with the last three letters dotted) among the epigram incipits found in *P. Oxy*. LIV 3724 (c. ii 16). It is practically certain that this particular incipit, as well as the vast majority of them, emanates from Philodemus. See D. Sider, *Looking for Philodemus in P.Oxy. 54.3724*, «ZPE» LXXVI (1989) 229-236 and *The Epigrams of Philodemos*, Oxford 1997, 203-205.

[11] I have in mind the fragment of the 'Iolaos' novel found in *P. Oxy*. XLII 3010 (see P.J. Parsons, *A Greek Satyricon?*, «BICS» XVII, 1971, 55-83 and now S.A. Stephens-J.J. Winkler, *Ancient Greek Novels: The Fragments*, Princeton 1995, 358-374), where it should be noted that βινῶ is found there in verse (Sotadeans), and the novel detected by Alpers in the *Et. Gen*. [K. A., *Zwischen Athen, Abdera und Samos. Fragmente eines unbekannten Romans aus der Zeit der Zweiten Sophistik*, in M. Billerbeck-J. Schamp (edd.), *Kainotomia. Die Erneuerung der griechischen Tradition. Le renouvellement de la tradition hellénique*. «Colloquium Pavlos Tzermias, 4.11.1995», Freiburg 1996, 19-55]

[12] I ought, I now believe, *inter alia* to have taken into account the excretory verb τιλῶ and two words for masturbation, φλῶ and the verb δέφω/δέφομαι, and their reflections. On τιλῶ see Bain 1999a, 275f. The verb δέφω/δέφομαι is reflected outside literature in the satyr-name Δόφιος (cf. A. Kossatz-Deißmann, *Satyr- und Mänadennamen auf Vasenbilden des Getty Museums und Sammlung Cahn (Basel), mit Addenda zu Charlotte Fränkel*, *Satyr- und Bakchennamen auf Vasenbildern (Halle 1912)*, in *Greek Vases in the J. Paul Getty Museum*, V, Malibu 1991, 131-199: 151. As Neumann *ap*. Kossatz-Deißmann points out, these names must be based on an as yet unattested *nomen actionis* *δοφή).

diachronic in its distribution. The material does not permit, or rarely permits, a proper consideration of the possibility, amply realised in modern languages, that certain offensive expressions might on occasion have appeared less offensive, given the context in which they were expressed and given the identity of the speaker who uttered them[13]; discussion must often end in speculation and the need to resort to analogy. In the meantime, however, rather than cluttering up my treatment of the topic indicated by the title of this essay with an extended methodological introduction[14], I shall plunge straight into a discussion of the lexicographical problems facing those who have to deal with this particular area of vocabulary and present evidence that illustrates the difficulties that confront anyone who wishes to elucidate the concept contained in the word in question, *aischrologia*.

1.1. I take as my starting point a year in the Byzantine period at the inception of 'The Great Schism'. In AD 1058 Michael Psellus composed a speech which was meant for delivery as part of the prosecution case against the patriarch Michael Keroularios[15]. The speech was never delivered, since Keroularios died on his way to the town in which his trial was to take place (we do not know where it was, but it is presumed to have been somewhere in Thrace). One of the grossest accusations – found in an invective, whose sting is somewhat blunted when one learns that a year or so after its composition Psellus felt able to produce an encomium of his now deceased one-time target – is that the cleric was incredibly foul-mouthed:

> εἰ δέ ποτε τὸν λόγον ἐμβάλοι εἰς διήγησιν ἐρωτικὴν ἢ ἄλλο τι λέγων περὶ ἐνίων ἐρεῖν ἐκτράποιτο[16] γυναικῶν, οὐδέν τι σεμνότερον τῶν ἐπὶ

[13] Dialectical variation in Greek also complicates the issue. For example, is the putative βενῶ found in Elis harmless in its own environment compared with the offensive βινῶ so frequently attested in Attica (see Dover *ap*. Bain 1991a, 58 n. 57)? Does the second element of the Boeotian word for cuttlefish, ὀπισθοτίλη, have a particularly vulgar resonance at home? (On this word and the passage in the old comic poet Strattis [fr. 49 K.-A. ὀπιτθοτίλαν] in which it occurs, see K.J. Dover, *Linguaggio e caratteri aristofanei*, «RCCM» XVIII, 1976, 357-371: 361 [transl. to English in K.J. D., *Greek and the Greeks*, Oxford 1988, 241]). S. Colvin (*Dialect in Aristophanes and the Politics of Language in Ancient Greek Literature*, Oxford 1999, 278) discusses the passage of Strattis, but does not come to a firm conclusion (save that the word must have been recognizable to an Athenian audience) about the tone of ὀπισθοτίλη. U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (*Aristophanes. Lysistrate*, Berlin 1927) on Ar. *Lys*. 1119 contended that σάθη was for Athenians a dialect word.

[14] [One such methodological introduction to the complexities of linguistic offence can now be found in J. Culpeper, *Impoliteness. Using Language to Cause Offence*, Cambridge 2011, with examples drawn mainly from English. AEC]

[15] The speech is entitled *Πρὸς τὴν σύνοδον κατηγορία τοῦ ἀρχιερέως*. The most recent edition is the Teubner *Orationes Forenses et Acta*, ed. G.T. Dennis, Stutgardiae-Lipsiae 1994; this passage is I 2570-2582.

[16] [Bain emends Dennis' text from ἐτράποιτο. AEC]

> τῶν τριόδων ἐφθέγγετο οὐδὲ μετετίθει τοὔνομα οὐδ' εἶχεν αἰδῶ ἢ[17] αἰδὼς οὐδὲ τρῖμμα ἦν τὸ ψιμύθιον[18], ἀλλ' οὐδαμῇ τὸ τῆς ἀλληγορίας καλὸν ὥστε ἑταίραν εἰπεῖν τὴν τἀφροδίσια μισθαρνήσασαν καὶ γνῶναι ἢ πλησιάσαι ἢ κἂν γοῦν συγκαθευδῆσαι τὸ συνεληλυθέναι, ἀλλὰ γυμνὰ τὰ ὀνόματα καὶ οὐδαμοῦ σχηματισμός, οὐκ ἔνδειξις[19], οὐκ ἔμφασις[20], οὐ τέχνη τοῦ λέγειν, οὐκ ἀποσιώπησις, οὐ παράλειψις, οὐ τὰ πέριξ εἰπεῖν ὥστε τὸ μέσον ἐνδείξασθαι. ἀλλ' ὥσπερ αὐτὸ τοὔργον δεικνὺς οὕτω διῄει τῷ λόγῳ ὥστε τοὺς πολλοὺς ἐρυθριᾶν καὶ μὴ ἔχειν ὅ τι καὶ φθέγξαιντο.

Whatever the basis of these accusations – given the nature of the long and continuous tradition of Greek invective[21] it may well be a slender one – anyone interested in the lower registers of the language is bound to ask "to which utterances 'no more dignified than those used by persons/women (i.e. prostitutes) at crossroads'[22], is Psellus alluding?" All that Psellus gives us consists of acceptable euphemisms, the words Keroularios s h o u l d have used. The word ἑταίρα should be used of a woman earning a living through sexual activities[23] and sexual intercourse, τὸ συνεληλυθέναι

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[17] [Bain emends Dennis' text from ἡ. AEC]

[18] [As the text stands the syntax of the last part of this sentence (ἢ … ψιμύθιον) is difficult: τρῖμμα appears to mean some kind of ground preparation (cf. τρίβω), with the text perhaps meaning something like "nor did he feel any shame that his make-up (τρῖμμα) was white-lead". Alexei Zadorojnyi has pointed out to me a contrast drawn by Gregory of Nazianzus between natural whiteness and that of the "women of the theatre and cross-roads" (Greg. Naz. *Or.* 8 = *PG* XXXV 800f.), i.e. users of ψιμύθιον. For make-up as an indication of potential infidelity in a married woman, see Lys. 1,14-17. AEC]

[19] ἔνδειξις is used in a technical rhetorical sense in the *Anon. Seg.* 47 (see M.R. Dilts-G.A. Kennedy, *Two Greek Rhetorical Treatises from the Roman Empire*, Leiden 1997, 16f.): Dilts and Kennedy translate as a «pointing out (of present circumstances)». Psellus is clearly not using it in the sense found there, but it must mean something similar to the word which follows it.

[20] ἔμφασις is used in Greek literary criticism to denote oblique reference; here "innuendo" would be a suitable translation. Compare the hypothesis to Cratinus' *Dionysalexandros* (46f.) where it is stated that the poet, in dramatizing the abduction of Helen by Paris and the inception of the Trojan War, mocks Pericles δι' ἐμφάσεως.

[21] On the Byzantine rhetorical tradition see H. Hunger, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner*, I, München 1978, Ch. I.

[22] Crossroads are dubious areas, places where one is liable to encounter prostitutes (see H. Herter, *Die Soziologie der antiken Prostitution*, «JAC» III, 1960, 70-111: 86 n. 290 [it should be noted that the reference to the epigram of Agathias therein is erroneous]): note the expression τριοδῖτις σοβάς, 'street-walker' (see LSJ[9] 1820) in Philo. LSJ's reference to Philo in the lemma for τριοδῖτις, I 568 C.-W., is an error: the expression is to be found in *De fuga et inventione* 153 (III 143 C.-W.).

[23] πόρνη is presumably one of the words deplored (it is certainly stronger than the inoffensive ἑταίρα, although it – and πόρνος – is not at all uncommon in later lexicography as a gloss on more exotic words); see A.H. Sommerstein, *The anatomy of euphemism in Aristophanic*

(this acts as the lemma) should be indicated by γνῶναι[24], πλησιάσαι[25], or, at a pinch, συγκαθευδῆσαι[26]; there is however no indication proffered as to the identity of the words which made the patriarch's speech appear so objectionable to Psellus. It would have been pleasant and enlightening to learn (or acquire further evidence on the topic) which particular obscenities, or which words that might be considered obscene by some, were current in Byzantium during the eleventh century[27], but to expect such information to emerge at this or any other time in the history of the Greek language until the modern era would be a sign of extreme naivety. Even when grammarians and lexicographers speak, as they frequently do, of what we would call bad language, they refuse to call a spade a spade, influenced by the rhetorical and literary critical tradition, which failed largely to distinguish between «vulgar words for things and words for vulgar things»[28].

1.2. Moving back several centuries[29], we find similar accusations of verbal impropriety levelled against another 'holy man', albeit and *par excellence* a secular

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comedy, in F. De Martino-A.H. S. (edd.), *Studi sull'eufemismo*, Bari 1999, 181-217: 200. A common word for prostitute in the Byzantine era was πολιτική (see G.P. Shipp, *Modern Greek Evidence for Ancient Greek Vocabulary*, Sydney 1979, 469); alternatively, χαμαιτύπη may have been in Psellus' mind. On words for prostitute in Greek, see H. Herter, *Dirne II*, «RAC» III (1957) 1154-1213: 1154f; cf. also Suet. *Blasph.* 34 and J. Taillardat, *ad l.*

[24] A word well known from biblical Greek, but not exclusive to it: see LSJ[9] [p. 350] *s.v.* III and add [Crates], *Epist.* 20.

[25] πλησιάσαι is also found in Pollux's list: see below.

[26] συγκαθεύδω is respectable enough to figure in a 'respectable' Greek novel (see Long. III 26,4, not to mention Plat. *Leg.* 838b) as well as in Old Comedy (see Cratin. fr. 311 K.-A., almost certainly paratragic, and Ar. *Ec.* 1009).

[27] Although it contains a somewhat uncritical survey of all Greek obscene language and an account of Greek sexual behaviour which at times borders on the prurient, the article by Koukoules does eventually live up to its title and supplies material that relates to this aspect of Byzantine language (Φ.Ι. Κουκούλες, *Τα ου φωνητά των Βυζαντιών*, «Αθήνα» LVI, 1952, 86-124).

[28] So K.J. Dover, *The colloquial stratum in classical Attic prose*, in G.S. Shrimpton-D.J. McCargar *et al.* (edd.), *Classical Contributions.* «Studies in Honour of Malcolm Francis McGregor», New York 1981, 15-25: 16 [= *Greek and the Greeks*, Oxford 1988, 16-30: 17], basing himself on Donald Russell's note on [Longin.] 42. It is not the case that rhetorical writers and critics were unaware of the distinction. For an early example of it see Anaxim. *Rh.* 35,18 φυλάττου δὲ καὶ τὰς αἰσχρὰς πράξεις μὴ αἰσχροῖς ὀνόμασι λέγειν, ἵνα μὴ διαβάλῃς τὸ ἦθος [τοῦ λέγοντος], ἀλλὰ τὰ τοιαῦτα αἰνιγματωδῶς ἑρμηνεύειν καὶ ἑτέρων πραγμάτων ὀνόμασι χρώμενος δηλοῦν τὸ πρᾶγμα. (On the phrase ἦθος τοῦ λέγοντος, see W. Süss, *Ethos. Studien zur älteren griechischen Rhetorik*, Leipzig-Berlin 1910, 120f., 249). In contrast to many other critics, Dionysius of Halicarnassus is notably enlightened in his advocacy of plain speech, but he is certainly not an advocate of the use of αἰσχρὰ ὀνόματα, see *Comp. verb.* 12.

[29] [To most likely around AD 200; B. Todd-A.C. Bowen (*Cleomedes' Lectures on Astronomy: A Translation of the Heavens*, Ewing 2004, 2-4) present the evidence for the dating of the work. AEC]

one. Cleomedes, *Caelestia* (II 1,482-502 Todd [= Epic. fr. 414 Us.]) contains the following verbal assault on Epicurus; this passage is part of a longer invective against Epicurus and his acolytes, and their misguided opinions about the size of the sun:

> οὕτω καὶ Ἐπίκουρος ὡς δή τις ὢν ἀλαζονεύεται, ἑαυτόν γε ἐν τοῖς φιλοσόφοις καταριθμεῖν ἐπιχειρῶν, καὶ οὐ μόνον γε, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ πρωτεῖα φέρεσθαι διαβεβαιούμενος καὶ ταύτῃ γε καὶ τοῦ Θερσίτου θρασύτερον ἑαυτὸν ἀποφαίνων. ἐκεῖνος μὲν γὰρ μόνον ὡς ἀριστεὺς καὶ ἴσος τοῖς βασιλεῦσιν ἀλαζονεύεται, οὐκέτι δὲ καὶ τὰ πρωτεῖα ἀπονέμει ἑαυτῷ, οὗτος δ' ὑπὸ πολλῆς τῆς σοφίας καὶ ἐπιστήμης μόνος εὑρηκέναι τὴν ἀλήθειαν διαβεβαιοῦται καὶ διὰ τοῦτο καὶ τὰ πρωτεῖα φέρεσθαι ἀξιοῖ. ὥστε πολὺ ἄν τις δικαιότερόν μοι δοκοῖ πρὸς τοῦτον εἰπεῖν·
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> Θερσῖτ' ἀκριτόμυθε, λιγύς περ ἐὼν ἀγορητής,
> ἴσχεο. (= *Il.* II 246f.)
>
> οὐδὲ γὰρ "λιγὺν" ἔγωγε τοῦτον ἂν τὸν Θερσίτην καθάπερ Ὀδυσσεὺς ἐκεῖνον, εἴποιμι, ἐπεί γε πρὸς τοῖς ἄλλοις καὶ τὰ κατὰ τὴν ἑρμηνείαν αὐτῷ ποικίλως διεφθορότα ἐστί, "σαρκὸς εὐσταθῆ καταστήματα" λέγοντι καὶ "τὰ περὶ ταύτης πιστὰ ἐλπίσματα", καὶ "λίπασμα ὀφθαλμῶν" τὸ δάκρυον ὀνομάζοντι, καὶ "ἱερὰ ἀνακραυγάσματα" καὶ "γαργαλισμοὺς σώματος" καὶ "ληκήματα" καὶ ἄλλας τοιαύτας κακὰς ἄτας, ὧν τὰ μὲν ἐκ χαμαιτυπείων ἄν τις εἶναι φήσειε, τὰ δὲ ὅμοια τοῖς λεγομένοις ἐν τοῖς Δημητρείοις ὑπὸ τῶν Θεσμοφοριαζουσῶν γυναικῶν, τὰ δὲ ἀπὸ μέσης τῆς προσευχῆς καὶ τῶν ἐπ' αὐτῆς προσαιτούντων, Ἰουδαϊκὰ καὶ παρακεχαραγμένα καὶ κατὰ πολὺ τῶν ἑρπετῶν ταπεινότερα.

What interests us particularly in this remarkable tirade is the references to "the language of brothels" and to the kind of expressions used by women celebrating the "rites of Demeter". Here we have an allusion to the kind of αἰσχρὰ ὀνόματα that forms the subject of this essay. The "language of the brothel" can be regarded as the equivalent of "the language of the crossroads" found in the passage of Psellus quoted above, and it is notable that *aischrologia* is here once more associated with female ritual[30]. At first sight it might be thought that this

[30] There is a large literature on obscenities in ritual: note, for example, A.C. Brumfield, *The Attic Festivals of Demeter and Their Relation to the Agricultural Year*, New York 1991, esp. 227f., and Id., *Aporrheta. Verbal and ritual obscenity in the cults of ancient women*, in R. Hägg (ed.), *Opuscula Atheniensia*. «Proceedings of the Third International Seminar on Ancient Cult, organised by the Swedish Institute at Athens, 16-18.10.1992», Stockholm 1996, 67-74; W. Burkert, *Griechische Religion der archaischen und klassichen Epoche*, Stuttgart 2011[2], 165f. [= Id., *Greek Religion*, *Archaic and Classical*, Oxford 1985, 104f. AEC]; N.J. Richardson,

passage is more helpful to those searching for the words that the Greeks regarded as vulgar or obscene than the other one previously quoted, in that various apparently objectionable expressions are actually cited. In fact, however, we learn little or nothing from these examples. Only one of the condemned expressions suggests itself as a candidate for classification as a genuine obscenity. This is ληκήματα, and it is far from certain without the context of a quotation that it fits the bill. It may have no connection at all with the sexual verb ληκῶ, and may merely refer to sounds made by women during intercourse (confusion arises from the existence of two different Greek verbs which both begin with ληκ-)[31] rather than denote a specific sexual act. When examined more closely, the individual words and phrases cited clearly emerge as stylistically distasteful expressions, some of them containing unacceptable morphology and linguistic forms which, in the view of the (somewhat racist?) writer, were tainted by the influence of non-native Greek speakers (note in this context Cleomedes' reference to "mode of expression", and to words "from the heart of the synagogue and its suppliant" and "debased Jew talk"), and the criticism made by Cleomedes (or rather his source) disappointingly falls into line with the type of aesthetic criticism of literary usage so prominent in Atticist grammarians and lexicographers. In this case we are not confronted by disapproval of the use of low and socially unacceptable words, but by disparagement of the author's morphology and of the alleged tastelessness of some of his metaphorical expressions[32]. It might be argued that the double occurrence of βινῶ in an epigram of Philodemus, the most important Greek poetical advocate of Epicureanism, and a probable example of his use of στύω (cf. n. 10), supports the assertions of Cleomedes, but the generic rules of prose and poetry in respect to low words differ: it would be astonishing to find a word like βινῶ in a piece of technical prose.

The Homeric Hymn to Demeter, Oxford 1974, *ad* ll. 192-201, and H. Fluck, *Skurrile Riten in griechischen Kulten*, Diss. Freiburg 1931, *passim*. Although in Athens and elsewhere obscenity is predominantly a function of female ritual activity, there is plentiful attestation of the use of taboo words in ritual contexts which are not confined to female speakers. Note for example the formula advocated by Theophrastus (*HP* VII 3,3) when one is planting cumin: φασὶ γὰρ δεῖν καταρᾶσθαί τε καὶ βλασφημεῖν σπείροντας, εἰ μέλλει καλὸν ἔσεσθαι καὶ πολύ. [Plut. *Quaest. conv.* 700f-701a also reports the same advice when planting celery – τὸ δ' ἂν καταρώμενοι σπείρωσι καὶ λοιδοροῦντες. AEC]

[31] On this see Bain 1991a, 70. For the possibility that ληκήματα here refers to sound, cf. the preceding ἀνακραυγάσματα and Ov. *Ars* II 689f.

[32] It is not unexpected that a literary critic would take exception to expressions like σαρκὸς εὐσταθῆ καταστήματα, τὰ περὶ ταύτης ἐλπίσματα, λίπασμα ὀφθαλμῶν, γαργαλισμοὺς σώματος (see E. Norden, *La prosa d'arte antica dal VI secolo a.C. all'età della Rinascenza*, it. transl. Roma 1987 [or. ed. Leipzig 1915^3], 136 n. 20, pointing out that several of these expressions contain formations emanating from the popular language). Tasteless expressions in literature are treated by literary critics under the heading of κακοζηλία: see the full discussion of this topic in H.D. Jocelyn, *Vergilius' Cacozelus (Donatus, Vita Vergilii 44)*, «PLLS» II (1979) 67-142.

A near contemporary of Epicurus, Teles, the popular philosopher and writer of 'diatribes', is similarly accused of employing φορτικὰ ὀνόματα, 'coarse words'[33]. His extant fragments, admittedly rather sparse, do not confirm this charge. The likelihood again is that he talked bluntly about topics and entities which the stylistically and morally fastidious thought should be avoided in proper prose literature or, if needs must, should be treated in the most circumspect and periphrastic manner. The Stoic Chrysippus also fell foul of critics. A source of Diogenes Laertius said of a notorious passage in which Hera's *fellatio* of Zeus was related that the language used "was more appropriate to street walkers (χαμαιτύποις) than gods"[34]. This led H.D. Jocelyn (*A Greek indecency and its students: λαικάζειν*, «PCPhS» XXVI, 1980, 12-66: 27) to speculate that Chrysippus might have used direct obscenities in this context[35]. But since, as we have already seen, we have no real control over such statements about foul language, even if we allow for the renowned bluntness of expression that was commonly attributed to Stoic writers[36], it seems wiser to assume that Chrysippus described the activity in terms which were explicit enough, but did not or did not need to resort to the language of Old Comedy and the streets, and that the criticism levelled at him was prompted by disapproval of his subject matter and of his failure to use an allusive form of reference: εὐθυρρήμων, 'plain speaking', does not necessarily equal αἰσχρολόγος, 'speaking shameful things'.

1.3. If we turn to the lexicographical tradition, it is natural first to examine the section in a second-century text, Pollux's *Onomasticon* (categorised as an 'Atticist's Roget') which deals with words for human intercourse[37]:

> ἐπὶ δὲ τούτων [τῶν ἀνθρώπων] καὶ ὁμιλῆσαι, μιχθῆναι, διαλεχθῆναι, ἐντυχεῖν, πλησιάσαι, κοινωνῆσαι, συναναπαύσασθαι, εἰς ταὐτὸν ἐλθεῖν, συγκατακλιθῆναι, συγκατακοιμηθῆναι, συγγενέσθαι, σποδεῖν, ὀπύειν,

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[33] See O. Hense, *Teletis reliquiae*, Tübingen 1909, LXXI.

[34] Diog. Laert. VII 188. Martin West suggests that Chrysippus has either misinterpreted a lost Orphic poem or else interpreted it in a contentious way (M.L. W., *The Orphic Poems*, Oxford 1983, 242).

[35] «We may guess that he employed λαικάζειν or λαικάστρια or both».

[36] Jocelyn cites two notable examples from Cicero (*Fam.* IX 22 and *Off.* I 128). De Martino in the shared bilingual preface to De Martino-Sommerstein, *o.c.* 9-15, collects passages in which the use of κύρια ὀνόματα, 'ordinary words' or 'direct' (εὐθυ-) expressions are either apologised for or deplored.

[37] Poll. V 92f.; the characterization is Dover's (see *The women of Samos*, in M.C. Nussbaum-J. Sihvola [edd.], *The Sleep of Reason: Erotic Experience and Sexual Ethics in Ancient Greece and Rome*, Chicago 2002, 222-228: 225). The passage quoted is directly preceded by a collection of words for animal intercourse (some of these are also used of human beings, a usage that one assumes to be coarse); for a discussion of these, see Bain 1990a. Poll. II 170-176, which lists terms for body parts, is not rewarding to the student of vulgar language.

> ἀφροδισιάζειν, συμπλέκεσθαι, καὶ τὰ τεθρυλημένα, ἃ δὴ παίζουσιν οἱ κωμικοί, ληκεῖν, δρυμάττειν, φλᾶν, σκορδοῦν, στενάσαι, σπλεκοῦν.

Here again we find little that could be justifiably described as downright αἰσχρόν. The verbs for intercourse are anodyne euphemisms, with the exception of some of the comic terms (most of them presumably dead at the time of writing), the vividly metaphorical σποδεῖν which one might have thought should fall more naturally into the category of "common phrases, such as the comic poets use playfully" (note Ar. *Th*. 492), and perhaps the archaic ὀπυίειν[38]. Atticist lexicographers have their own agenda, and it would be unrealistic to expect them to supply the kind of information that we would demand from a modern dictionary. Even so, words like βινῶ and κινῶ in its transferred sexual sense (and the noun πέος) are quintessentially Aristophanic, and Aristophanes is an author notably esteemed and recommended by Atticists. Yet none of these words is found here, an indication that their register was still too low at the time of the composition of the *lexica* to figure in acceptable Atticising prose. Pollux at least presents us with a list of words 'playfully used' by the comedians, all of which no doubt carried a vulgar tone, in particular ληκεῖν, which must represent ληκᾶν, an undoubted obscenity, again possibly dead at the time of writing.

1.4. Some sources, however, while not revealing the words in question to which exception is taken, do at least tell us where to look for them. A notable example of this comes from a letter of the emperor Julian[39]:

> ἀγνεύειν δὲ χρὴ τοὺς ἱερέας οὐκ ἔργων μόνον ἀκαθάρτων οὐδὲ ἀσελγῶν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ῥημάτων καὶ ἀκροαμάτων τοιούτων. ἐξελατέα τοίνυν ἐστὶν ὑμῖν πάντα τὰ ἐπαχθῆ σκώμματα, πᾶσα δὲ ἀσελγὴς ὁμιλία. καὶ ὅπως εἰδέναι ἔχῃς ὃ βούλομαι φράζειν, ἱερώμενός τις μήτε Ἀρχίλοχον ἀναγιγνωσκέτω μήτε Ἱππώνακτα μήτε ἄλλόν τινα τῶν τὰ τοιαῦτα γραφόντων. ἀποκλινέτω καὶ τῆς παλαιᾶς κωμῳδίας ὅσα τῆς τοιαύτης ἰδέας· ἄμεινον μὲν γὰρ καὶ πάντα.

The recommended boycott of this iambic trio, Archilochus, Hipponax, and any other exponent of their genre, along with those parts of Old Comedy which partake of the ἰαμβικὴ ἰδέα, indicates an awareness that the places in which αἰσχρὰ ὀνόματα are primarily to be found are iambic poetry and Old Comedy[40].

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[38] [ὀπύω, as in Pollux, is the Attic variant of ὀπυίω. AEC] On ὀπυίω, see J. Wackernagel, *Sprachliche Untersuchungen zu Homer*, Göttingen 1916, 228 n. 1 and G.P. Edwards, *Meaning and aspect in the verb ὀπυίω*, «Minos» XX/XXII (1987) 173-181.

[39] Iulian. *Epist*. 89b 300.

[40] E. Bowie is provocatively sceptical regarding the links between Ionic iambus and Old

1.5. If we look to what in this context we might call the direct tradition, Greek literature and epigraphy preceding the period of systematic lexicographical activity first consolidated at the library of Alexandria, we shall find many references to *aischrologia*. They are all similarly frustrating, in that we are never given examples of the alleged offensive vocabulary.

The unrestrained use of sexual or abusive vocabulary was recognised by medical writers as an attendant symptom of derangement or physical illness[41], and the use of αἰσχρολογία was also frequently treated at all times as boorish and aggressive. This is exemplified in Middle Comedy:

> ὡς σκαιὸς εἶ κἄγροικος αἰσχροεπῶν [⏑ –]
> ἐπαρίστερ' ἐν τῷ στόματι τὴν γλῶσσαν φορεῖς[42]

Note also, for example, a passage in the Demosthenic *corpus* (54 [*In Cononem*],8f.):

> κείμενος δ' αὐτῶν ἤκουον πολλὰ καὶ δεινὰ λεγόντων· καὶ τὰ μὲν ἄλλα
> καὶ βλασφημίαν ἔχει τινὰ καὶ ὀνομάζειν ὀκνήσαιμ' ἂν ἐν ὑμῖν ἕνια.

The violent behaviour of Conon and his friends is naturally accompanied by bad language, which the virtuous plaintiff is equally naturally incapable of reproducing in court. One may also note an instance outside literature where a petitioner from Ptolemaic Egypt describing an assault inflicted upon him refers to his attackers in the following way:

> οἱ δ' ἐμπηδήσαντες φωνὰς ἀπρεπεῖς προΐεντο[43].

Here, as before, we are never given the privilege of hearing the words that offended. This is entirely to be expected. Oratory, although it often deals with the

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Comedy in *Ionic iambus and Attic Komoidia: father and daughter, or just cousins?*, in A. Willi (ed.), *The Language of Greek Comedy*, Oxford 2002, 33-50. In the meantime see, among discussions of this topic, R.M. Rosen, *Old Comedy and the Iambographic Tradition*, Atlanta 1988; E. Degani, *Aristofane e la tradizione dell'invettiva personale in Grecia*, «Entr. Hardt» XXXVIII (1993) 1-49; and G. Zanetto, *Iambic patterns in Aristophanic comedy*, in A. Cavarzere-A. Aloni-A. Barchiesi (edd.), *Iambic Ideas: Essays on a Poetic Tradition from Ancient Greece to the Late Roman Empire*, Lanham 2001, 65-76; G. Agosti, *Late antique iambics and iambikè idéa*, in Cavarzere-Aloni-Barchiesi, *o.c.* 219-255. [To this list can also now be added K. Lennartz, *Iambos. Philologische Untersuchungen zur Geschichte einer Gattung in der Antike*, Wiesbaden 2010, and A. Rotstein, *The Idea of Iambos*, Oxford 2010. AEC]

[41] See, for example, among many others, Hippocr. *Epid.* IV 1,15 and VII 1,25.

[42] Ephipp. fr. 23 K.-A. [with blank final iambus in the first line; Dindorf restores ἔα. AEC] Much later note the mock-prudery found in [Diog.] *Epist.* 35 (ed. and trans. A.J. Malherbe, *The Cynic Epistles*, Atlanta 1977, 144-147) referring to Diogenes' erection: εἶτα ὁ γνώμων μοί πως ἀνίσταται (τὸ γὰρ ἕτερον ὄνομα δέδια διὰ τοὺς πολλοὺς εἰπεῖν).

[43] *P. Tebt.* 802,13f. [The petition is dated to 135 BC. AEC]

sleazier side of life and it is the habit of its practitioners to attempt to blacken the character of their opponents by using sexual innuendo, consistently observes extreme linguistic *decorum*[44]. The Tebtunis petitioner, or rather, as it were, his solicitor, is maintaining a long tradition. The classic instance of this practice must be Aeschin. 1,37f. where the prosecutor pretends to be unwilling to utter the word πόρνος, 'prostitute', or a related form when describing the activities of the accused, Timarchus[45]:

> δέομαι δ' ὑμῶν, ὦ Ἀθηναῖοι, συγγνώμην ἔχειν, ἐὰν ἀναγκαζόμενος λέγειν περὶ ἐπιτηδευμάτων φύσει μὲν μὴ καλῶν, τούτῳ δὲ πεπραγμένων ἐξαχθῶ τι ῥῆμα εἰπεῖν, ὅ ἐστιν ὅμοιον τοῖς ἔργοις τοῖς Τιμάρχου. οὐδὲ γὰρ ἂν δικαίως ἐμοὶ ἐπιτιμήσαιτε, εἴ τι σαφῶς εἴποιμι διδάσκειν βουλόμενος, ἀλλά που μᾶλλον τούτῳ, εἰ αἰσχρῶς οὕτω τυγχάνει βεβιωκὼς ὥστε τὸν τὰ τούτῳ πεπραγμένα διεξιόντα ἀδύνατον εἶναι εἰπεῖν ὡς αὐτὸς βούλεται, ἐὰν μή τι καὶ τῶν τοιούτων φθέγξηται ῥημάτων.

All this to avoid a word enshrined in Athenian legal terminology: the act under which the prosecution is proceeding actually contained the word πεπορνευμένος, which Aeschines eventually comes out with at 51: the πορνικὸν τέλος (itself referred to in this speech at 119) must have been well known to all those listening to the case.

2. LSJ and *aischrologia*

Notoriously an article by A.E. Housman written towards the end of his life and entitled *Praefanda*[46], which consisted of a series of notes on some passages containing

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[44] See C. Carey, *Return of the radish or just when you thought it was safe to go back into the kitchen*, «LCM» XVIII/4 (1993) 53-55: 55: «it is not that sex is avoided by classical prose genres. The orators in particular retail the most gross scandals with great enthusiasm. However, in order to avoid alienating the audience they usually either deal in imprecision or otherwise distance themselves from the material they related». Writers on rhetoric advocate the avoidance of αἰσχρὰ ὀνόματα in invective (see S. Koster, *Die Invektive in der griechischen und römischen Literatur*, Meisenheim a.G. 1980, 14 *et alibi*).

[45] See K.J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, London 1978, 20-22 on the legal terminology, and on the rhetoric C. Carey, *Propriety in the Attic orators*, in De Martino-Sommerstein, *o.c.* 369-391. Sommerstein sees the use of πόρνη and πόρνος in Aeschines and in the Demosthenic corpus (he draws attention to [Dem.] 59,107-114) as seeking for 'shock effect' (*The anatomy of euphemism in Aristophanic comedy*, in De Martino-Sommerstein, *o.c.* 181-217: 200). I would not disagree, but equally I do not think that this undermines the point I am making; cf. bibliography cited in n. 23.

[46] A.E. Housman, *Praefanda*, «Hermes» LXVI (1931) 405-412 (= J. Diggle-F.R.D. Goodyear [edd.], *The Collected Papers of A.E. Housman*, Cambridge 1972, 1175-1184).

explicit sexual references or sexual innuendo[47], had the peculiar distinction of being accepted for publication in the «Classical Quarterly», but then of being rejected by its Management Committee, this despite its having been written «in the obscurity of a learned language»[48]. The editors of the German journal «Hermes» were more tolerant, although the article eventually emerged still cloaked in the learned language. Housman reacted in a characteristically philosophical manner when responding to one of the editors, who had what must have been the daunting task of revealing to him the decision of the board[49]. Were it not for his professed predilection for the Cyrenaeans, one would be tempted to describe his response as stoical.

It is a sign of the times, perhaps, that someone has taken the trouble to translate Housman's decorous Latin into English[50]. This translation cannot be counted a total success and, aside from several mistaken interpretations, it falls into the trap of rendering Latin and Greek obscenities with modern American terms. This is distinctly unhelpful to non-Anglophones and indeed often presents obscurities to speakers of English in the old country and its other former colonies. A Yiddish word like 'schlong' is not certainly transparent to non-Americans. The same criticism can also often be levelled against Henderson's pioneering study of the sexual language of Greek comedy[51]. Lexicographers discussing ancient colloquialisms should exercise extreme caution before resorting to colloquial glosses. I shall return to this topic at the end of this section.

In passing I draw attention to an error in Jayo's translation (see n. 50). The Greek expression οὐχὶ λαικάσει is interpreted as containing a third person singular active verb. The phrase is a formula of vulgar abuse which employs the middle future second person of the verb λαικάζω, the equivalent of Latin *fello*. This was known to Housman (and others before he wrote, notably Heraeus)[52] and was established beyond doubt by Shipp, who drew attention to instances of magical antaphrodisiac spells from Greek Egypt which enumerated, in their most complete

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[47] Many of these passages contain subtle wordplay and make no use whatsoever of vulgar or obscene diction.

[48] This famous phrase is used by Edward Gibbon in his autobiography (A.O.J. Cockshut-S. Constantine [edd.], *Memoirs of my Life and Writings*, Bodmin 1994, 211). Colin Haycraft was wont to point out that it is persistently misquoted, a redundant epithet «decent» being anteposed before the first substantive. Donald Russell draws my attention to the revised *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* where the phrase «the decent obscurity» is cited from a Gibbonian parody from an issue of the short-lived, but entertaining journal «The Anti-Jacobin».

[49] For Housman's reply, see Housman, letter to H. Stuart Jones (appendix I *ap*. Jocelyn, *A Greek Indecency* cit. 12-66) [= A. Burnett (ed.), *The Letters of A.E. Housman*, Oxford 2007, II 228. AEC]

[50] J. Jayo, *Praefanda: A.E. Housman. Translated by James Jayo*, «Arion» s. 3 IX (2001) 180-200.

[51] J. Henderson, *The Maculate Muse: Obscene Language in Attic Comedy*, New York-Oxford 1991[2].

[52] Housman *ap*. Jocelyn (n. 49).

form[53], three alternative forms of sexual intercourse from which the caster's *innamorata* was to be restrained from enjoying with another man (λαικάζω being opposed to passive forms of βινῶ and πυγίζω). The expression οὐχὶ λαικάσει is roughly the equivalent (a considerably more offensive one) of the English "get stuffed!"[54].

To return to Housman and the general issue of the problems of *praefanda* and lexicography, in the present day four-letter words of English now regularly appear in print (or else appear along with a couple of internal asterisks; two of these words, arguably the most basic sexual terms in the English language, did not even figure in Murray's dictionary)[55]. As a contrast to the Housman-story (*si magna licet componere parvis*) and an indication of changing times I can relate a personal experience. In the mid-to late nineties I wrote an article on popular (magic influenced) medicine and submitted it to a learned journal: it contained, in passing, some references to the word βινῶ, which in each case I glossed without using vulgar English terms. One of the editors positively insisted that I translated it with the venerable native term. I acceded to his request. The editors of the new Oxford pocket dictionary of Greek (Morwood-Taylor 2002) have also taken the plunge with their definitions of βινῶ and πρωκτός[56].

This of course is very different from the atmosphere that prevailed in the eras in which Liddell and Scott was put together and first revised. In those days *aischrologia* as I have defined it was a topic regarded by most scholars with deep distaste. 'L'Affaire Housman' is a witness to this: in the late twenties of the last century, and to a lesser (but not all that lesser) extent later, there were persons engaged in the teaching and interpretation of ancient texts who preferred to ignore

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[53] G.P. Shipp, *Linguistic Notes (λαικάζω, πόσις, ῥηχίη, ψάρ and ψήρ, rex)*, «Antichthon» XI (1977) 1-10: 1f. R. Gordon suggests that those examples of the formula which omit λαικάζω have been censored because of the feeling of some practitioners that the expression was 'disgusting' (*"What's in a list?" Listing in Greek and Graeco-Roman malign magical texts*, in D.R. Jordan-H. Montgomery-E. Thomassen [edd.], *The World of Ancient Magic*. «Papers from the First International Samson Eitrem Seminar at the Norwegian Institute at Athens, 4-8.5.1997», Bergen 1999, 239-277: 268).

[54] Michael Silk (*Aristophanes and the Definition of Comedy*, Cambridge 2000, 149 n. 154) surprisingly rejects the notion that this is what the phrase means at *Eq.* 167; I believe this to be incorrect. [Cf. the formulation found at Petron. 42 *frigori laecasin dico* (approximately, "I say fuck the cold"). AEC]

[55] See G. Hughes, *Swearing. A Social History of Foul Language, Oaths and Profanities in England*, Oxford 1991, 238f. [For absolute clarity, presumably the two English four-letter words Bain refers to are *fuck* and *cunt*; 'the c- word' remains the highest ranked offensive word in the UK in studies from 1997 and 2000 (cited in J. Culpeper, *Impoliteness*, Cambridge 2011, 141-143). AEC]

[56] κύσθος, however, is notably absent (as are λαικάζω and its derivatives and πυγίζω), perhaps not through prudery, but because it is absent from the German dictionary which is the lexicon's model, and πέος is rendered somewhat coyly by 'penis'.

passages which contained sexual innuendo or direct references to bodily functions and some bodily parts, and were happy to suppress attempts to elucidate such passages. Before that epoch in any case, there was not all that much material available, particularly in the vernacular, to the honest lexicographer confronted with this area of vocabulary. With the exception of works of a semi-pornographic nature (generally of no philological value) ancient *aischrologia* received relatively little serious attention in the period before the compilation of modern lexica. There exists of course fairly extensive discussion by humanist scholars attempting to elucidate individual passages in ancient literature with a manifest or possible sexual content (for the most part in Latin texts). Systematic treatments of the topic, however, did not emerge and, particularly in anglophone cultures, there were yawning gaps in the commentaries on an author like Aristophanes, who as well as relying for humorous effect on innuendo, was, following the *lex operis*, quite happy to include in his plays low and direct vocabulary. The lack of adequate comment on some parts of Aristophanic comedy must have handicapped Liddell and Scott and their first revisers, Sir Henry Stuart Jones and Roderick McKenzie. Commentaries like those of W.J.M. Starkie, which were planned on a fairly lavish scale and which, despite the fact that their authors, one assumes with some confidence, were perfectly capable of elucidating passages which contained references to bodily functions, sexual acts, and bodily parts, so pervasive within the genre, tended to pass them over in silence. Wilamowitz, referring to Starkie's *Wasps*-commentary, naughtily affected to express a belief that the work was intended to be a schoolbook[57]: «Ich nenne vor allem die in sprachlich grammatischen Dingen höchst schätzbare Schulausgabe (oder im England kastriert man den Author auch für Erwachsene?) von Starkie», a memorable utterance, part of which formed the epigraph of Eduard Fraenkel's famous (and grossly unfair) «Gnomon» review of Fordyce's Catullus, a commentary which omitted thirty two of those poems in the corpus «which did not lend themselves to comment in English»[58].

Prudery has been ascribed not just to Anglophone scholars. Jocelyn made an accusation, which, if valid, would provide further evidence of the problems facing lexicographers working in the area which I am discussing. Complaining of the difficulty of obtaining from the lexica adequate information about the usage and

[57] See U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Über die Wespen des Aristophanes*, «SPAW» (1911) 460-491: 486 n. 1 (= *Kleine Schriften*, I, Berlin 1935, 284-346: 315 n. 1.) This is not entirely fair to Starkie: in his commentary on *Acharnians* (1909) he wrestles with the explication of καταγιγαρτίσαι (Ar. *Ach*. 274f.). [In contrast, S. Douglas Olson's more recent commentary of 2002 (Oxford) on this line is unabashed. AEC]

[58] E. Fraenkel, *Catullus. A commentary by C. J. Fordyce*, «Gnomon» XXXIV (1962) 253-263: 253. There may have been extenuating circumstances: Fordyce, whatever his personal inclinations, would not have had a free hand in dealing with Oxford University Press, and an unexpurgated edition of Catullus at the time (1960) was unlikely to appeal to schoolteachers.

distribution of the verbs βινῶ and λαικάζω[59], he accused the editors of the *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* (*SEG*) of omitting words in this category from their indices through deliberate 'prissiness'. This provoked an indignant response on the part of the editors, who, somewhat curiously, resorted to the defence that such words had been omitted through 'carelessness'[60].

On the whole I am inclined to accept a modified version of this defence, and I am prepared to assert that in the world of Greek lexicography (both in general and as it is reflected in such works as *SEG*) conscious prudery or, in Jocelyn's term, 'prissiness' has played a relatively small part. While the study of the classical languages in the British isles from the nineteenth century onwards until fairly recently can be shown to be pervaded by a general reluctance to confront and explain 'low words' and in the case of works intended for schoolboys by outright expurgation or bowdlerization[61] – we could all provide favourite examples of our own, but I shall resist the temptation to do so – I do not believe that prudery is the sole determining factor accounting for the inadequacy of certain entries in Liddell and Scott and LSJ. Undoubtedly concern for verbal propriety in rendering the Greek words has induced the somewhat timid content of some of their entries. A striking example comes to mind: Peter Glare, the editor of the *Revised Supplement*, drew attention to their entry under ποῤδή[62]. This is taken more or less directly from the excellent *Wörterbuch der griechischen Sprache* (1819) by Franz Passow, save that the Latin gloss *crepitus ventris* replaces the direct German expression («Furze») of the original entry: in polite Victorian society farting was unmentionable[63].

As an entry in the lexicon this is undoubtedly 'mealy mouthed' or 'prissy'. It might well have puzzled or disappointed the Victorian or Edwardian schoolboy trying to read Aristophanes (if his attention span was still in operation), leading the less bright or the lazy to ignore the word in question, but the more adventurous and inquisitive to further investigation[64]. However that may be, as a lexical

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[59] H.D. Jocelyn, *Binein yet again*, «LCM» VI/2 (1981) 45f.: 45.

[60] *SEG* XXXI 84f.

[61] See, above all, K.J. Dover, *The expurgation of Greek literature*, «Entr. Hardt» XXVI (1981) 55-89 (= Id., *The Greeks and their Legacy*, Oxford 1988, 270-291). There are parallels in English literature for the disappearance in the nineteenth century of coarse words which had once been freely admitted into certain genres: see Hughes, *o.c.* 238f.

[62] P.G.W. Glare, *Liddell and Scott: its background and present state*, in R. Burchfield (ed.), *Studies in Lexicography*, Oxford 1987, 5-18: 12.

[63] No doubt I have left hostages to fortune with this statement. [K. Thomas, *Bodily control and social unease: the fart in seventeenth-century England*, in G. Walker-A. McShane (edd.), *The Extraordinary and the Everyday in Early Modern England*, Basingstoke 2010, 9-30 argues that farting and its discourse (*crepitus ventris*, in fact) does appear to have become increasingly socially unwelcome from the early nineteenth century onwards; before this period crepitational humour was much more acceptable. AEC]

[64] Compare R.R. Bolgar and A. Momigliano *ap*. Dover, *The expurgation* cit. 85 (= Id., *The Greeks* cit. 288).

entry, it hardly amounts to 'bowdlerization'. Quaint as it may seem today, it is for its date perfectly adequate and anyone with an adequate knowledge of Latin or in possession of a Latin dictionary would undoubtedly have benefited from it.

I would hesitate, then, before chastising earlier lexicographers for their 'prudery' or 'prissiness'. It cannot be said that English lexicographers, as distinct from commentators or editors of school texts, totally shirked the duty of trying to explain those words which they almost certainly found distasteful. The chief reviser of Liddell and Scott, Sir Henry Stuart Jones felt obliged to write to Housman inquiring as to the true nature of the verb λαικάζω. He received a memorable reply[65], the content of which was subsequently taken into account in LSJ. I would be inclined to offer an alternative explanation for the inadequacies of some of the entries in the field with which I am concerned. I would attribute them rather to a shared feeling on the part of dictionary-makers and commentators on texts that the lemmata in question were not particularly important and to a lack of interest *tout court* in the lower, colloquial registers of the Greek language. Greek lexicographers, like the epigraphists arraigned by Jocelyn, I would suggest, have tended to believe that this area of vocabulary was less important for example than those which involved nomenclature, legal and administrative terms, etc. (note that in *SEG* the index of words is headed «more important words»), and less important for students of literature than the vocabulary of those genres which contained words which were clearly poetic, or words that could be used to illustrate the distinction between pure Attic and other dialectal forms. Many of the entries in Liddell and Scott were (and still are) tailored to the needs of the public school composer of verse or Attic Prose (nowadays a somewhat diminished clientele, to say the least).

Susanna Morton Braund[66] has expressed her personal satisfaction at the modern habit of using English four-letter words or similar terms from the lower register of the language when discussing Latin and Greek obscenities. I am not sure that I follow her argument, and I cannot say that I share her enthusiasm. She compares the near-contemporary works of James Adams (*The Latin Sexual Vocabulary*, London 1982) and Amy Richlin (*The Garden of Priapus*, Princeton 1983) which contain extensive discussions of the Latin sexual vocabulary, praising them both, but stressing the liberating effect of the use of uninhibited language employed by the latter. This seems to me to obscure the distinction between lexicography and translation. Richlin's work abounds in translations of passages from, particularly, Latin verse where English/American colloquial obscenities, if correctly applied (this is a big 'if'), may well be in place as an aid to some of her readers. Likewise, no one could criticize the use of English vulgar language in translations offered by

[65] See Housman *ap*. Jocelyn (n. 49).

[66] See S. Morton Braund, *Personal plurals*, in J.P. Hallett (ed.), *Compromising Traditions: The Personal Voice in Classical Scholarship*, London 1997, 38-53.

Dover (*Some evaluative terms in Aristophanes*, in A. Willi [ed.], *The Language of Greek Comedy*, Oxford 2002, 85-97) since he is attempting to provide his readers with analogies, and his topic is more a sociolinguistic than a lexicographical one. Adams's more austere study, on the other hand, eschews translation and is intended to present an objective lexicographical account of the tone of words as well as their meaning. Given his intention, it might be regarded as hazardous to have prejudiced the discussion by introducing low terms from another vernacular and another culture. I would suggest that lexicographers when dealing with this category of vocabulary should practise caution. By all means draw attention to the possibility that a particular word may belong to the lower registers of the language, but take care before glossing it with a particular Anglo-American colloquialism (*mutatis mutandis* for lexicographers writing in other languages). In general LSJ has hitherto been somewhat loath to draw attention to varieties of register (a notable exception is their willingness to indicate that a word is 'poetic': not always with justification or proper consideration of dialect variation[67]). In future, perhaps, this is an area of language to which more attention might be paid, although one must admit that the production of a lexicon is obviously a project somewhat different in intent from that of either a Thesaurus or an *histoire des mots*. There are two potential approaches available to lexicographers dealing with the kind of words I am discussing and with substandard words in general[68]. One of them, the more economical of space, but placing great emphasis on the judgment of the lexicographer, would involve explicit indication that a particular word was essentially vulgar; the other, leaving it to the users of the lexicon to make up their own minds, would be to attempt to provide a full idea of the distribution of the word (with perhaps comments on the lines of 'not in high prose', etc.) by listing occurrences by genre and taking into consideration occurrences in non-or subliterary texts. An acceptable compromise between the two approaches would seem to me to be the best course. The problem of assessing the register of any given word in a language is difficult even if one is attempting to do so synchronically. A language such as ancient Greek which lasted so long, spread so widely, and evolved so much presents especial difficulties, and it is expecting rather a lot of future lexicographers to take on this task. Even so, a minimal attempt would

[67] It is one of the many great virtues of Shipp (*Modern Greek Evidence* cit. *passim*) that he questions, with good reason, many of these categorizations: note the approval of this aspect of Shipp's work expressed by N.C. Conomis, rev. Shipp, *Modern Greek Evidence* cit., «Hellenica» XXXIV (1982/1983) 240-243: 241. Some, but by no means all, of the questionable entries in LSJ can be attributed to 'Athenocentrism'; the majority, however, reflect indolence and ignorance, and a failure to perceive that dialect words are not in themselves poetic.

[68] On 'substandard' words in Greek, see J. Kramer, *Klassische Sprachen und Substandard in der Geschichte des Griechischen*, in G. Holtus-E. Radtke (edd.), *Sprachlicher Substandard II: Standard und Substandard in der Sprachgeschichte und in der Grammatik*, Tübingen 1989, 55-82: disappointingly he says nothing about the area of vocabulary which I am discussing.

be of great benefit to linguists and students of literature. Indeed I would make a plea for more extended entries devoted to the category of words I am discussing, including, at the very least, the specific meaning given in unambiguous English, some indication of transferred uses should they exist, some hints as to the word's distribution within genres, and finally, and perhaps most importantly, where such evidence exists, examples of non-literary occurrences of the word.

3. The lexicography of πέος

Now, as promised, a discussion of a particular entry in LSJ: πέος, the 'basic' word for the penis in Old Comedy[69], is as I once pointed out one of those words to which LSJ after defining and giving a single example of its occurrence in literature tantalizingly adds an «etc.»[70]. Wackernagel treated it, because of its undoubted antiquity, as one of those aboriginal basic obscenities of Greek that had been deliberately suppressed in epic poetry[71]. It was also one of the words I adduced as a parallel for the obscene verbs which I discussed in 1991[72], but it differed from the words mentioned there in that there were no occurrences of it to be found in non-literary contexts, except for a single reflection in a satyr-name, Πέων, attested on a vase[73]. It was a word that was almost certainly dead by the time of the later Roman Empire and it has left no reflection in the modern tongue; occurrences in Byzantine poetry are undoubtedly instances of learned revival[74]. The works of Tzetzes establish for certain that πέος was dead by the twelfth century: he uses the

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[69] See J. Henderson, *The Maculate Muse*, New York-Oxford, 1991, 108f. Its cognate πόσθη is perfectly respectable and is used as a technical term in medical writers (see Bain 1999a, 269); ψωλή and its derivatives are, originally at any rate, used specifically of the erect or circumcised male organ.

[70] See Bain 1991a, 75 n. 196.

[71] J. Wackernagel, *Sprachliche Untersuchungen zu Homer*, Göttingen 1916, 224-226.

[72] Bain 1991a, 51. Since I wrote these words there has been some improvement. The entries on πέρδομαι and πρωκτός have been slightly expanded in the *Revised Supplement* to LSJ.

[73] See Bain 1991a, 52 nn. 5f. Culpably I did not mention Strato there. See Kossatz-Deißmann, *o.c.* 165 for further examples of the anthroponym in addition to the one cited by C. Fränkel, *Satyr- und Bakchennamen auf Vasenbildung*, Halle 1912, 25.

[74] [πέος appears to be used in Standard Modern Greek in a similar distribution to English *penis*. Almost all ancient examples of πέος from literary works are found in Aristophanes (the exceptions are fragments ascribed to Archilochus, Aeschylus and Diphilus); additional examples appear in later language commentators and lexicographers as part of definitions or descriptions, for example Phryn. *PS* 12 F., Orion σ 41 St. and numerous examples in the *Suda*. Bain is correct in identifying Tzetzes as an author who revives this word in literary discourse, although the date of the 'death' of this word in everyday use remains difficult. The use of πέος in Modern Greek may be a relatively recent reintroduction from *katharevousa* Greek (ironic, given its original tone in the Classical language). AEC]

word in a letter (*Epist*. 104 [p. 151,12 Leone]) and glosses an occurrence of it in one of his own poems (*Chil*. XIII 293 πέος δὲ τὸ αἰδοῖον). The date of [Archil.] fr. 327 W.^{2}, where πέος is also attested, is not certain (see above): πέος is one of many words from Old Comedy that the composer of the piece delights in parading.

There existed when I wrote my 1991 piece on Greek sexual vocabulary one ostensible candidate for an occurrence of πέος in a non-literary context: it proved and still proves to be a dud[75]. The word was restored as a supplement in a bilingual inscription from Sicily, emanating from Catania, connected with the cult of Priapus, who is the speaker[76]. An early transcription demonstrates just how fragmentary this inscription is[77]:

]κεν ενθα και ενθα[
]θαι τους απ' αστεω[
]εσθαι τους απ' Ακιδ[
]αυτω καρπον, ως ορ[
]τουτο το παχυ τοις σ[
]*me Samius utroque in*[
]*ormem penem ut osten*[
….*Rubri Sami fil*

Any restoration of the inscription is bound to be hazardous. Even so, Croenert in *SEG* II 533 amongst other bold suggestions inserted πέος before τοῦτο τὸ παχύ in the final line of the Greek part of the inscription, and, unwittingly anticipating potential complaints from Jocelyn, the editor actually included the restored word in the index to the volume. The date suggested for this inscription was the third century BC. A casual glance at the letter-forms would be enough to discredit this. In addition to the orthography, the linguistic content of the inscription makes it quite evident that we are dealing with a document from the late imperial period as Herter, correcting his earlier annotation, points out[78]. A later dating for the

[75] [Despite Bain's scepticism, the most recent publication of this inscription by G. Manganaro, *Iscrizioni*, *epitaffi ed epigrammi in greco della Sicilia centro-orientale di epoca Romana*, «MEFRA» CVI (1994) 79-118: 110f. (= *SEG* XLIV 738,21), also restores πέος, dating the stone to the second or third century. G. Manganaro, *Culti privati nella Sicilia romana*, in M. Le Glay (ed.), *L'Afrique*, *la Gaule*, *la Religion à l'époque romaine*, Bruxelles 1994, 831-840: 835 sees the inscription as alluding to a statue of Priapus set up as a guardian against thieves. The stone itself was lost during the Second World War. AEC]

[76] [On the use of Latin and Greek and bilingualism in Sicily, see K. Korhonen, *Sicily in the Roman imperial period: language & society*, in O. Tribulato (ed.), *Language and Linguistic Contact in Ancient Sicily*, Cambridge 2012, 326-369. AEC]

[77] D. Libertini, *Sicilia XIII Acireale – Scoperte a Casalotta*, «NSA» XIX (1922) 491-499: 494: I have suppressed all his restorations, some of which are most implausible.

[78] See H. Herter, *De Priapo*, «Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten» XXIII (1932) 187: contrast Id., *De Mutino Titino*, «RhM» n.F. LXXVI (1927) 418-432: 419.

inscription casts serious doubt on the restoration πέος. Wilamowitz had already taken exception to πέος, arguing that τοῦτο τὸ παχύ was by itself sufficient as a Greek equivalent for *en*]*ormem penem*[79]. Although he is undoubtedly correct in his rejection of Croenert's supplement, he goes too far in his assertion that πέος was a dead word after Aristophanes: «ein Wort, das niemand seit Aristophanes in den Mund genommen hat, selbst Straton mit offenbarer Absicht (bis auf einmal, wo es verächtlich klangen soll) vermeidet». It is very difficult to counter generalizations of this kind since later literary attestation of words belonging to this area of vocabulary may well reflect the author's knowledge of classical authors such as Aristophanes and bear no relation to the author's own idiolect[80]. In this case, however, we now have evidence to show that Wilamowitz was mistaken in his assertion. One would not perhaps have expected that such evidence would have been retrieved from a bathhouse in Bulgaria, but this is in fact the case. Inscriptions found, appropriately enough, on an arch (*fornix*) in a bathhouse in Odessus, modern Varna, which date from the second century AD provide us with the first genuine non-literary examples of πέος (excluding its single onomastic reflection)[81]. These inscriptions, in addition to supplying two other possible instances of the word and further examples of πυγίζω, as well as an occurrence of the compound καταπυγίζω (which now becomes a 'real' word)[82], contains the memorable collocation σιδηροῦν πέος[83].

One can scarcely argue that some Moesian aficionado of Aristophanes or Old Comedy in general has scratched or scribbled on to the wall of the bathhouse he frequented a dead Atticism[84] (or, what would amount to the same thing, a quotation from a lost comedy: the phrase c o u l d be accommodated to verse, but it is not obviously metrical). A 'penis of iron' is not in itself an altogether surprising

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[79] U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (*Die Heimkehr des Odysseus: neue Untersuchungen zu Homer*, Berlin 1927, 179 n. 1) compares the use of τῷδε at Eur. *Cyc*. 160: παχύ in this context is explicit enough (cf. Ar. *Lys*. 23).

[80] This is the case with an author like Lucian, who was steeped in the vocabulary of Old Comedy.

[81] In G. Mihailov, *Inscriptiones Graecae in Bulgaria repertae*, V, Serdicae 1997, nr. 5074.

[82] See LSJ[9] 907 *s.v.*: καταπυγίζειν is curiously glossed at Phot. κ 344 Th. τὸ τὴν πυγὴν ἐπὶ πολὺ μεταφέρειν ἐν τῷ βαδίζειν.

[83] Antipater of Thessalonica uses the adjective of shoulders: *AP* VI 256,1f. σιδαρέους / Ἄτλαντος ὤμους (Beckby). The reading (in Mihailov, *o.c.* 4b) here is, according to its editor, either [σ]ειδερ[ο]ῦ[ν] or σιδερ[ο]ῦ[ν]: we also find two other possible instances of πέος on its own (6b,4, 12).

[84] [What is termed 'graffiti' must however not be viewed as necessarily associated with sub-elite and uneducated hands: this graffito may be 'defacement', but cannot be classed categorically as representative of contemporary slang just because it is found on a wall and not in another 'more educated' environment. The case for how we should view such material is made in particular by J.A. Baird and C. Taylor in the introduction to their co-edited volume, *Ancient Graffiti in Context*, Routledge 2011, 1-17. AEC]

expression (Latin *rigidus* used in sexual contexts comes to mind), but I struggle to provide an exact or even close parallel from either Greek or Latin[85]. [Archil.] fr. 327 W.^{2} opens with the line:

σίδηρός ἐστι μοῦνος ὃν στέργει Κάπυς

The word σίδηρος must here indicate a weapon made of iron, or else iron itself; we are thus confronted by a transfer, as the following line makes clear:

τὰ δ' ἄλλα λῆρος[86] ἦν ἄρ' αὐτῷ πλὴν πέους

The writer is punning on σίδηρος, and is, in view of the mention of πέος, thinking in terms of the hardness of an erection. While it is obvious that Archilochus of Paros did not write these lines, it cannot be established with total certainty when his pseudonymous *impersonator* wrote them. The two possibilities confronting us are either the Imperial period or the Renaissance: the more or less flawless metrical technique, accompanied by a lack of observation of Byzantine accentual rules precludes the Byzantine era[87]. I would guess that the latter is more probable although it would be tempting to assume, in view of the absence in the literature which has come down to us of the imagery of iron applied to the male organ, that the writer had better access to ancient literature than a learned humanist. But the name Κάπυς (the name of a legendary king of Capua) suggests Capua and the Campanian vice (although the vice in question was not sodomy[88]), topics familiar to humanists. One therefore suspects an Italian source for this poem. In the medieval period, we can almost certainly point to a parallel. Michael Psellus' poetic invective *In Sabbaitam* contains the abusive expression addressed to its target εὐνοῦχε τὸν σίδηρον, ἄρρην τὸν τρόπον[89]. One interpreter translates[90] the first half of this antithesis «mutilato con ferro»: even in Byzantine Greek it is difficult to believe that the accusative τὸν σίδηρον could mean this. Better then to assume that, as in Ps.-Archilochus, σίδηρος is used metaphorically of the penis, and translate "a

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[85] [A possible parallel may be seen in a bawdy joke along the lines of "what's the strongest thing in the world? A πέος" reported by Ath. X 451b-c, and ascribed to Diphilus (= fr. 49 K.-A.). AEC]

[86] τὰ δ' ἄλλα λῆρος is directly paralleled at Ar. *Lys*. 860: cf. Ar. *Ra*. 809 λῆρόν τε τἄλλ' ἡγεῖτο.

[87] See G. Tarditi, *Due carmi giambici di uno Ps.-Archiloco*, «RCCM» III (1961) 311-316: 312f.: the manuscript which transmits this poem, *Barb*. gr. 69, dates from the seventeenth century.

[88] On the Campanian vice, see J. Adams, *An Epigram of Ausonius (87, p. 344 Peiper)*, «Latomus» XLII (1983) 95-109: 100.

[89] Psell. *Poem*. 21,147 in L.G. Westerink, *Michaelis Pselli poemata*, Stutgardiae-Lipsiae 1992.

[90] See F. Conca, *La lingua e lo stile dei carmi satirici di Psello (Contro il Sabbaita; Contro il Monaco Iacopo)*, «Eikasmós» XII (2001) 187-196: 192 n. 13.

eunuch as to his penis" (i.e. a man incapable of an erection)[91]. Perhaps it would be not hopelessly romantic to believe that these two instances reflect popular usage.

At any rate, the discovery of these graffiti should make us think twice about Wilamowitz's assertion regarding the occurrence of πέος in Strato of Sardis (*AP* XII 240,2), an author certainly not averse to obscenity[92]. There has been much controversy regarding Strato's date[93]. The matter hinges on his alleged relationship with Martial and, more importantly, the clear community of themes with some of the poems of the Greek epigrammatist Rufinus, whose own date is uncertain. His editor, Sir Denys Page, located him in the fourth century AD. If Page was right and one believes Rufinus to have been the earlier and more original poet, as it is reasonable to do on the basis of a comparison of his and Strato's treatment of common themes and of phraseology shared between them, this would prolong the literary life of πέος still further into late antiquity and perhaps lend a kind of support to the Wilamowitzian view of Strato's use of it. Independently and simultaneously, however, Alan Cameron and Louis Robert have established that the historical references in Rufinus preclude this date and that the linguistic evidence adduced by Page for a late date for him does not hold water[94]. A Hadrianic date for Strato looks likely, in which case his epigrams would be roughly contemporary with our

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[91] [An alternative interpretation is that the lines from Psellus mean something akin to "like a eunuch when it comes to the sword, but like a real man when it comes to his (sexual) behaviour". I am thankful to an anonymous reviewer of an earlier version of this piece for this interpretation. AEC]

[92] Strato uses βινῶ at *AP* XII 245,1 and πυγίζω at *AP* XII 240,4 and 245,3. He also alludes to στύω when referring to Ἀστυάναξ (*AP* XII 11,4) and employs ὄρχις, a word which, in its anatomical meaning, certainly has claims to the title 'low', at *AP* XII 240,3 (see Bain 1999a, 271) and πρωκτός at *AP* XII 6,1. There is an almost certain allusion to λαικάζω in the final line of *AP* XII 187 τοῖς φθονεροῖς λάμβδα καὶ ἄλφα λέγε. See F. De Martino, *Sigle ed eufemismi alfabetici*, in De Martino-Sommerstein, *o.c.* 99-180: 155. The arguments for this interpretation are strong: phallic threats to envy or the envious are very common (see K.M.D. Dunbabin-M.W. Dickie, *Invidia rumpantur pectora: the iconography of phthonos/invidia in Graeco-Roman art*, «JbAC» XXVI, 1983, 7-37), and λέγω λαικάζειν is a set phrase: it is semantically calqued by Petronius and Martial – see J.N. Adams, *Four notes on Latin sexual language: CIL 4.8898; Persius 4.36; Martial 11.104.17; Petr. 21.2*, «LCM» VII/6 (1982) 86-88: 88.

[93] On the date of Strato, see R. Keydell, *Bemerkungen zu griechischen Epigrammen*, «Hermes» LXXX (1952) 497-500 (= *Kleine Schriften*, Berlin 1991, 376-391) who takes Rufinus to be dependent on him; A. Cameron, *Strato and Rufinus*, «CQ» n.s. XXXII (1982) 162-173; A. Cameron, *The Greek Anthology: From Meleager to Planudes*, Oxford 1993, 65-69; W. Steinbichler, *Die Epigramme des Dichters Straton von Sardes*, Frankfurt a.M. 1998, 17-23 (and the bibliography contained in these works). I am grateful to Lucia Floridi for sending me a draft of the relevant section of the introduction to her commentary on Strato. Her treatment of the problem is judicious and convincing [L. F., *Stratone di Sardi. Epigrammi*, testo crit., trad. e comm., Alessandria 2007].

[94] See Cameron, *o.c.* and L. Robert, *La date de l'épigrammiste Rufinus. Philologie et réalité*, «CRAI» (1982) 50-63 (= L. Robert, *Opera Minora Selecta*, V, Amsterdam 1989, 777-790).

Bulgarian bathhouse graffito. It would not then be necessary to suppose that when Strato used the word πέος he was reviving an expression found in Old Comedy.

Any future entry on this lexical item ought, as well as indicating how widespread is its occurrence in Old Comedy, to draw attention to these new found epigraphical attestations and to its onomastic reflection[95], and to present evidence for its survival into at least the second century AD. I would recommend that the entries on other words in this field, such as those collected and discussed in Bain 1991a, should, subject to the available evidence, conform to similar guidelines and be set out in similar fashion in future revisions of the lexicon[96].

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[95] On the importance of onomastics for lexicographers, particularly regarding 'submerged' vocabulary, see Bain 1995b, 186f. and 1999c, 125, echoing earlier protreptics, notably those of Paul Maas, Olivier Masson, and Louis Robert. Their task is now considerably eased by the publication of successive volumes of the *Lexicon of Greek Proper Names* (*LGPN*).

[96] Very many scholars have assisted me in the preparation of this essay. Aside from others not mentioned here who were present when it was delivered in oral form at Newnham and those individually acknowledged in the text and footnotes, I single out Jim Adams, Klaus Alpers, Colin Austin, Archie Burnett, Albio Cesare Cassio, James Diggle, Kenneth Dover, Laurent Dubois, Nan Dunbar, Harry Jocelyn, David Jordan, Robin Nisbet, Peter Parsons, Joyce Reynolds, Charlotte Roueché, Donald Russell, Manolis Voutiras, Martin West, Tim Wilcox, and Nigel Wilson. I apologise to all those others to whom I am indebted and may have neglected to mention. I must also express my gratitude to Andrew Stokes who, over and above the call of duty, rendered massive assistance to a neurotic technophobe.

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Abstract

This article was written by David Bain before his death in 2004, and has been prepared for publication posthumously by Amy Coker as part of her work on offensive language in Greek. The first part discusses the ancient concept of aischrologia in ancient and Byzantine authors and presents a working definition of this term. The second part outlines how obscene words are treated by lexicographers of the modern period, and makes some suggestions as to how they should be treated in the future. The piece finishes with a note on πέος, which pulls together and examines the available evidence for the history of the word after Aristophanes.