Aristophanes on the modern Greek stage

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'My purpose was not so much to present an artificial revival, as to prove a natural survival,' wrote the Greek theatre director Alexis Solomos,[1] explaining his decision to bring Aristophanes' comedy onto the Greek stage of the 1950s. Although the idea of a 'natural survival' is problematic,[2] the reception of Aristophanes in modern Greece displays certain characteristics reminiscent of the function of Old Comedy in fifth-century B.C. Athens. These characteristics have never received the scholarly attention they deserve. This paper aims at analysing them in the context of the history of Aristophanes' plays on the modern Greek stage.

I aim to show first that Aristophanes' comedy initially resisted and ultimately surpassed restrictions regarding language and morals imposed by the nineteenth-century Greek intellectual elite. This unusual reception can be contrasted with that of classical tragedy, which was often governed by rules reflecting more closely Western-European patterns of interpretation than ancient Greek modes. Such rules did not apply to Aristophanes. On the contrary, his satirical humor itself[3] embodied, and therefore fueled, a παράβαση, a 'transgression' of the established order. It was precisely this 'destabilizing' spirit which appealed, and continues to appeal, most directly to the larger Greek public, as my paper will show. The 'rebel' Aristophanes was first discovered and furthered by the amateur-actors who staged the nineteenth-century improvised productions of his comedies, as well as by a tradition of notorious Aristophanic revue-plays, which flourished during the first quarter of the twentieth century. By the 1950s, however, Aristophanes' work had moved from these margins onto the 'official' stage of the Athens and Epidaurus Festival of Ancient Drama. The most important contributors to this promotion of Attic comedy were Karolos Koun and Alexis Solomos. The ensuing 'institutionalization' of Aristophanes, however, did not diminish his popularity with the Greek theatre-going audience then or now. Nor did it affect the long-standing reputation of Aristophanes for subverting or even breaking the rules. The final sections of my

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paper will reveal that Aristophanes most certainly lived up to this reputation during the political changes of the late 1950s to 1974, when the Colonels' dictatorship fell. By then, politically charged Old Comedy, which some have seen as a refracting lens filtering contemporary reality,[4] had been fully adapted to deliver modern comment and criticism relevant to the twentieth-century Greek present. In modern Greek society, as in antiquity, the satirical, public voice of Aristophanes has made itself heard more and more often, inviting his ever-faithful audience to engage in democratic dialogue and to become part of the action on the comic stage.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, revival of ancient drama in Athens simply meant revival of Greek tragedy, because tragedy most clearly met the needs of the contemporary nationalist ideology.[5] Classical tragedy, however, was interpreted in conservative, scholarly terms, often with a flavour of nostalgic grandeur.[6] Correspondingly, the language of almost all productions of tragic plays was either ancient Greek or *katharevousa*. Nonetheless, Aristophanes defied the cultural and political conventions of the contemporary intellectual elite. His comedies could not be contained by the restrictive ties of language, translation and interpretation: full-blown *katharevousa* was hardly ever found in published translations of Attic Comedy, except occasionally in choral passages.[7] Indirect and often self-imposed censorship based on moral criteria, however, did affect Aristophanic comedy in the earliest decades of its revival in Greece. This censorship accounts for the relatively small number of translations, adaptations, and stage versions of Aristophanes' plays prior to 1900.[8] Already Adamantios Koraes (1748-1833), the most important representative of the Greek Enlightenment, had regarded Aristophanes ambiguously as a 'χαριέστατος βωμολόχος', 'a most charming, foul-mouthed' playwright.[9] Koraes' own desire to create a modern Greek language[10] drew him towards the study of Aristophanic comedy, a vast linguistic gold-mine preserved from the heyday of classical Athens.[11] But the playwright's shocking vulgarities (βωμολοχίαι) had to be handled with circumspection in the context of the Enlightenment's general admiration of the classics. This notion of Aristophanes the βωμολόχος remained attached to Old Comedy's reputation throughout the nineteenth century.

Most early productions of ancient drama were staged in the thriving Greek communities outside Greece, by the Danube, in Venice, Bucharest, Constantinople, Odessa, and Egypt.[12] Teachers in local Greek schools frequently took the initiative to produce a classical play with students, amateur actors, or both. For a long time, Aristophanic performances given by actors other than amateurs were

unknown. This personal involvement of people without formal stage training became the most prominent feature of the earliest revival of Old Comedy in Greece.[13] The initial amateur spirit also partly accounts for the high degree of audience appeal and participation associated with modern Greek revivals of Aristophanic comedy to this day. One early adaptation of Aristophanes' *Plutus* stood out among these loosely organized productions by amateurs. In 1868, the play was staged in Athens by the *thiasos* 'Sophokles' of Sophokles Karydes.[14] The production owed its success largely to the modern, politicized translation made by the Constantinopolitan Michael Chourmouzes (1801-1882), which was far more attractive to the public than any scholarly rendering.[15]

That the revival of classical Greek tragedy and comedy took different paths became most manifest around the turn of the century. While revived classical tragedy tended to envelop itself with an aura of sanctity, comedy increasingly encouraged experimentation and personal initiative by translators, producers, actors, and spectators. The audience present at Aristophanic revivals was more receptive to verbal and visual innovations on stage; it often took for granted that some anachronisms were inserted in the original, to make ancient jokes appeal to modern times. This phenomenon was unheard of in the realm of tragedy. The 'timeless vision' of tragedy had to preserve tradition and reinforce the concept of continuity with the past. Consequently, classical tragedy fell victim to the contemporary Greek language question, whereas Aristophanes' comedy, not regarded as an 'object of national pride,' remained immune.[16] In 1903, the Royal Theatre of Athens[17] staged the *Oresteia* in a production by Thomas Oikonomou. The adaptation made by Georgios Soteriades, in a higher register of the vernacular, was used in the production.[18] This enraged a group of university students, who aggressively defended Professor Georgios Mistriotes' view[19] that classical tragedy ought to be performed in the original. Bloody fights broke out in the streets of Athens in clashes between students and police.[20] This incident, known as the *Oresteiaka*, not only bears witness to the modern Greek concern for language, but also reveals the intensity of the public's immediate involvement in shaping the revival of ancient drama. The huge public attention which the production received prior to the première already foreshadowed its success with the Athenian audiences: they crowded the theatre for ten consecutive nights.[21]

Around 1900, several translations of Aristophanes were published. Many of these were still literal, philological in nature, being mostly the work of scholars trained in the classics.[22] Georgios Soures (1853-1919), however, was the first to

create a free, artistic translation of Aristophanes' *Clouds* in the vernacular. He also staged his version of the play in a production with professional actors supervised by Nikolaos Laskares. Soures' verse adaptation was extremely successful both in Greece, with many repeat performances at the Municipal Theatres of Athens and of Piraeus, and abroad, touring the Greek communities of Egypt.[23] Soures' work initiated a tradition of appropriating Aristophanes' voice, making him the spokesman for the modern author.[24] Noteworthy is the fact that female theatre goers ('κυρίαι') were not allowed to attend the *Clouds* of the year 1900.[25] The contemporary newspaper *Akropolis* reported the story of one brave lady who tried to sneak in but was removed by the police.[26] Aristophanes' play itself was never particularly known for its obscenities, but as rendered by the 'foul-mouthed' (ἀθυρόστομος) Soures, it gained such a reputation.[27]

The public attention which Soures' production received, was responsible for a major turning-point in the history of the revival of Old Comedy. Directors of commercial theatres soon discovered the financially attractive side of the sensation associated with Aristophanes' name. The very obscenities which had caused them to ignore Aristophanic comedy, suddenly made it look exciting to the early twentieth-century stage. Meanwhile, the commercial theatre tended to avoid reviving classical tragedy, both in the original and in translation, since past attempts had proven that the cost of tragic productions was never covered by the low ticket sales.[28] In 1910, Anastasios Aperges, actor and director of the free Greek Theater Company 'Aristophanes,' staged Soures' *Clouds* in Athens, Trebizond and Odessa, as well as *Lysistrata* in a translation of Polyvios Demetrakopoulos.[29] In 1904, the Royal Theatre produced *Plutus* in a demotic verse translation of Themistokles Solomos.[30] In the same year, the New Stage Company (*Nea Skene*) of the aesthete and romantic Konstantinos Chrestomanos staged the *Ecclesiazusae* in a verse translation by Demetrakopoulos. This last play, more controversial due to its content, was considered unsuitable for ladies as well.[31] 'Αἱ Κυρίαι καὶ Δεσποινίδες παρακαλοῦνται νὰ μὴ προσέλθωσι,' 'Ladies and Misses are requested not to attend,' read the program. In some performances, however, the exclusively male cast staged a 'purified' version.

In early twentieth-century Greece, Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* was perceived as the most risqué of all eleven comedies. First adapted in 1905 by Demetrakopoulos and staged at the Municipal Theatre of Athens, this women's play remained forbidden territory for female actors and spectators until the 1920s.[32] *Lysistrata* and other Aristophanic comedies were now gradually adopted by the flourishing,

French-style 'soirée noire' theatre of Athens. For nearly three decades, Aristophanes was performed almost exclusively in disreputable theaters catering to this light-hearted, cabaret-like genre, modelled on the Parisian *revue* and *vaudeville*.[33] *Lysistrata* in particular thus became the victim of a historical misunderstanding, focusing exclusively on the erotic and sexual elements in the play. Famous transvestites and cross-dressers, 'μεταμορφωτές,' monopolized the leading female role(s) in productions of this comedy.[34] To them, *Lysistrata* functioned merely as an alibi for putting on 'pornographic,' or at least very daring, plays.[35] The first serious *Lysistrata* production was not staged until 1951: the *Thymelikos Thiasos* of Linos Karzes brought the play to the Herodes Atticus Theatre, and presented the renowned actress Kyvele (Adrianou) in the leading role.[36] Meanwhile, obscene jokes on the official stage of the Royal Theatre (later the National Theatre) remained an absolute taboo. The Greeks had to wait until the fall of the dictatorship in 1974 before censorship on moral grounds was finally lifted. Thus it was that in 1976, the Art Theatre of Karolos Koun was first permitted to bring an unexpurgated version of the *Acharnians* onto the public stage![37]

During the First World War, the aforementioned Polyvios Demetrakopoulos (1864-1922; pseudonym: Pol Arcas), one of boldest and most prolific translators of Aristophanes' oeuvre, started introducing features of Old Comedy into the contemporary satirical revue-theater called *epitheorese*.[38] In his production *International Panathenaia of 1915* (Παγκόσμια Παναθήναια τοῦ 1915) at the Theatre of Marika Kotopoule, for instance, Demetrakopoulos modelled female characters on the leading ladies of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata.* Using the same 'weapons' as their ancient Greek counterparts, the women made a contemporary appeal for international peace with the following song:

– Τρέξατε στὸ Ὕπρ, στὶς Φλάντρες,
στὸ Ἀρράς, στὰ Δαρδανέλλια
τοὺς χαμένους σας τοὺς ἄντρες
γαργαλίστε τους μὲ γέλοια,
καὶ μὲ σκέρτσο καὶ μὲ νάζι
ρίχτε ἐρωτικὴ ματιὰ
νὰ τοὺς καίῃ, νὰ τοὺς βράζῃ
τῆς ἀγάπης ἡ φωτιά.[39]

Run to Ypres, to Flanders,
to Arras, to the Dardanelles.
Tempt your lost men,
wih laughter, wit, and coquetry.
Cast an erotic glance at them,
so that the flame of love
may scorch them and devour them.

In 1919, the Greek Theatre Company[40] produced Aristophanes' *Peace* in a verse adaptation by Demetrakopoulos at the Olympia Theatre in Athens. Its few performances still contributed to the fame of actor Christophoros Nezer (1888-1970).[41] During his sixty-year career, Nezer played major roles in every single Aristophanic comedy, and personally raised the level of many of these revivals.[42] Emphasizing the contemporary character of Aristophanes, he also left his signature on the twentieth-century interpretation of Attic Comedy, long before any of the directors of the first theatre companies. These generally continued the tradition of 'disreputable' productions of Aristophanes' plays throughout the inter-war period.[43]

In the early 1930s, Karolos Koun (1908-1987) started to experiment systematically with Aristophanic comedy. At Athens College, where he taught English until shortly before the Second World War, Koun organized student productions[44] of the *Birds*,[45] the *Frogs*, and *Plutus*. In 1934, he created the *Laïke Skene*, or People's Theater (1934-36), and staged the *Plutus* with a professional cast. This *Laïke Skene* was the forerunner of the well-known *Theatro Technes*, which emerged under the German occupation of Greece (1942). With very limited means, Koun's Art Theatre then engaged into the production of plays from the Greek and international repertoire. Neither fully recognized nor supported by the state, Koun nevertheless succeeded in establishing a 'school' in various senses of the word. This marginal position of the Art Theatre, lasting for over thirty years, was not unrelated to its conspicuous interest in Aristophanes.[46] Indeed, the interpretation of ancient drama, and especially of Attic Comedy, proved to be one of the main goals of Koun's school.

Koun claimed that his lifelong goal was to enable large audiences to communicate with ancient drama and particularly with Aristophanes. For this purpose, he developed his personal theory of 'Greek Folk Expressionism' (Ἑλληνικὸς Λαϊκὸς Ἐξπρεσιονισμός),[47] which determined the reception of Old Comedy for

the following fifty years.[48] Koun regarded theatre, and specifically Aristophanic comedy, as representative of the rich cultural traditions of Greece itself, positioned on the crossroads of East and West.[49] His own folk approach, which he defended in numerous interviews, required that each feature of an Aristophanic production would be evocative of things Greek, whether ancient, Byzantine or modern. Popular, down-to-earth elements had to be inserted into speech, music, choreography, sets and costumes. Ultimately, this interpretation would bring the ancient Greek playwright 'back to his people.' (Or did Koun perhaps more intuitively create an Aristophanes whom the present-day urban classes would recognize more easily?[50]) In Koun's view also, the actor should not merely represent but move his spectators in order to secure their emotional participation. His Folk Expressionism, by assigning responsibilities to the public as well as to the actors, thus continued Old Comedy's direct involvement with the audience. In addition, Koun kept asking for new, more up-to-date translations with a larger potential for communication, but true in spirit to the ancient text. He was also convinced that only Greeks, not foreigners, could do justice to Aristophanes' comic spirit, because Greeks alone could guarantee a continuity of the 'folk wit' (λαϊκὸ πνεῦμα) in which Aristophanic comedy was rooted:

> Κάποτε με ρώτησαν από του Στράντφορντ, αν θα ήθελα να ανεβάσω μαζί τους κωμωδία. Αρνήθηκα. Ο Αριστοφάνης είναι τόσο πλασμένος με το ελληνικό χώμα και τα πρόσωπά του τόσο ρωμαίικα, τόσο ελληνικά, που δεν γίνεται να μεταφερθούν αλλού.[51]
>
> Stratford asked me once if I would like to produce a comedy with them. I said no. Aristophanes is so moulded with Greek earth and his characters are so 'Romaic', so very Greek, that they cannot be transposed elsewhere.

When Koun put his theory into practice in his *Plutus* of 1957, the results were astounding: modern folk songs, *rebetika* with *bouzouki,* provided the musical background;[52] the farmers/*manges*, singing Anatolian tunes, enjoyed a glass of *retsina* in a *taverna*, and the priest of Zeus appeared on stage dressed in the robe of a Greek-Orthodox priest! These theatrical devices, partly repeated in the Art Theatre's *Birds* of 1959, immediately earned Koun the criticism of trying to make Aristophanes contemporary by cheap gimmicks, at the expense of the lyricism of

the original.[53] For the *Acharnians* of 1976, another landmark in the reception of Aristophanes, Koun found inspiration in the modern *panegyri* (popular religious festival), as well as in Greek shadow theatre: Dicaeopolis was reincarnated as Karaghiozes, the very recognizable eponymous hero of this popular genre. The Art Theatre's *Thesmophoriazusae* of 1985 took on the character of an urban middle-class comedy, with stereotyped ladies in colourful dresses moving about in the magic of surreal music and dance.

After decades at the margin, Aristophanes made a surprisingly early and impressive début at both the Athens and the Epidaurus Festivals.[54] By 1960, six of his comedies had already been staged either in Athens or in Epidaurus: the National Theatre under the direction of Alexis Solomos produced the *Ecclesiazusae*, *Lysistrata*, *Thesmophoriazusae*, and *Frogs* in consecutive years (1956-59). Koun's *Theatro Technes* revived Chourmouzes' paraphrase of *Plutus* in a 1957 production at the Herodes Atticus Theatre. Indeed, we owe the modern Greek rebirth of Aristophanes in the second half of the twentieth century to Karolos Koun and to his former student, Alexis Solomos. The two directors, who worked independently and in very different conditions, gave the starting point for a tradition of presenting Aristophanes to the large urban public, and thus made his ancient plays the most popular in Greece. Until that time, the National Theatre all but avoided Attic Comedy, with the exception of Sokrates Karantinos' indoor production of the *Clouds* in 1951.[55] Abroad, however, in France, England, and Germany, Aristophanic comedies had long been in the repertoire of recognized theatre companies. Under the leadership of Solomos, the National Theatre of Greece finally launched a large-scale revival of Aristophanes on the 'official' stage of the Festivals. For the first time also, Aristophanic comedy received a share of the financial and other resources of a subsidized state theatre. Thus the most significant steps were made towards 'institutionalizing' the reception of Aristophanes' comic voice.

The numerous productions of Aristophanes' plays since the inauguration of the Festivals bore the stamp of prevailing schools and styles. Different interpretations of Old Comedy were created by the various theatre companies emerging over the past four decades. Solomos, who personally directed all Aristophanic plays except *Plutus*, shared Koun's conviction that Attic Comedy should be made contemporary, but the outcome of his own work strongly diverged from that of his teacher. Whereas Koun brought to light the oriental features of the genre, Solomos interpreted Aristophanes along the lines of the contemporary Parisian *revue* and operetta. This was especially true of his first Aristophanic productions with the

National Theatre: his *Ecclesiazusae* of 1956 and his *Lysistrata* of the following year. Both plays presented *fantaisiste* spectacle in a 'purified' language, with numerous theatrical effects.[56] Speech, music, and props in these productions acquired a contemporary flavour, often a touch of the 1950s.[57] They featured fragments of *bouzouki* and *rebetika* music, for instance; in the *Frogs* of 1959, Euripides appeared on stage driving a motorcycle. Solomos revised or revived many of his productions at least once, but nearly always applied this formal, stylized approach to Old Comedy. The director's refined mode of interpreting Aristophanes was partly meant to undo the dubious reputation gained by his comedy from its time as the 'forbidden fruit' of Greek *soirée noire* theatre.[58] In Solomos' later productions, Aristophanic characters came to function as key-figures, as symbols of larger concepts beyond the stage innovations.[59] In the *Birds* of 1979, for instance, Solomos tried to translocate the myth of Aristophanes' play by turning the 'state' of Nephelococcygia into a full-blown dictatorship,[60] no doubt a comment on the Greek military junta of 1967-74. His *Clouds* of 1970 presented Socrates' students as contemporary hippies.[61] When Solomos produced the *Peace* in 1964, he made Polemos appear as a caricature of Hitler.[62] In the introduction to his book, *The Living Aristophanes* (1974), he stated:

> What must be faithfully revived in contemporary productions is not the aspect, but the essence, of ancient drama; not the letter, but the spirit; not a picture, but a vision. We must discover the laws and rhythms, the shapes and colors of the Aristophanic performance in the kaleidoscope of modern popular entertainment.[63]

Kostas Bakas, a successor of Solomos as director of the National Theatre in the 1980s, continued a mixed tradition of the refined, elevated style of his predecessor and of the folk approach espoused by Koun. Meanwhile, Athens saw the emergence and successful growth of the State Theatre of Northern Greece and of the *Amphi-Theatro* under Spyros Evangelatos. The latter brought a more thought-provoking conception to Aristophanic comedy. Looking for the right setting for his 1984 production of Aristophanes' *Peace*, for example, Evangelatos chose the decor of an abandoned music-hall, dating from an unspecified post-war period. This translocation of the ancient play into an abstract time and place underlined Evangelatos' personal interpretation of an Aristophanes with 'diachronic' dimensions.[64] The actors to this place revealed themselves as former 'stars' remembering

the old-time glamour. They had gathered to reflect on the idea of peace in joyful terms, borrowed from Aristophanes' play, but instead became haunted by their recent wartime experiences. The production ended with the startling image of the neglected goddess Peace (Leda Tasopoulou) sadly fleeing the scene.[65]

Anachronisms in the interpretation of Aristophanic material were not always well received. Koun's première of the *Birds* in 1959, in which he inserted anachronistic political, social, and especially religious satire, met with an unforeseen storm of protest and caused the first big scandal on the 'official' stage of the Athens Festival. Although at that time the production was received as a very poor attempt to make the ancient original contemporary, it now stands as a landmark in the long tradition of performing Aristophanes.[66] What exactly happened then on that infamous evening of the première, on 29 August 1959, in the Herodes Atticus Theatre? Apparently, the majority of the spectators, a total of more than three thousand people,[67] expressed their uneasiness from the very beginning of the play. The great liberties taken by the translator, Vasiles Rotas, did not meet with general approval;[68] the same held true of the music by Manos Chatzidakis, of the choreography by Rallou Manou's *Helleniko Chorodrama*, even of the sets and costumes by Yannis Tsarouches. Too much music, song, and dance came at the expense of the actors' parts. The overall impression was that of an improvised, unfinished, and disorganized performance.[69] Near the middle of the two-hour production, an unfortunate incident occurred. In one particular scene, Peisetaerus, the protagonist, called on a priest to sacrifice a goat to the gods. This priest started parodying Greek-Orthodox liturgy by chanting on the tone of Byzantine ecclesiastical music.[70] A few people – it is unclear how many exactly[71] – felt shocked at what they regarded as sacrilege. They instantly showed their disapproval interrupting the scene with cries of 'αἶσχος', 'ντροπή', 'φθάνει πιά', 'disgraceful', 'shame!', 'enough!' The majority of the audience, however, applauded enthusiastically.[72] The scene was broken off, but the performance itself continued without further disturbances, albeit in a tense atmosphere.[73] On the following day, however, Konstantinos Tsatsos, a leading member of the conservative government of Prime Minister Karamanles, forbade any of the three scheduled repeat performances of the *Birds* to take place. Tsatsos had been among the spectators in the Herodeion and had taken offence at the implicit criticisms voiced against the Greek Orthodox Church and its connection with current conservative politics.[74] This formal prohibition was a phenomenon unheard of in times of democracy. Popular reaction to the Art Theatre's exclusion from the Festival was immediate. The Greek

press and radio covered each step of this public matter day after day for about two weeks. The incident had an enormous impact and soon caused a political split reflected in newspapers' diverging opinions. In accordance with their own political viewpoints, different papers took different sides.[75] Some relatively conservative newspapers, such as *To Vema* and *Kathemerine*, saw Koun as the main culprit and attacked Rotas' liberal translation as well. They defended Tsatsos' decision, the official statement of which ran as follows:

> ... Τὸ χθὲς ἐμφανισθὲν ἔργον ἀτελέστατα προπαρεσκευασμένον ἀπετέλεσε παραμόρφωσιν τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ κλασσικοῦ κειμένου, ὡρισμέναι δὲ σκηναὶ αὐτοῦ παρουσιάσθησαν κατὰ τρόπον προσβάλλοντα τὸ θρησκευτικὸν αἴσθημα τοῦ λαοῦ.[76]
>
> ... The play performed yesterday, insufficiently rehearsed, constituted a deviation from the spirit of the classical text, while some of its scenes were presented in such a way as to offend the religious sensibilities of the people.

More left wing papers, on the other hand, such as *He Avge*, *Eleftheria*, and *Ta Nea*, all put the blame on the Festival authorities, on Tsatsos, and some even on Karamanles himself.[77] They claimed that the members of the Festival's organizing committee were at fault for not having canceled Koun's première earlier, since they knew his mode of interpreting Aristophanes from the past and had been able to attend the final rehearsals of the play. These newspapers also provided Koun with an opportunity to defend himself against Tsatsos' arbitrary interference.[78] Tsatsos was charged with imposing censorship, of incursion on the democratic right of freedom of speech. *He Avge* published the following harsh criticism: 'What Cleon could not do to Aristophanes [i.e. to prevent him from speaking out publicly[79]], Konstantinos Tsatsos managed to do, all under the cover of democracy!'[80] Tsatsos, the newspaper claimed, saw in Aristophanes' satire and in his presumed revolutionary ideas a powerful threat to the Establishment.[81] Therefore, the *Birds* was banned, not because the people did not like the performance, but because the government disliked it. By punishing Koun, Tsatsos wanted to set a precedent, to make it understood that Aristophanes interpretation had to play by certain rules. Although the revived Aristophanes was never permanently silenced, the political impact of this controversy remained manifest for a long time. Sixteen years went by before Koun was allowed to stage a new performance of the *Birds* at the official

Festival of Epidaurus. Leftist newspapers continued to ridicule Tsatsos, who was nicknamed Κότα, 'the Chicken.' They persisted in publishing cartoons and caricatures of him dragging a chicken along on every occasion.[82]

The dictatorship of 1967-74 affected the development of modern Greek theater in a profound way. The Colonels controlled not only the daily workings of the state, but cultural and intellectual life as well. They also established severe, direct censorship:[83] plays, classical or modern, Greek or foreign, offending against the regime, traditional morality or religion, could not be presented; even if they had been passed at first, they could still be withdrawn at any time.[84] In 1967, when Koun was putting on a production in London, he was asked to return to Greece and to cancel a scheduled performance of the *Birds* at the Lycabettus Theatre. During these seven years, perhaps as many as half of all plays proposed by Koun were rejected by the censor.[85] Yet the tight control was not able to dent the satirical bent of the *epitheorese*-theatre, or political revue, nor the spirit of the extremely popular Aristophanes. In the final years of the dictatorship, 1973-74, theatre activity dropped even further, due to political and economic factors as well as to more severe censorship. Current events created a general feeling of insecurity, while inflation hit the country. Directors often avoided plays engaging in social and political criticism, and chose to revive old melodramas instead. Amidst this turmoil, however, the status of Aristophanic comedy remained stable. Some stage directors resorted to the Athenian playwright as a 'rebel' voice from the past in order to satirize current conditions. They challenged the audience to look through this disguise and to play, as it were, the role of an ancient public with inside knowledge of the present. Having been on close terms with Aristophanes for so many decades, theatre-goers kept up this role remarkably well.

In December of 1974, an experimental theater company recently founded in Thessaloniki, called *Theatriko Ergasteri* or Theatrical Workshop, produced Aristophanes' *Knights,* translated by Kyriazes Charatsares and directed by Vyron Tsamboulas. Until then, this comedy had hardly been popular and, due to its manifest political content, had been particularly suspect in the eyes of the censor. Instead of delivering the original *parabasis,*[86] however, the cast presented a *parabasis* of its own making, amounting to an explicit statement about the political situation under the recently abolished junta.[87] The classical *parabasis*, the traditional locus of a 'dialogue' between playwright and audience, now served as an opportunity for 'stage dialectics' between ancient and modern times, between fiction and reality. This initiative, a παράβαση or 'transgression' of the original

parabasis, caught on immediately: frequent interplay with the actors on the comic stage had prepared Aristophanes' modern Greek audience to put on its own theatrical *persona* of being contemporary to the ancient performance, while keeping on the alert for any analogies between past and present. In their guise as fifth-century B.C. Athenians, the audience knew and expected the *parabasis* to rupture the dramatic illusion of the ancient play, and responded instantly to a re-invented one, which also dropped every pretence and fast-forwarded its public back to the future.

Aristophanes' contemporary political relevance did much to account for his vast success during the Junta years. However, this situation also explains why Old Comedy's revival went in decline during the two years immediately following upon the fall of the dictatorship. With the re-establishment of democracy in Greece, real political challenges, which had kept Aristophanes' stubborn spirit alive, vanished. Since 1977, however, Aristophanic comedy has again been produced frequently, but many recent stagings have degenerated into events for tourists. Furthermore, the Greeks' initial enthusiasm for the grand Festivals has waned, due to the repetitiveness in the repertoire of – and in the approaches to – revival productions of ancient drama. On the other hand, the past twenty years have seen all sorts of alternative uses of Aristophanic material, such as Savvopoulos' musical version of the *Acharnians*,[88] a shadow theatre adaptation of the *Birds*,[89] the publication of children's and comic books of all eleven comedies,[90] and productions staged in Greece by foreign, mostly English-speaking companies.[91]

Giorgos Messalas, director of the Modern Theatre (*Monterno Theatro*), brought Aristophanes himself on stage in a 1985 production of the *Thesmophoriazusae* at the Herodes Atticus Theatre. The Greek director thus enacted the long-existing 'dialogue' between past and present productions of Aristophanes, through the voice of the (literally) revived playwright himself. Thodoros Morides, alias the ancient comedian, ironically questioned theatrical innovations with the words:

Ω θεοί, ω θεοί, γιατί, γιατί;
Δεν έχω γράψει τέτοια σκηνή.
Κάθε καλοκαίρι λοιπόν
αλλαγές θεατρικές.
Αυτά τα έχω επιτρέψει
μόνο στις Κρατικές Σκηνές ...[92]

God, o God, why, why?
I have not written such a scene!
Every summer then theatrical changes.
These I have allowed
to the State Theatres only ...

In 1985, Thymios Karakatsanes re-emphasized the political relevance of Aristophanic comedy in a revue-like production of the *Clouds*. Socialist ideals underlying it encouraged him and his company to bring the ancient playwright as close to the masses as possible, and to perform in public spaces other than the official stage of the Festivals.[93] In 1992, finally, the producer Demetres Kollatos caused great controversy when he intended to put on an anti-Catholic production of Aristophanes' *Peace* in Skopje, in which he denounced all non-Greek claims to Macedonia![94]

Aristophanic comedy has, as we have seen, survived turbulent episodes of modern Greek history, conflicts over language, times of puritanism (in either language or visual stage production), foreign occupations, censorship, and military rule. This has been possible only because producers, actors, and audience revived Aristophanes' public impact for modern Greek culture. No other ancient literary creation had been so closely linked as Old Comedy to the political, sociological and intellectual realities of the community it addressed, nor did any other ancient literature offer a more challenging combination of entertainment and instruction. In nineteenth and twentieth-century Greece, this genre was revived as a civic display rooted in a 'spectacle culture,' in a 'contest of public voices.'[95] Aristophanic comedy self-consciously re-established itself as a further forum for public statement. It reclaimed the privilege to ridicule or parody other official manifestations, and to reflect on the vocation of comic theatre in general. It also rightly saw comedy as having something to say about democracy. In Greece, Aristophanic revivals initiated a dialectic process inviting the audience to participate, whether before, during, or after the time of the comic performance. The modern Greeks observed the playwright's satirical talent as well as his presumed 'folk character' (λαϊκότητα), his 'disruptive' personality and direct political engagement. They then increasingly related all these aspects to what they saw as their own national character.[98] Consequently, they often chose to negotiate their concern for language, liberty, national and cultural identity through the medium of Aristophanic comedy. In self-assigned roles and as part of the comic cast, they gave Aristophanes a prominent

place in their struggle for linguistic change, freedom of speech, and democratic politics.

NOTES

I wish to thank the editors, the reader, Dimitri Gondicas, Richard Martin, and Stratos Constantinidis for their encouragement and for many helpful comments.

1 A. Solomos, Ὁ ζωντανὸς Ἀριστοφάνης (Athens 1961) = *The Living Aristophanes* (Ann Arbor 1974) 11. On the revival history of ancient drama in modern Greece, see: A. Bacopoulou-Halls, 'Revival. Greece' in J.M. Walton, ed., *Living Greek Theatre. A Handbook of Classical Performance and Modern Production* (Westport, Conn. 1987) 261-95; G. Chatzedakes, Ὁ Ἀριστοφάνης καὶ μεῖς, *Theatrika – Kinematographika – Teleoptika* 14-18 (1977) 64-74; S.E. Constantinidis, 'Classical Greek drama in modern Greece: mission and money', *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 5, 1 (1987) 15-32; T. Lignades, Σύντομο οδοιπορικό στην αναβίωση του αρχαίου δράματος και στις εφαρμογές του, *Ekkyklema* 18 (1988) 50-4; F.M. Pontani, 'Sopravvivenza di Aristofane in Grecia', *Dioniso* 39 (1965) 380-389; G. Sideres, Τὸ Ἀρχαῖο Θέατρο στὴ Νέα Ἑλληνικὴ Σκηνὴ 1817-1932 (Athens 1976); E. Tsirimocou, *La place d'Aristophane dans le théâtre grec contemporain* (diss. Paris 1977). For introductions to modern Greek theatre at large, see: A. Bacopoulou-Halls, *Modern Greek Theater: Roots and Blossoms* (Athens 1978); T.H. Gressler, *Greek Theatre in the 1980s* (Jefferson, NC, and London 1989); G. Sideres, Ἱστορία τοῦ Νέου Ἑλληνικοῦ Θεάτρου: 1794-1944, Α' 1794-1908 (2nd ed. Athens 1990); D. Spathes, Ο Διαφωτισμός και το Νεοελληνικό Θέατρο (Thessaloniki 1986).

2 In my view, the bearing of Aristophanes' comedy on modern Greece situates itself on a cross-cultural level, and does not support a claim for continuity between ancient and modern Greek culture.

3 Some Aristophanes scholars indeed consider the satirical element to be central (e.g. J. Henderson, 'The *Demos* and the comic competition' in J.J. Winkler and F.I. Zeitlin, eds., *Nothing to Do with Dionysos? Athenian Drama in Its Social Context* (Princeton 1990) 271-313.) Others focus on different characteristics of Aristophanic comedy: see e.g. M. Silk, 'Pathos in Aristophanes', *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 34 (1987) 78-111, and 'The autonomy of comedy', *Comparative Criticism* 10 (1988) 3-37.

4 See A.M. Bowie, 'The parabasis in Aristophanes: prolegomena, *Acharnians*', *Classical Quarterly* 32, 1 (1982) 27-40.

5 This ideology, underlying the earlier movements of the Greek Enlightenment and Romanticism, can be defined as the desire of the 'patriotic' upper classes to establish a continuity between distant Greek antiquity and the less glorious present. Greek tragedy was one of the hallmarks of the ancient past, which the nascent intelligentsia of the 'new-born nation' eagerly tried to recapture. See Bacopoulou-Halls, 'Revival. Greece' 263-4, 266; Constantinidis, 'Classical Greek drama in modern Greece' 20-1; Lignades, Σύντομο οδοιπορικό 50.

6 Bacopoulou-Halls, 'Revival. Greece' 265; Lignades, Σύντομο οδοιπορικό 50-53. Cf. Spathes Ο Διαφωτισμός και το Νεοελληνικό Θέατρο 54-5, 161.

7 On translations of Aristophanes into Modern Greek, see T. Karageorgiou, Οι νεοελληνικές μεταφράσεις του Αριστοφάνη, *Philologike* 43 (1993) 39-41; G.N. Oikonomos and G.K. Angelinaras, Βιβλιογραφία τῶν ἐμμέτρων νεοελληνικῶν μεταφράσεων τῆς ἀρχαίας ἑλληνικῆς ποιήσεως (Athens 1979) 403-11. For a general introduction to the problems of translating Attic

Comedy in Greek, see G.M. Sifakis, Προβλήματα μετάφρασης του Αριστοφάνη (Athens 1985), and H. Petase in *Kathemerine*, 17 October 1993. On the difficulties of rendering Aristophanes in English, see A.H. Sommerstein, 'On translating Aristophanes: ends and means', *Greece and Rome* (2nd series) 20 (1973) 140-54.

8 Karageorgiou, Οι νεοελληνικές μεταφράσεις του Αριστοφάνη 39-40.

9 Koraes used and explained this oxymoron in a letter dated 3 March, 1807, and addressed to Alexandros Vasileios.

10 Koraes' philological position arose from broader political and educational considerations. He was convinced that the enlightenment of contemporary Greece would be furthered by re-establishing a written idiom and medium of instruction. He hoped to fulfil this need for a unified language, consonant with the unique ideology of modern Greece, by 'purifying' and elevating the vernacular, guided by its ancient Greek roots. In several passages of his Προλεγόμενα στοὺς ἀρχαίους Ἕλληνες συγγραφεῖς (Athens 1986-90; photogr. repr. of ed. Paris 1809-21, 1822-27, 1833), Koraes made efforts to account for the numerous obscenities characteristic of Old Comedy. Unfortunately, he never produced a scholarly edition of any of Aristophanes' eleven comedies. He did engage in textual criticism of the paleographic tradition both of Aristophanes' plays and of the related scholia, but only to a limited extent. See G.A. Christodoulou, Ὁ Ἀδαμάντιος Κοραὴς ὡς διορθωτὴς τῶν κλασικῶν κειμένων (Τὸ χειρόγραφο Χίου ἀριθ. 490) in S. Phasoulakes, ed., Πρακτικά Συνεδρίου 'Κοραής και Χίος' (Χίος, 11-15 Μαΐου 1983) (Athens 1984) vol. 1, 37-54, esp. 38, 39, 40, 45; I.Th. Kakrides, S. Kavvadas, eds., Ἀδαμαντίου Κοραῆ. Παρατηρήσεις καὶ διορθωτικὰ εἰς Ἀριστοφάνους κωμῳδίας καὶ τὰ παλαιὰ σχόλια αὐτῶν, *Epistemonike Epeteris tes Philosophikes Scholes tou Athenesi Panepistemiou* I, 1 (1925) 146-55.

11 Already the Atticists and their Byzantine successors had studied and copied Aristophanes for his pure Attic language.

12 Spathes, Ο Διαφωτισμός και το Νεοελληνικό Θέατρο 16, 40, 54, 145, 158.

13 In fact, professional (subsidized) productions of Aristophanes started as late as the 1950s (see below). Meanwhile, the Greeks' direct, informal interest in his plays has lasted.

14 Sideres, Ἱστορία τοῦ Νέου Ἑλληνικοῦ Θεάτρου 215.

15 M.M. Papaioannou, Μιχαὴλ Χουρμούζης. Ὁ ἀνώνυμος παραφραστὴς τοῦ *Πλούτου* τοῦ Ἀριστοφάνη (1860), *Epitheorese Technes* 75 (1961) 165; Karageorgiou, Οι νεοελληνικές μεταφράσεις του Αριστοφάνη 39-40: Chourmouzes inserted anachronistic attacks against the contemporary elite supportive of King Otto.

16 Cf. Karageorgiou, Οι νεοελληνικές μεταφράσεις του Αριστοφάνη 39.

17 The Royal Theatre was founded in 1901, but closed down seven years later (1908). It reopened in 1932 as the National Theatre of Greece with Photos Polites in the position of director.

18 Soteriades' controversial adaptation was based upon Hanz Oberlaender's abridged version of the German translation of Aeschylus' *Oresteia* made by Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff. See Sideres, Τὸ Ἀρχαῖο Θέατρο στὴ Νέα Ἑλληνικὴ Σκηνή 169, 194.

19 Prof. Georgios Mistriotes of the Department of Classics at the University of Athens founded in 1895 the Society for Staging Ancient Greek Drama (Ἑταιρεία ὑπὲρ τῆς διδασκαλίας ἀρχαίων δραμάτων): Lignades, Σύντομο οδοιπορικό 51.

20 Constantinidis, 'Classical Greek drama in modern Greece' 22-3.

21 Sideres, Τὸ Ἀρχαῖο Θέατρο στὴ Νέα Ἑλληνικὴ Σκηνή 188-92, 194-9.

22 Among them were: N.S. Baxevanakes (Aristophanes' *Frogs*, 1902), Th. Solomos (*Plutus*, 1905), and M. Avgeres, who translated the *Acharnians, Peace, Knights, Wasps, Thesmophoriazusae and Plutus*, all published 1911-12 by G. Phexes.

23 Sideres, Τὸ Ἀρχαῖο Θέατρο στὴ Νέα Ἑλληνικὴ Σκηνή 164-9, 178, 210, 213, 221.

24 Soures also made anachronistic use of Aristophanes in personal contributions to his satirical newspaper *Ho Romeos*.

25 I refer to the parallel exclusion or restriction of women in ancient Greek theatre. The difficult evidence is treated in A.W. Pickard-Cambridge, *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens*, revised by J. Gould and D.M. Lewis (Oxford 2nd ed. 1968) ed. suppl. (1988) 263-5, 269.
26 *Akropolis*, October 27, 1900; Sideres, Τὸ 'Αρχαῖο Θέατρο στὴ Νέα 'Ελληνικὴ Σκηνή 167. The exclusion of 'ladies,' if at all enforced consistently, seems not to have applied to Mrs. Soures herself. Reportedly, she was watching part of the performance from behind the stage.
27 Chatzedakes 'Ο 'Αριστοφάνης καὶ μεῖς 65-6.
28 Constantinidis, 'Classical Greek drama in modern Greece' 24-5, 29.
29 Sideres, Τὸ 'Αρχαῖο Θέατρο στὴ Νέα 'Ελληνικὴ Σκηνή 238-40.
30 Sideres, Τὸ 'Αρχαῖο Θέατρο στὴ Νέα 'Ελληνικὴ Σκηνή 210-11.
31 Sideres, Τὸ 'Αρχαῖο Θέατρο στὴ Νέα 'Ελληνικὴ Σκηνή 204-5. Cf. Chatzedakes, 'Ο 'Αριστοφάνης καὶ μεῖς 70.
32 Sideres, Τὸ 'Αρχαῖο Θέατρο στὴ Νέα 'Ελληνικὴ Σκηνή 213, 240, 291.
33 The very free French *Lysistrata* of Maurice Donnay (Paris 1892) provided the basis for Marika Kotopoule's modern Greek adaptation of the play. The famous actress even played the protagonist role herself in her 1910 production in Athens and later in Alexandria. In these versions, Lysistrata was suddenly given both a husband and a lover. After a long and contrived 'rejection' scene, she yielded to the erotic advances of the lover to break her oath of sexual abstinence. Sideres, Το 'Αρχαῖο Θέατρο στὴ Νέα 'Ελληνικὴ Σκηνή 239, 390.
34 Among them were: Kyros Kyrou, Georgios Christodoulou, Marios Rotzaïron, Marios Demopoulos, and the Manou brothers.
35 N. Anastasopoulos, Αυτή τη Λυσιστράτη ποιος θα την πάρει;, *Tachydromos*, July 3, 1986, 40-45. Paul Nord's successful revue called *Paparouna*, staged as late as 1933 at the Perroquet Theatre in Athens, might illustrate this practice: in a scene named *Lysistrata*, the then very popular male transvestite K. Mavreas played the role of the eponymous heroine, who now conspired against a marital strike undertaken by the men! See the newspaper articles by 'D.G.' in *Hellenike*, 15 and 24 June 1933.
36 For a critique of this very conservative production, using masks and buskins, see P. Chares in *Nea Hestia* 50 no. 584 (1951) 1463-5.
37 A. Phostieres, Th. Niarchos, interview with Koun, *He Lexe* 46 (1985) 677.
38 Sideres, Τὸ 'Αρχαῖο Θέατρο στὴ Νέα 'Ελληνικὴ Σκηνή 257-8. For an introduction to and historical examples of revue-plays, see Th. Chatzepantazes and L. Maraka, (eds.) 'Η 'Αθηναϊκὴ 'Επιθεώρηση, 3 vols. (Athens 1977).
39 From P.T. Demetrakopoulos et al., Τὰ Παγκόσμια Παναθήναια τοῦ 1915. "Ολα τὰ ἄσματα (Athens 1915) 21.
40 The 'Εταιρεία 'Ελληνικοῦ Θεάτρου was founded in 1919 by students of the Greek Theatre Association's School of Drama: Constantinidis, 'Classical Greek drama in modern Greece' 26.
41 Sideres, Τὸ 'Αρχαῖο Θέατρο στὴ Νέα 'Ελληνικὴ Σκηνή 278-81.
42 K.D. Linardatos, Χριστόφορος Νέζερ: 61 χρόνια θέατρο!, *Psychagogia*, 3 March, 1970, 15.
43 Sideres, Τὸ 'Αρχαῖο Θέατρο στὴ Νέα 'Ελληνικὴ Σκηνή 281, 291, 386.
44 Some of Koun's pupils at Athens College later became renowned actors and directors themselves.
45 In the year 1929, the *Birds* had gained public attention in Leon Koukoulas' adaptation staged by Spyros Melas, who directed the Free Stage Company (*Elefthere Skene*) of Marika Kotopoule. Sideres, Τὸ 'Αρχαῖο Θέατρο στὴ Νέα 'Ελληνικὴ Σκηνή 398-402.
46 S. Chatzaras, Κάρολος Κούν· 70 χρόνια ζωῆς. Β' μέρος 1944-1978, *Kallitechnike Epitheorese* 2nd series, 2 (1978) 53.
47 D.N. Maronites, interview with Koun, *Anti* 340 (1987) 46-7.
48 Koun's vision lives on in the work of his successors, Giorgos Lazanes and Mimes Kougioumtzes.
49 According to Martin Bernal, this might be problematic as a description of ancient Greece's artistic products. See M. Bernal, *Black Athena. The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization* (New

Brunswick, NJ 1987-91).

50 Koun's emphasis on 'λαϊκότητα' in Aristophanes interpretation came close to a folkloristic approach, to an urban (elitist) (re)construction of what is 'popular.' The Art Theatre's productions of Aristophanic comedy, to which the director himself always referred as 'popular,' were often merely using popular 'iconography.' On Koun's aestheticism of a cultivated 'λαϊκότητα,' see P. Kokkore, Ο ρόλος του Κάρολου Κουν στη διαμόρφωση της ελληνικής εκδοχής του θεατρικού μοντερνισμού, *Ekkyklema* 21 (1989) 34-40.

51 *Ta Nea*, 4 August 1985. Cf. Maronites, interview with Koun 48.

52 The *rebetika* accompanied by the *bouzouki*, expressions of the contemporary Greek urban (sub)culture, are excellent examples of 'urban folklore.'

53 A. Terzakes in *To Vema*, 6 September 1957, and G. Staurou in *He Avge*, of the same date.

54 Until the mid-twentieth century, nearly all revival productions of Aristophanes were staged in indoor theatres. The idea of performing outdoors had been launched in the late 1920s, when the Greek poet Angelos Sikelianos and his American wife, Eva Palmer, staged *Prometheus Bound* and later the *Suppliants* in the ancient theatre of Delphi as part of the so-called Delphic Festivals. Sikelianos' initiative led indirectly to the systematic revival of the ancient Greek repertoire on the outdoor stage. More than twenty-five years went by, however, before the well-preserved ancient theatre of Epidaurus and the heavily restored Herodes Atticus Theatre in Athens were used for annual summer festival performances. The Epidaurus Summer Festival was inaugurated in 1954, the Athens Festival one year later. The purpose of these Festivals was to present ancient drama to a much larger public, both Greek and foreign, in its original setting.

55 For Karantinos' interpretation, see his study Πρὸς τὸ ἀρχαῖο δρᾶμα ... (Athens 1969).

56 V. Varikas in *Ta Nea*, 20 July 1956, and M. Plorites in *Eleftheria*, 25 June, 1957 respectively. Both shared the opinion of most other contemporary critics.

57 Constantinidis, 'Classical Greek drama in modern Greece' 15.

58 Kostas Georgousopoulos, in an interview, 8 December 1993.

59 Pontani, 'Sopravvivenza di Aristofane in Grecia' 388.

60 H. Varopoulou in *Proïne*, 1 August 1979.

61 B.D. Klaras in *Vradyne*, 4 July 1970, and Alkes Thrylos (pseudonym for Helene Ourane) in *Nea Hestia* 88 no. 1033 (1970) 1043.

62 V. Varikas in *Ta Nea*, 25 July 1964.

63 Solomos, *The Living Aristophanes* 6.

64 H. Varopoulou in *To Vema*, 4 September 1984.

65 For Evangelatos' pessimistic conception of the play, see his note in the playbill accompanying the 1991 repeat performance: 'the Athenian poet's *Peace* is ... a text profoundly imbued with the experiences of War, fraught with agony. ... If you 'forget about it' [i.e. about peace], if you think it is natural and obvious, although -- in words only – you are all for it, Peace departs.' Cf. G. Varveres, Η κρίση του θεάτρου, Κείμενα θεατρικής κριτικής (1976-1984) (Athens 1985) 248-50 [= *He Lexe* 37 (1984) 655-6].

66 The same production won the *Théâtre des Nations* first prize in 1962, and was performed on three occasions for the World Theatre Season in London. Bacopoulou-Halls, 'Revival. Greece' 281.

67 *Ta Nea*, 31 August 1959; *He Avge*, 1 September 1959.

68 According to eye-witness Alkes Thrylos, the stage version of Rotas' translation employed bold anachronisms, such as: 'missiles,' 'military bases,' 'Einstein,' 'cow-boys,' etc. Thrylos, Τὸ Ἑλληνικὸ Θέατρο VIII (Athens 1980) 128 [= *Nea Hestia* 65 no. 773 (1959) 1246].

69 According to *Ta Nea*, 31 August 1959; *To Vema*, 1 September 1959; and *Kathemerine*, 1 and 2 September 1959.

70 The priest's mock prayer to the 'Olympian' gods of Nephelococcygia occurs at lines 864-88 in Aristophanes' original. Koun's parody-of-the-parody was based on the tone of its delivery, rather than

on its content.

71 The numbers vary according to the ideological views of the different sources. Compare the left wing *He Avge*, 1 September 1959: 'two to three people who wanted to cause trouble during the performance,' with the vague statement of the centrist *To Vema,* published on the same day: 'The audience was divided: ... one part of it had become hostile, while the other wavered.' The phrase leaves the impression that possibly as much as half of the audience disapproved.

72 *Eleftheria* and *He Avge*, 1 September 1959.

73 *Kathemerine*, 1 September 1959.

74 In 1958, the National Radical Union (right) had won the elections by a large majority at the expense of the United Democratic Left and the Liberal Party (centre). The United Democratic Left became the official opposition party with twenty-four per cent of the vote. Konstantinos Karamanles had been appointed prime minister in 1955. His first term lasted until 1963. Tsatsos himself was president of Greece during the years 1975-80. See R. Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece* (Cambridge 1992) 242 and table 6.

75 *Kathemerine*, 10 September 1959.

76 *Kathemerine*, 1 September 1959.

77 *He Avge*, 1 September 1959.

78 They published interviews in which Koun expressed his surprise at this official reaction. He claimed that he had been interpreting Aristophanes in similar terms for many years, since the time of his student productions in the 1930s (e.g. *Ta Nea*, 31 August 1959; *He Avge*, 1 September 1959). *Anexartetos Typos*, 2 September 1959, printed Koun's protest declaration, in which he threatened to take legal action in order to receive financial compensation for the losses incurred by the cancellations (cf. *Ta Nea*, 31 August 1959; *Eleftheria*, 1 September 1959). The same paper even began to publish Rotas' translation 'χωρὶς περικοπάς,' 'without abridgments,' as a sensational daily serial (starting 2 September 1959)! This and other papers also printed Rotas' justification of his free rendering of the *Birds*.

79 In both ancient and modern sources, Cleon, the influential fifth-century B.C. politician, is most frequently characterized as the arch-enemy of Aristophanes, agitating against the public criticisms of the latter. For a different treatment of the relationship between Cleon and Aristophanes, see L. Edmunds, *Cleon, Knights, and Aristophanes' Politics* (Lanham, Maryland 1987).

80 Front-page of 1 September 1959 issue.

81 *He Avge*, ibid. Note the heading of the related article in *Eleftheria*, 1 September 1959: 'Οἱ "Ορνιθες' γκρεμίζουν τὸ κοτέτσι τοῦ κ. Τσάτσου,' 'The *Birds* are tearing down the hen-house of Mr. Tsatsos!'

82 One of the first such cartoons, signed by Makres, was published by *Anexartetos Typos* on the front page of its 2 September 1959 issue.

83 See 'Athenian' [R. Rouphos], *Inside the Colonels' Greece*, trans. R. Clogg (London 1972), and R. MacDonald, *Pillar and Tinderbox: The Greek Press and the Dictatorship* (New York and London 1983).

84 Iakovos Kambanelles and Kostas Mourselas, both active as writers during the Junta years, told me in personal interviews (2 and 23 March 1994 respectively) that the committees of censors appointed by the Colonels were rather disorganized and not particularly qualified to judge art and literature. Clever authors often found ways to take advantage of this situation.

85 Chatzaras, Κάρολος Κούν 54, 56-7.

86 The *parabasis* was a central element in Old Comedy, in which the chorus-members 'came forward' and addressed the spectators directly in the voice of the ancient playwright. It also provided room for 'theatrical self-consciousness' (as in the *Knights,* where Aristophanes criticizes his comic rivals), as well as for intertextuality among plays. See the recent study of T.K. Hubbard, *The Mask of Comedy: Aristophanes and the Intertextual Parabasis* (Ithaca and London 1991).

87 For a critique of this production, see Τὸ Θεατρικὸ 'Εργαστήρι Θεσσαλονίκης καὶ οἱ "Ιππῆς'

τοῦ 'Αριστοφάνη (θέσεις καὶ ἀπόψεις Λαὸς καὶ 'Εξουσία), *Anti* 4 (1974) 41-2.
88 D. Savvopoulos, Ο Αριστοφάνης που γύρισε από τα θυμαράκια. Αχαρνής. Τραγούδια για νέους κανταδόρους (record made by the company Lyra, 1977). As a booklet: id., Ο Αριστοφάνης που γύρισε από τα θυμαράκια· ολόκληρο το κείμενο και μια συζήτηση (Thessaloniki 1981).
89 Done by P. Michopoulos in 1984.
90 See the work of D. Potamites, S. Zarambouka, T. Apostolides and G. Akokalides.
91 For example, the very successful 1993 production of *Lysistrata* by Peter Hall. The Cyprus Theatre Organization staged several productions of Aristophanes in Greek at the summer Festivals, e.g. the 1981 *Plutus* and 1989 *Frogs*, both under the direction of Nikos Charalambous, and the 1991 *Wasps* by Eves Gavrielides and Neophytos Taliotes.
92 *Apogevmatine*, 8 July 1985.
93 *Ta Nea*, 30 June 1985; *To Vema*, 4 July 1985.
94 *Apogevmatine*, *Eleftherotypia* and *Eleftheros Typos* of 28 July 1992.
95 See S. Goldhill, *The Poet's Voice. Essays on Poetics and Greek Literature* (Cambridge 1991) 167, 175.
96 Cf. Chatzedakes, 'Ο 'Αριστοφάνης καὶ μεῖς 64-5.