**Aristophanes’ Lampito in Sociolinguistic Perspective**

Preston Lee Atwood

4/12/2018

*Thesis*: Employing recent sociolinguistic theory to describe the function of Lampito in Aristophanes’ *Lysistrata*, I argue that the realism of Lampito’s Laconian/Spartan dialect is ultimately intended to buttress Aristophanes’ goal of fostering Spartan appreciation and his ideal of panhellenic peace.

*Ferguson and DeBose’s List of Features in Simplified Registers*:[[1]](#footnote-1)

1. slow and exaggerated enunciation as well as great overall loudness
2. use of full forms (instead of contractions)
3. use of short sentences and parataxis rather than hypotaxis
4. repetition of words and use of invariable tag questions
5. use of analytic paraphrases for certain lexical items and grammatical constructions
6. reduction of inflection (often by selection of one or two all-purpose forms)
7. omission of function words (such as articles, prepositions, auxiliaries)
8. avoidance of dialectal or slang forms in favor of standard forms
9. phonological simplifications (e.g., by addition of a vowel to final consonants)
10. use of a special lexicon of quantifiers, intensifiers, and modal particles
11. use of foreign or foreign-sounding words (e.g., English savvy)

*(Incomplete) List of Features in Lampito’s Speech (= Unsimplified Laconian)*

1. Many vowel contractions (e.g., ε before α/ο/ω > ι; ε + ε > [ε:]; ο + ο > [ɔ:])
2. Nondiphthongal vowel combinations (e.g., α + ε > η; ᾱ + ο/ω > ᾱ)
3. Sentences comparable in length and content as those of the Athenian women (e.g., 143-44, 168-71)
4. No noticeable repetition
5. Several cases of inflection (e.g., nom. pl. πρυτάνιες [981]; personal pronouns: ἐγών [983]; μ(έ) [84]; τύ [1188]; ἁμές [168]; ἁμῶν [168]; ἁμίν [1081]; ἁμέ [95]; ὑμέ [87])
6. Many syntactical peculiarities

*Lampito’s Attributes in View of the Play’s Metanarrative*

1. Beauty (κάλλος, 78)
2. Well-coloredness (εὐχροῖες, 79)
3. Robustness (σφριγᾷ, 79)
4. Sexual prowess (κἂν ταῦρον ἂγχοις, “You could even throttle an ox!”, 81)
5. Sense of humor
   1. γυμνάδδομαί γα καὶ ποτὶ πυγὰν ἅλλομαι, “In any case, I do exercise and leap to the buttocks” (82)
   2. ἇπερ ἱαρεῖόν τοί μ’ ὑποψαλάσσετε, “You know you’re handling me like a sacrificial victim” (84)
6. Sympathizes with the Athenian women whose husbands are also off to war (105-106)
7. Songs for peace (117-18; 143-44)
8. Remains loyal to the oath

1. C. A. Ferguson and C. E. DeBose, “Simplified Registers, Broken Language, and Pidginization,” in *Pidgin and Creole Linguistics*, ed. A. Valdman, 99-125 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977), 104. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)