

Aristophanes' Lampito in Sociolinguistic Perspective

The sociolinguistic concept that ethnic identity exists as a result of an intentional “process” and that language is a primary means by which communities enact, perform, and reproduce identity (Fishman, 1977; Wardhaugh, 2010) has only recently been applied to the question of dialect in the Aristophanic corpus (Hall, 1989; Colvin, 1999, 2000; Willi, 2002, 2014). The results of such sociolinguistic analysis have aided in determining the degree to which the speech of foreigners in Aristophanes' extant comedies reflect linguistic realism, substandard or non-standard Attic, or unmarked, barbaric Greek. These results have further implications for how we should read the plays and how a foreigner's speech might be integral to the development of the Aristophanic plot. In this paper I employ recent sociolinguistic theory to describe the function of Lampito in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, arguing that the realism of Lampito's Laconian dialect is ultimately intended to buttress Aristophanes' goal of fostering Spartan appreciation and his ideal of panhellenic peace.

Bibliography

Colvin, Stephen. *Dialect in Aristophanes and the Politics of Language in Ancient Greek*

Literature. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

_____. “The Language of Non-Athenians in Old Comedy.” In *The Rivals of Aristophanes*, ed. David Harvey and John Wilkins, 285-298. London: Duckworth and the Classical Press of Wales, 2000.

Fishman, J. A. “Language and Ethnicity.” In *Language, Ethnicity, and Intergroup Relations*, ed.

H. Giles, 15-57. *European Monographs in Social Psychology*, 13. London/New York: European Association of Experimental Social Psychology by Academic Press, 1977.

Hall, E. *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition through Tragedy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.

Willi, Andreas. "The Language(s) of Comedy." In *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Comedy*, ed. Martin Revermann, 168-185. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

_____. "Foreigner Talk." In *The Languages of Aristophanes: Aspects of Linguistic Variation in Classical Attic Greek*, idem, 198-225. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.