Making Monkeys: Archilochus fr. 185–187 w. in Performance*

Deborah Steiner

ἐρέω τιν' ὕμιν αἶνον, ᾧ Κηρυκίδη,
 ἀχτυμένη σκυτάλη,
 πίθηκος ἥϊει θηρίων ποκριθείς
 μούνος ἀν' ἐσχατιήν,
 τῷ δ' ἄρ' ἄλώπηξ κερδαλὴ συνήντετο,
 πυκνὸν ἔχουσα νόον.

I shall tell you people a fable, Kerykides, a pained message stick: a monkey was going, keeping away from the beasts, alone in the back-country, and a fox with a view to gain met him, a fox with a guileful mind.

ρόπτρῳι ἐρειδόμενον.

pressing on the trap spring

τοιήνδε δ' ᾧ πίθηκε τὴν πυγὴν ἔχων

monkey, with buttocks like this

In the fragmentary Epode cited above (fr. 185–187 w.), the seventh-century Ionian iambographer Archilochus selects one Kerykides as his target, mocking

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his interlocutor through his narration of an animal fable featuring an upstart monkey duped by a more wily fox. My aim in exploring a poem that has attracted relatively little commentary in existing scholarship is three-fold:¹ first, better to understand the impetus behind Archilochus' song and its contents by contextualizing it within its performative milieu, the archaic symposium; second, to restore to its central place an element frequently omitted from the many recent discussions of the sympotic occasion, namely dance; and third, to demonstrate the overlaps between the verbal and visual dimensions of that occasion by investigating the place of monkeys in the late archaic images and texts broadly contemporary with Archilochus' composition. My analysis falls into four sections. I begin with the figure of Kerykides and the agonistic situation that Archilochus constructs vis-à-vis his addressee, which positions the victim in mimetic relation to his mocker and anticipates the monkey motif of the *ainos* still to come. Section two tracks the meta-sympotic language of the fable, and argues that Archilochus intends the story both as an attack on a symposiast who has violated the decorum of the private gathering and as a public shaming of a political rival whose sympotic failings demonstrate a corresponding unfitness for civic office. In section three I turn to the visual evidence, proposing that monkeys in vase images from the archaic to the early classical period function much like Archilochus' ape—that they too transgress the boundaries of acceptable sympotic behaviour and raise the problem of interlopers at the drinking party and other elite sites. The closing discussion suggests a connection between simians in painted and plastic media and a second set of individuals who in art, and probably in real life too, fulfill a very similar function to the monkeys in the visual ambience of the symposium: not satyrs, whose affinity to monkeys fine discussions by François Lissarrague and Herman Brijder have already explored,² but the so-called 'fat dancers' or komasts who appear on painted pottery from the mid-seventh century on.

1 The notes to van Dijk (1997) 144–147 offer a comprehensive review of the bibliography, to which add the important discussion in Bowie (2008) 133–136. Existing treatments generally concern themselves either with the question of whether Kerykides should be understood as an actual individual and contemporary of Archilochus, or with the presence of fable as a characteristic element of Ionian *iambos*.

2 See Lissarrague (1997) and (2000) and Brijder (1988).

Archilochus vs. Kerykides; Performative Rivals

My reading of the poem begins with the question that other treatments of the work pose: who is Kerykides, whom, following Ewen Bowie's recent discussion,³ I regard as a real-world individual (although one probably not present at the event), and what is the nature of the antagonism between him and the author of the attack? As I argue, in these opening lines Archilochus announces a relationship of rivalry—political, aesthetic/performative, and sexual all—with his addressee that both locates Kerykides as an (erstwhile) equal and co-symposiast and suggests the element of imposture in his assumption of that status. The larger purpose of this frame, which follows the conventions visible in other iambic poetry whose authors use fables to mount their attacks, is not just to mock the speaker's victim, but also to prepare the way for the motif that the *ainos* more fully explores: like monkeys, and fat dancers too, Kerykides is simultaneously homologous self and other, a replica and distortion of the authentic and more properly aristocratic article.

Commentators past and present agree as to the social implications of the patronymic Kerykides, prominently positioned at the end of the opening line,⁴ in seventh-century Paros: one reader calls the designation 'quasi-epic', and others find it appropriate for an historical noble, the scion of an elite family, a military chief, a fellow aristocrat or political rival.⁵ The very use of the patronymic, which bespeaks a hereditary and quasi-sacred calling, demarcates Kerykides as one of a select company in Paros' political and religious life. A dedicatory inscription from late-sixth-century Thasos records the fact that an individual who held the highest office, that of archon, in both Paros and Thasos also 'performed many missions as messenger among other peoples on behalf of his

3 Bowie (2008) 133–136.

4 The emphatic use of the target's name at the opening of the composition is entirely consistent with the pattern found in other iambic attacks that use fables as vehicles of mockery; see, most famously, the address to Lykambes at the opening of Archil. fr. 172 w. (with Hawkins [2008] 97–99). Commentators plausibly suggest that fr. 168 w., which overlaps so closely with the opening lines of fr. 185, would have continued with an *ainos*: 'Charilaus, son of Erasmon, much the dearest of my companions, I will tell you something funny (γελῶν) and you will delight in hearing it' (see Zanetto [2001] 69 for this). For the pun implicit in the name and patronymic, see Philipiddes (2009) 15–16; this article appeared after the Delphi conference where my analysis was presented, and I hope adequately to have noted areas of agreement and divergence in our accounts. Note too Ar. *Vesp.* 1400 and Callim. *Ia.* 4.1 for imitations of this archaic iambic practice.

5 Archibald (1902) lxxxix; Pouilloux (1964) 12; Lasserre (1984) 76; Adrados (1993) 3.

city' (*CEG* 416 = *IG XII* suppl. 412).⁶ And in Athens, the highly prestigious *genos* Kerykes supplied the *dadouchos* who served at the rites of Demeter at Eleusis;⁷ since the worship of Demeter on Paros and Thasos (of which more later on) is well attested already for the archaic period, it seems plausible that Kerykides' family might also have provided personnel for those rites.

In fr. 185, the name Kerykides does more than position this individual at the social apex. The larger point of the first two lines is the implicit pun and evident parallelism between 'Son of Herald/Messenger' and the *skutalê* or message stick.⁸ As Stephanie West argues, readers have been misled by later sources' focus on the object's use as a cryptographic device, evidence for which long postdates Archilochus. Instead, its foremost meaning is that of a staff or baton, 'part of an official messenger's equipment', the function of the object in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* 991, where it equips the Spartan *kêrux*.⁹ Moreover, it supplies an authenticating device,¹⁰ confirming that the herald comes in his official capacity and that the message that he carries/issues is genuine and officially sanctioned. Indeed, as Thucydides makes clear,¹¹ the staff not merely equips its carrier, but is indispensable to his function: when negotiations between hostile parties broke down, 'the essential thing at such

6 I owe this reference to Bowie (2008) 136.

7 Members of the Athenian *genos* are also visible in the cult of Apollo on Delos and at the Lenaea; in the fifth century, it had among its numbers a family that included both the super rich Kallias and his grandson of the same name, a general, ambassador and patron of many of the leading intellectuals of the time. For details, see Parker (1996) 302.

8 The following discussion of the nature of that pun and the relationship that it supposes between the poetic ego and Kerykides necessarily depends on an uncertain reading in the manuscripts: while the most recent editor of the poem and some earlier discussions take *skutalê* as a nominative (so Gerber [1999] 201; see too the discussion in S. West [1988] 47), making the stick a figure for the speaker's own person, Bowie (2008) and several others prefer to read it as a vocative, in which case it would apply to Kerykides. Most recently, Philippides (2009) 14–16 revisits the debate, and argues for the vocative. For a further alternative see n. 40. At the risk of making a circular argument, I opt for the first account, both because this seems to work best with the remainder of the mockery and because it conforms to the dynamic of rivalry integral to this and other iambic compositions.

9 West (1988) 43.

10 West (1988) 44.

11 See particularly 1.53.1, where the historian remarks of the Corinthians' 'unofficial' embassy, 'they decided to embark men on a skiff and send them to the Athenians without a herald's staff ... and make trial of what they had intended'. For discussion of this and other relevant passages, see Drew Griffith (2008) 182.

moments was the *κηρύκειον*;¹² the presence of the herald followed on for no more reason than that the baton required a bearer.

With this opening phrase, Archilochus sets up a close but skewed bond between the speaker and his interlocutor: the poet has appropriated the now personified accessory from the individual to whom, following his name, it stands in metonymic relation, and, in a self-authorizing and message-authenticating gesture, makes himself *qua* stick spokesman of the communiqué that Kerykides should properly deliver in his own voice. In this sorcerer's apprentice-type scenario, the normally silent stick will go on to turn against its customary bearer, telling a story calculated to dismantle its target's self-construction and public image, and to demonstrate Kerykides' unfitness for the status and role seemingly announced by the opening patronymic.¹³ As West also acutely notes, Archilochus' choice to identify himself as message stick allows the speaker to distance himself from his mockery: he is only the reluctant (hence 'grieving'; see below) conduit for rather than author of his critique. Not only does this serve as a self-exculpatory gesture on the poet's part (and such placatory remarks are entirely typical of archaic fable tellers; cf. Hesiod, *Works and Days* 202), but, I would add, it makes the mockery still worse. What the *ainos* delivered by the stick goes on to articulate is not an individual attack, but a general, collective and even 'official' view, and one that, to boot, is broadcast loud and clear: from Homer on, to be a herald requires a powerful voice.¹⁴

But perhaps this is to take too naive a view of the *skutalê*. In Bowie's rich account,¹⁵ when the stick is read together with the monkey's buttocks that conclude the poem, and with Aristophanes' redeployment of Archilochus' closing extant line for a joke about anal penetration,¹⁶ it takes on the distinctly

12 Drew Griffith (2008) 183.

13 The attack that Archilochus launches belongs, moreover, in a time-honoured (and epic) tradition of mockery among peers: typical of 'flying' exchanges between Homeric heroes on the battlefield is the suggestion that the object of rebuke is unworthy of his exalted paternal heritage (e.g. *Il.* 4.399–400). Conversely, parentage can also be a source of mockery and abuse at the symposium; see Anacr. *PMG* 388.11 and Soph. *OT* 779–780.

14 See, for example, *Il.* 2.50, Arist. *Pol.* 132b8, Cic. *Fam.* 5.12.8. Note, too, how in the image comparing his chorus-leader to a *skutalê* at *Ol.* 6.90–91, discussed below, Pindar continues the evocation of the messenger when he then designates Aineas a 'mixing bowl of loud-sounding (ἀγαφθέγκτων) songs'.

15 Bowie (2008) 134–136.

16 *Ach.* 119–121: ὦ θερμόβουλον πρωκτὸν ἐξυρημένε. / τοιόνδε δ', ὦ πίθηκε, τὸν πάγων ἔχων / εὐνοῦχος ἡμῖν ἦλθες ἐσκευασμένος; 'O man with his hot-desiring arsehole shaved, and do you monkey, with a beard like yours ...' (trans. Sommerstein).

off-colour connotations so very much at home in the sympotic space. At Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* 991, the *skutalê* alludes not just to the baton that Spartan heralds regularly carry, but in a visible double-entendre, to this messenger's painfully erect phallos. A scholion to Thucydides (1.53.1 Hude) confirms that the staff or *κηρύκειον* was by definition 'upright': the commentator glosses it as 'a straight piece of wood' (ξύλον ὀρθόν).¹⁷ Assuming the presence of this sexual innuendo in Archilochus, though it is fully exploited only at the composition's end, the poet's mockery takes on a sharper edge. Since the 'stick' that the speaker claims for his own person more properly belongs to Kerykides, then Archilochus—in a typical iambic and literary/agonistic move that Hipponax also uses against Boupalos, and Aristophanes replicates in his mockery of Cratinus¹⁸—impugns his target's manhood, appropriating the very symbol of his virility.¹⁹

But there is more to the *skutalê* than just this typically sympotic word play; also consistent with a milieu that privileged displays of wit in the form of verbal and visual *griphoi*,²⁰ and of *eikones* too, that game of comparisons in which the performer compared himself and others to some object or, typically, animal, the baton motif both presages the figure of the monkey soon to follow and comes accompanied by a term whose correct meaning will only be revealed in the song's concluding portion. Note that Archilochus designates the animal of the *ainos* a *pithêkos*, one among the several varieties of apes that appear in later discussions of the different simians known to the Greeks. Aristotle (*HA* 502a–b) divides apes into three kinds, *pithêkoi* (Barbary apes, probably familiar to the Greeks from contacts with Phoenician traders and evidence for whose use as pets is apparent from the classical period on), *kêboi* (long-tailed monkeys) and *kunocephaloi* (baboons). What chiefly distinguished *pithêkoi* was their lack of tail. Jeffrey Henderson has amply documented the obscene meaning of *kerkos*, 'tail', in the ancient sexual vocabulary and its role as a symbol for the phallos;²¹ although his sources postdate archaic *iambos*, Archilochus' extant fragments, too, contain many instances of expressions that carry such double and sexually-

17 Cited in Drew Griffiths (2008) 182 who notes how the characterization conforms to visual representations of the herald's staff, and the caduceus of Hermes. Cf. too, Pi. *Ol.* 6.90–91, on which more below.

18 See Rosen (1988) 39 on Hippon. fr. 86 w., and Ar. *Eq.* 526–536, with Hawkins (2008) 104–105.

19 The link between messengers and virility is visible in the form of the message-bearing, phallic herms supposedly set up by Peisistratus in sixth-century Athens.

20 See Neer (2002) 15, 46, 62–63 for these.

21 Henderson (1991) 20, 87, 128, 177.

loaded meanings (e.g. fr. 42, 44, 119, 188 and 189 w.). Of course, then, Kerykides must be a *pithêkos*: deprived of his *skutalê*, he has, inevitably, lost his 'tail'.²²

Nor is this quite the end to the joke. We can read the adjective used of the stick, 'grieving', as Archilochus' self-exonerating and mock declaration of his unwillingness to deliver his unwelcome message, or, understanding the expression in the objective sense, as an anticipation of the misery that his song will cause Kerykides.²³ But the sexual implications of the co-presence of the *skutalê* and rump invest ἀχθυμένη with its own iambic sting. Since, as I go on to detail, the monkey plainly serves as a cipher for Kerykides, the fox's reference to his victim's buttocks implicitly invites the audience (retrospectively) to focus their attention on the corresponding portion of the addressee's anatomy.²⁴ As visual and verbal accounts make clear,²⁵ simian posteriors are notoriously misshapen or even missing, and we might assume a similar deficiency (real, or merely as one element of the poet's mockery) on Kerykides' part. Read this way, the enigma posed by ἀχθυμένη is belatedly and amusingly resolved for a puzzled audience: just like the baton belonging to the *Lysistrata* herald, Archilochus' *skutalê* is 'pained' because, were it to seek out Kerykides in an erotic capacity (with all the relations of subordination that the latter's position as *eromenos* necessarily involves), it too would be bound to remain painfully

22 It is tempting to see the first element in *Kerykides* as also gesturing towards this 'tail' element, and an additional way in which an individual's name (or, in some instance, moniker) can generate the joke that follows. The same monkey/phallos pun probably underpins the myth of the roguish Kerkopes' theft of Heracles' bow, a story, our ancient commentators claim, familiar to Archilochus and already visible in his fr. 178 w. (the myth then reappears in Cratinus' *Archilochoi*, fr. 13 Kassel-Austin, further suggesting a link between the iambic poet and the story); not only does the brothers' encounter with Heracles feature the same set of elements—trapping, buttocks, genitals, and ridicule—as the Epode, but, in sources from the fourth century on, the Kerkopes, whose name means 'Tail-face', are transformed into *pithêkoi*. The joke becomes particularly pronounced on a fourth-century Lucanian pelike (Malibu, the J. Paul Getty Museum 81.AE.189) which displays the two brothers, characteristically hanging upside down from the pole carried by Heracles, both endowed with outsized genitalia; one of the two additionally has the face of a monkey; for discussion of the image and play on *kerkos* in the representation of the simian-faced brother on the vase, see Walsh (2009) 179 with his figs. 62a–c.

23 Philippiades (2009) 16 argues for this last implication.

24 Bowie (2008) 134, observing how frequently in later Attic comedy and political rhetoric an allusion to the πυνή serves to brand an individual with the charge of pathic homosexuality, suggests that Archilochus anticipates that slander here, and directs the same imputation at his target.

25 So already in Semon. fr. 7.76 w. and Arist. *PA* 689b30–35; see further sections 2 and 3 below.

upright.²⁶ Compounding ‘Herald’s Son’s’ failure to fulfill his messenger’s role is, then, his inadequacy *qua* partner in the humiliating sexual encounter projected here.²⁷

One further aspect of the polysemous *skutalê* looks to this notion of a partnership *manqué* or gone awry. Several ancient sources cite the baton’s use as a *sumbolon*, an object that could be split in two and, on being reassembled, would confirm the transactions and alliances between the individuals whose relations it physically instantiated.²⁸ When Pindar uses the message-stick image at *Olympian* 6.90–91, where he styles the chorus trainer Aineas an ‘upright messenger (ἄγγελος ὀρθός),’²⁹ a *skutalê* of the fair-haired Muses’, the conceit signals both Aineas’ role as the wholly accurate deliverer of Pindar’s composition and the exact ‘fit’ or homology between the encomiast and his co-worker:³⁰ so perfectly matched are they that one can stand in for the other and Aineas lead the chorus in Pindar’s absence. Archilochus’ self-characterization as *skutalê* suggests the reverse dynamic, even a falling out between those who once were fellow-symposiasts and perhaps sworn *hetairoi* in the drinking group.³¹ Far

26 Such self-mockery, particularly of a sexual kind, is entirely at home in Ionian *iambos* (note Archilochus’ famous Cologne Epode, fr. 196a w., with its closing suggestion of *coitus interruptus*). See Hedreen (2006) 294–298 for detailed discussion of the point, with additional evidence from Hipponax.

27 It is not inconceivable that the poetic ego suggests that some such erotic relationship did exist between him and his speaker; perhaps a sexual as well as political fallout or betrayal would then lie behind the attack.

28 West (1988) 44–45.

29 Here we have a play on the ‘straight/upright’ character of the baton, whose physical aspect forms a piece with the veridical and ethically correct nature of the messenger and his speech. Philippides (2009) 19 calls attention to the adjective in the context of a very different argument.

30 Here I somewhat modify the acute reading of the image in Carne-Ross (1979) 34. I would further suggest a consciousness of the iambic precedent in Pindar (as also argued by Philippides [2009] 18–20 on grounds different from those mentioned here). The poet introduces the image just after declaring that he and Aineas ‘flee the ὄνειδος, “Boeotian pig”’, presumably a standard piece of invective, and then goes on to equate Aineas with a sympotic krater, the centerpiece in the sympotic space where such iambic mockery would be performed.

31 In more explicit fashion, the Lykambes Epode (fr. 172–181 w.) attacks its victim for a violation of an earlier pact of friendship, or, in the reading of Bowie (2008) 137–141, Lykambes’ betrayal of a political alliance between the speaker and his addressee. The motif of treachery between friends is a theme entirely typical of sympotic poetry; for this in Theognis, see Donlan (1985); Alcaeus fr. 129 v. explicitly addresses Pittacus’ violation of the oath of alliance that he swore, quite possibly in the context of the symposium where such

from existing in the relations of equivalence that the bi-partite message stick normally affirms,³² Kerykides' shortcomings, whether anatomical or heraldic, signal his incapacity to supply the requisite matching portion, to measure up.

Why then this fine-tuned demonstration of Kerykides' deficiencies in these several and interrelated spheres? While sexual ribbing is thoroughly at home at the symposium,³³ and the iambic poet's construction of relations of symmetry and rivalry with his sparring partner are very much a hallmark of the genre,³⁴ Archilochus' focus on the public status that his victim's name articulates takes this sympotic confrontation out of the confines of the dining room and projects it into the more civic domain. What motivates this song, I suggest, is an ongoing political *agôn* between Kerykides and the poet, with the role of public herald as the sticking point between them.³⁵ As noted earlier, heralds figure prominently in rites celebrated on behalf of Demeter, and both Archilochus' poetry and the *Vita* record the link between the iambographer and his family and the Demeter cult on Paros and Thasos. Intriguing in this regard is a phrase in the Mnesiepes inscription (*SEG* XV 517), which describes the poet's scandalous introduction of 'something too iambic' for performance at a local festival. As Diskin Clay observes, the words *κεχοσμημέ*[ν- and *κή*]ρυκος in the inscription's lines 24–25 could either suggest a herald in festival attire come to announce the new mode of worship that Archilochus was to initiate or describe the poet's appearance in herald's dress.³⁶ This second scenario seems better to fit the context: presenting himself in the official capacity which properly belonged to him, Archilochus would be claiming the impunity that heralds enjoyed so as safely to perform his innovatory and risqué song.³⁷

pledges were exchanged, while fr. 70 v. paints the poet's political opponent as a symposiast, and so as a double of the performer of the current composition.

32 Note Kinesias' response at Ar. *Lys.* 992–993 for another declaration of homogeneity as demonstrated by the *skutalê*. Because he too has just such a baton/phallos as the Spartan messenger, he is already 'in the know' concerning the communication that the Spartan brings.

33 Cf. Hippon. fr. 30.1 w.

34 For this see Steiner (2009a).

35 Here I build on Bowie (2008) 136. His reading does not, however, include the possibility of a stylized element to this rivalry so as to bring it in line with the stereotypical interactions between iambographers and their *echthroi*. It is entirely possible to imagine a blend of reality and fiction here, in which the suggestive name of a fellow Parian aristocrat and contemporary political feuding serve as the starting point for Archilochus' witty construct.

36 Clay (2004) 17.

37 Note, however, that, according to the *testimonia*, the costume failed to protect its wearer, who was indeed punished for his composition.

Clay's discussion notes in passing a striking 'follow up' to Archilochus' heraldic self-fashioning as the inscription records it:³⁸ when attempting to persuade his fellow Athenians to resume an unpopular war with Salamis, and so as to escape prosecution from the current law explicitly prohibiting this type of speech, Solon presented himself in herald's guise (αὐτὸς κήρυξ ἦλθον, 'I have, in person, come as a herald') to deliver his song of martial exhortation (fr. 1–3 w.). But Archilochus fr. 185 w. offers a no less compelling precedent than the incident reported in the Mnesiepes inscription for Solon's performance here. Not only, like his Parian predecessor, does the Athenian poet-politician replace the herald's usual speech in prose for one in verse (ὠιδὴν ἀντ' ἀγορῆς θέμενος, 'composing song instead of speech', fr. 1.2), but analogous, too, is his re-staging of a properly political message in what seems likely to be a sympotic context where, in keeping with the role-playing that went on at that site, the symposiast might even have dressed the part and engaged in an impromptu performance,³⁹ baton and all.⁴⁰ Like Archilochus too, the Solonian singer could plausibly expect that his message, invested with all the public warrant and truth-content that defines heraldic discourse, would travel beyond the present audience and reverberate in the civic world outside.

In every respect then, Kerykides is positioned as the poet's double, an alter ego who turns out imperfectly to mirror, or in sexual terms, to 'fit' the original. It is this near, but not-quite-exact homology that in part motivates the fable's simian motif as Archilochus taps into a notion that would prove ubiquitous in Greco-Roman culture: the monkey as the animal that, more than any other, most closely 'apes' men, supplying an almost perfect, but ultimately inauthentic and incomplete, imitation of the original. So a fragment of Phrynichus styles flatterers and illegitimate offspring—the ones posing as friends, the others as true-born citizens—'monkeys' (πιθήκους, fr. 21 Kassel-Austin; the term is also regularly used in Attic comedy of sycophants and parvenus), while Plutarch similarly likens the flatterer's imitation of the conduct of a friend to

38 Clay (2004) 17, but without additional discussion.

39 Bowie (1986) 18–21 argues most strongly for a sympotic setting; for a discussion and review of the different possible positions on the question, see Noussia-Fantuzzi (2010) 205 and Steiner (2014) 3, where I also argue for the sympotic and iambic character of fr. 1–3 w.

40 In a third suggestion concerning the problem of the case of ἀχνημένη σκυτάλη (see n. 8 above and the review of alternatives in Philippides [2009] 14), some editors have taken it as a dative, and supposed that Archilochus delivered his message *with* a message stick; the nominative reading given here preserves that possibility if we assume a more dramatic-type performance of the song complete with props.

the behaviour of a monkey (*Moralia* 52b, 64e).⁴¹ For Lucian, telling an anecdote that features dancing monkeys (*Piscator* 36),⁴² the animals are the most prone to imitate (μιμηλότατα) men, and in a note on the passage in Plato's *Republic* where Thersites is described as putting on the soul of a *pithêkos* in the afterlife (620c), Proclus builds on this long tradition when he observes that the ape soul that Thersites assumes stands for the life of the imitator (*In Platonis Timaeum commentarii* 329d).⁴³ The act of betrayal integral to the imposture that the monkey practices, and the heinous deed of violating the sworn bond of *hetaireia* which typically motivates an iambic attack and may be operative here, is a second prompt for the entrance of the monkey: in a characterization of the Kerkopes as 'deceptive rogues' (ἀπατηλοί πανούργοι), Semonides goes on to remark that 'monkey business (κερκωπία) is deception' (fr. 34 w.).

The *ainos* and Its Sympotic Frame

With this by way of preface, Archilochus goes on to narrate the fable promised in the opening lines. In discussing the story, I first map its several protagonists onto the individuals named in the incipit, and then highlight the meta-sympotic language that the fable includes, anchoring it to the occasion and to the concerns typical to that institution; the fable's sympotic commentary, I further suggest, functions much like the vocabulary deployed in the opening lines, uniting the events in the dining hall with affairs in the political arena.

With the later Aesopic version of the *ainos* at hand,⁴⁴ unscrambling the lacunose story isn't hard: the ape stands for Kerykides, the fox for Archilochus,

41 The scholia to Pind. *Pyth.* 2.72 cited below (schol. 2.131b, 132c–f Drachmann) identify the 'monkey' here as Bacchylides, whom Pindar would be casting as his failed imitator and even 'plagiarist' (for this, see Bowra [1937] 9–21).

42 Here costumed apes performing the sword dance all but dupe their viewers into thinking the dancers human; the imposture is only revealed when the audience throws nuts on the stage and the monkeys display their real nature by rushing to the food. This 'imitative dancing', as well as the promise of extra rations, are themes that I take up in section 2.

43 For the mimetic monkey, see further the plentiful examples cited in the discussions in Bowra (1937) 10–11, Connors (2004), Lilja (1980) and Luria (1930).

44 ἐν συνόδῳ τῶν ἀλόγων ζώων πίθηκος ὀρχησάνεμος καὶ εὐδοκιμήσας βασιλεὺς ὑπ' αὐτῶν ἐχειροτονήθη, ἀλώπηξ δ' αὐτῷ φθονήσασα ὡς ἐθεάσατο ἔν τινι πάγῃ κρέας κείμενον, ἀγαγοῦσα αὐτὸν ἔλεγεν ὡς εὐροῦσα θησαυρὸν αὐτῇ μὲν οὐκ ἐχρήσατο, γέρας δὲ αὐτῷ τῆς βασιλείας τετήρηκε, καὶ παρῆινει αὐτῷ λαμβάνειν. τοῦ δὲ ἀμελήτως ἐπιόντος καὶ ὑπὸ τῆς παγίδος συλληφθέντος, αἰτιωμένου τε τὴν ἀλώπεκα ὡς ἐνεδρεύσασαν αὐτῷ, ἐκείνη ἔφη "ὦ πίθηκε, σὺ δὲ τοιαύτην πυγὴν ἔχων τῶν ἀλόγων ζώων βασιλεύεις;" 'In a gathering of irrational beasts a monkey was elected

and the rest of the animals who cast their votes figure the larger audience at the performance.⁴⁵ The monkey's double trajectory, first up, then down, closely corresponds to that of Kerykides, at least as the poem presents him. Matching Archilochus' initial acknowledgment of his interlocutor's high public status is the acclaim that the witnesses to the monkey's dancing grant the beast, and its subsequent election as king. The wooden trap into which the unwary ape later falls illustrates the way in which the two-faced and superficially entertaining *ainos*—a term cognate with *ainigma* and *ainissomai*,⁴⁶ and which trap-like conceals its true nature or underlying meaning beneath a pleasing covering—will similarly ensnare its gullible victim and deliver its painful correction.⁴⁷ The fox's parting jibe also matches the fable frame: just as Kerykides' lack of *skutalê* indicates the element of imposture/inadequacy in his claim to herald's status, so the monkey's lack of rump proves the decisive element in the revelation that this monkey king has, as it were, no clothes.

Nor does the larger audience (as typically in archaic fables, which may address themselves to multiple interlocutors) get off scot-free. If the animals that elect the monkey after its display of dancing skills stand in for the broader sympotic group, then the 'king's' unmasking simultaneously reveals these individuals' failure of judgment—they too have rated Kerykides too highly both at the symposium and in civic affairs where they have allowed him to serve as herald.⁴⁸ Elsewhere too, in Pindar's second *Pythian*, a monkey brings about the same aesthetic-cum-ethical confusion and exposure on the part of a group of auditors, and this in a composition in which, as I have argued elsewhere,

king by them after dancing and thus gaining distinction. A fox became jealous of him, and when she saw a piece of meat lying in a trap, she took him there and told him that she had found a treasure, but instead of using it herself had kept it as a prerogative of prestige for him as king, and she urged him to take it. He approached it thoughtlessly and was caught in a trap, and when he accused the fox of having ambushed him, she said, "Monkey, with buttocks like that are you really going to be king of the irrational beasts?" (Aesop 81 Perry).

45 Van Dijk (1997) 146–147.

46 See Nagy (1999²) 240 for this.

47 Babrius' reworking of this fable's motif for another story (130) appears to integrate the *skutalê* of Archilochus' incipit into the body of the fable itself; in this instance *σκυτάλιον* is the term used for the 'trigger' that, when jogged, releases the trap. In the light of the earlier discussion of the monkey's buttocks, it is also intriguing that in Babrius' tale the victim knocks against the trigger when he is 'bent forward' (*προσκούψας*) over the trap.

48 As Bowie (2008) 134 suggests, the term *ἄλγοι* preserved in the Aesopic fable most probably also belonged to the song's lost final line (which would be required by the metre), allowing the audience more easily to connect the world of the beasts with their own.

Archilochus and his poetry of invective-and-*ainoi* form a leitmotif.⁴⁹ Distinguishing his patron Hieron from those listeners who fail to give the poet's ode the reception that its aesthetic merits warrant,⁵⁰ Pindar contrasts his *laudandus* with individuals who 'don't get it'; they are figured as children captivated by the charms of a monkey: 'Pretty is the ape in the eyes of children, always pretty' (καλός τοι πίθων παρὰ παισίν, αἶει καλός, *Pyth.* 2.72). Again it is the failure to discern the monkey's signature ugliness, and this within the context of passing aesthetic judgment, that indicates a larger flawed taste and want of mental wherewithal.

The fox—the Archilochean cipher both here and in the Lykambes Epode, and the wily-minded animal that the iambographer seems to view as particularly apt for projecting his poetic persona⁵¹—is the obvious star and victor in the tale, the one which displays the πυκνόν ... νόον in the encounter. Promoting this identification is the fact that the fox's triumph depends not just on the mechanical trap, but on those verbal powers of flattery, enticement and mockery that the song's frame has just put on display on its performer's part. Part of the poet-fox's acumen also lies in knowing his victim; in keeping with a characterization apparent already in Sumerian and other Near Eastern sources which feature the ape,⁵² the monkey is a byword for stupidity and so eminently likely to fall for the ruse. And if, as several sources suggest, the poetry of mockery involves at least some portion (or impression) of an impromptu performance, then the *bon mot* with which the fable ends, and which fr. 187 w. most probably preserves, would supply an instance of the fox's ability to produce *ex tempore* exactly what the situation requires, a fitting counterpart to the singer's on-the-spot choice of an *ainos* so eminently suited to his target.

Over and above these parallels are the affinities between events in the fable and the performative setting, symmetries that make the tale so effective a commentary on the current situation. If we use the Aesopic *ainos* to reconstruct Archilochus' piece, the story opens at what is styled a σύνοδος, a gathering where, having witnessed a performance by the dancing monkey, those present at the event go on to elect him king. For those attending the symposium, the

49 See Steiner (2011) 244–245 and Most (1985) 122–123, 126–127; Brown (2006) offers a detailed discussion of the centrality of Archilochus and the language of invective in the composition.

50 Here I follow the interpretation of Most (1985) 103–105.

51 Note, too, fr. 201 w.; on the Archilochean fox, see Steiner (2010) with earlier bibliography cited there, and Kurke (2011), esp. 154–156 and 225–259.

52 For these, see the material gathered in Dunham (1985).

match between this beginning and their own position would be clear. They too had come together for an occasion that Solon fr. 4.22 w. designates a *σύνοδος*, and just as some kind of dancing contest seems to occur in the *ainos* (hence the choice of a winner by vote; intriguingly at Aristophanes *Vespae* 855, ἀρυστίχοι, jugs for drawing wine, also serve as voting jars, suggesting an analogous correspondence between the sympotic and political/judicial domains), so too the symposium hosts informally competitive performances of speeches, songs and dance.⁵³

Following these other points of overlap, the capers performed by the monkey would then offer a derisive counterpart to the entertainment supplied by Kerykides in his bid for his fellow diners' accolades, one subsequently 'capped' by the poet's psogic *réplique*-cum-correction to another symposiast's ill-judged (and this in both senses) self-display. There is nothing implausible in the notion that 'Herald's Son' might actually have danced before the company, and that his inept (according to Archilochus' representation) performance would have occurred within an informally competitive frame. The eighth-century Dipylon oinochoe, whose single extant hexameter line reads 'whoever of the dancers now dances most lightly' (a declaration that could plausibly have concluded 'he will get me as his prize'), would have been awarded to the victor in a dancing contest. Not only is the prize-object itself very well suited to commemorating an occasion that featured convivial drinking, but if the inscription (whose meter and diction are impeccably Homeric) refers to *Odyssey* 8.248–249, where Alcinous summons the young Phaeacians to dance by way of diversion at a banquet, then it more narrowly locates the wine jug at the sympotic occasion. In one reconstruction, the oinochoe would even have supplied the host of the private event with an improvised prize to give to a particularly skilled guest.⁵⁴

According to several sympotic poets and other later sources too, solo dancing not only regularly occurred in the dining hall, but, on some occasions at least, existed in close proximity to the type of ribald, mocking discourse delivered by the iambographer here. Ion of Chios combines the different modes in fr. 27.7–8 w. ('let us drink, let us play (παίζωμεν), let the song go through the night. Let someone dance; willingly begin the gaiety'); the 'play' (παίζειν)

53 The designation of one of the symposiasts as 'king', *basileus*, is also suggestive, although the term designates the symposiarch only in post-classical sources. Note, however, *Adesp. eleg.* 27.9 w. with its exhortation to obey the ποταρχοῦντος. See too Murray (1983) 260, and, for titles used of the symposiarch, Man in *RE* IV (1900) 612–613.

54 Robb (1994) 32.

cited here, other authors affirm,⁵⁵ encompasses precisely the jokes, teasing and debunking that Kerykides' contribution then elicits from Archilochus.⁵⁶ In Aristophanes' account of the symposium gone awry in his *Wasps*, the inebriated Philocleon, wholly failing to observe his son's recommendations concerning polite dinner party conversation and the singing of witty drinking songs, jumps up from his couch and mocks and jeers at the other guests (κατεγέλα, 1305) while 'prancing about' (ἔσκιρτα, 1305); his jesting includes an insulting *eikōn* and a barrage of 'rustic joking' (σκώπτων ἀγροίκως, 1320).

Further sources attest that dancing which breached the standards of sympotic decorum also occurred in the *andrōn*, and this on the part of symposiasts as well as the hired entertainers treated at my discussion's end. In Herodotus' well-known account (6.126–130, esp. 129.3–5), Hippokleides' unmannerly dance and literal self-exposure at Cleisthenes' dinner party (in the context of a larger competition that involved athletics and dining etiquette) prompt not just a piece of verbal wit and censure on the part of the outraged host—the youth, Cleisthenes famously remarks, has 'danced away his marriage'—but also that dancer's expulsion from the sympotic-cum-agonistic space.⁵⁷ A scene from Xenophon's *Symposium* sets against the lovely movements of a beautiful young boy the parodic performance of the hired buffoon and *aklētōs* (the individual not actually invited to the dinner party), the Syracusan Philip. In Xenophon's account of the episode, 'At first, because the company had praised the way in which the boy's natural beauty seemed to be enhanced by the grace of his dance postures, Philip made a burlesque out of the performance by rendering every part of his body that was in motion more ridiculous than it naturally was' (2.22). As these and other episodes suggest, graceful and skillful dancing supplied a medium through which an individual at a symposium could

55 See Ar. *Ran.* 395 and *Adesp. eleg.* 27.4–6 w. The same verb can, in the context of *choreia*, signify dancing.

56 In a still earlier source, at the proto-sympotic dinner party hosted by Eumaeus in *Od.* 14, the disguised Odysseus tells a tale that Eumaeus subsequently designates an *ainos* (508) for the covert meaning that it contains; the hero narrates the story after a preface addressed to those whom he styles his *hetairoi* and in which he explains that wine is the catalyst for what he previews as a possibly indecorous anecdote; the same wine, he remarks, can set a man to dancing (463–467). There is also mockery in Odysseus' 'fable': Thoas becomes the dupe of the ruse devised by the Odysseus-figure whom the 'beggar' includes within the story.

57 In this instance, however, that derisive remark elicits a rejoinder from the supposedly disgraced and banished party, which, in Herodotus' notoriously slippery account, is the source of Hippokleides' future renown.

exhibit his overall bodily excellence and the *ethos* and *genos* with which that corporeal grace and condition(ing) formed a piece; as corollary to this, it was also an act that, performed by an inebriated and/or low-class individual, could turn into a tasteless and ridiculous display, a revelation of the performer's base nature.⁵⁸

Read against these accounts of ungainly and burlesque dancing, fresh motives for Archilochus' choice of a monkey fable become evident. As Aelian attests, *ῥιθῆκοι* are ready to dance if they see a man dancing' (*De natura animalium* 17.25), and both the visual evidence considered in section 3 below and two other Aesopic fables (83 and 463 Perry) bear out the observation. The equation of Kerykides with the dancing ape also illuminates the fox's parting shot, rendering the applause that the audience gave the dancer still more ill-timed. While misshaped or deficient buttocks may be nothing more than a signature element in the animal's notorious ugliness, in Semonides' visualization of the monkey that particular feature forms a piece with the ape woman's awkward and risible manner of moving her body (fr. 7.73–77 W.).⁵⁹ More than just gesturing towards the ungainly steps that Kerykides would have executed, the closing focus on the rump may also retrospectively suggest the type of dance that Archilochus (damagingly) invites his listeners to impute to his target, whether or not it corresponds to the mode in which the dancer actually performed. Is the poet perhaps suggesting that the symposiast tried to do the *kordax* (also associated with the 'fat-dancers' discussed later on), a lewd and vulgar dance in which the performer sticks out and wiggles his buttocks and that, according to Theophrastus, only the shameless man would perform in a state of sobriety

58 For a particularly strong statement of this, see Pl. *Leg.* 654a9–b1. Note too Plut. *Lyk.* 28.4 with the description of how Helots would be introduced into the *syssitia* where they would be made to perform 'dances that were ignoble and risible' by way of negative exempla for the Spartan youths.

59 αἴσχιστα μὲν πρόσωπα· τοιαύτη γυνή / εἰσιν δι' ἅσ τεος πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις γέλως / ἐπ' αὐχένα βραχέα· κινεῖται μόγις / ἄπυγος, αὐτόκωλος. ἃ τάλας ἀνὴρ / ὅστις κακὸν τοιοῦτον ἀγκαλίζειται. 'This one is absolutely the worst plague that Zeus has given to men. Her face is extremely ugly; such a woman is an object of laughter to everyone as she goes through the town. She is short of neck, moves with difficulty, has no rump and is all legs. Ah, pity the man who embraces such a plague'. Semonides' description has many points of overlap with the Homeric representation of Thersites, with his own deformed anatomy and awkward motion; for the Thersites-ape equation, see Pl. *Rep.* 620c, *Lycoph. Alex.* 1000. Ogden (1997) 40–41 suggests that a representation of the anthropomorphized ape on the handle of a Caeretan hydria treated in section 4 depicts Thersites; for discussion of this, see Walsh (2009) 46.

(*Characteres* 6.3)? And what could be more ridiculous than Kerykides attempting a dance for which, by virtue of his unlucky anatomy, he is singularly ill-equipped?

Several other sympotic offenses included within the Aesopic *ainos* and that may—although caution needs to be exercised here—have figured in the lost portions of Archilochus' fragmentary piece extend the suggestion of indecorous conduct. Consonant with the greed so regularly condemned by the iambographers, and by poets composing sympotic elegy and lyric too, is this monkey's eagerness for the choice portion of meat or *geras* that the fox claims to have set apart for it,⁶⁰ and the fact that this consumption, should it have occurred, would have gone on outside the collective space, in the 'back of beyond'; this is the detail that figures in fr. 185.4 w., where the monkey-fox encounter occurs. In the context of the *andrôn*, where, as vase representations show, commensal dining, egalitarian seating arrangements, and equal measures of wine and food are the order of the day, with no diner privileged above the rest, this monkey's wish to procure more than its initial share and to engage in solitary eating reveal its larger unfitness for inclusion in the group.⁶¹

If fr. 185–187 w. did incorporate details included in the larger *ainos*, then the meta-sympotic language of the fable would align Archilochus' attack on Kerykides with the more generalized practice visible in the iambic, lyric and elegiac repertoires: there conduct at the symposium repeatedly supplies an index, positive or negative, for elite behaviour in the civic-cum-political sphere and the condition of the polis at large. By virtue of the fable's choice of terms that do double duty and apply equally to the public and private space, the animals can emblemize both the diners who granted Kerykides first place in the *agôn* at the drinking party and the same Parian aristocrats who had a voice in awarding or sanctioning preeminence in political affairs; the mention of voting, the office of *basileus*, and the *geras* which, a phrase from Solon attests (fr. 5.1 w.), refers not only to the honorific portion of meat that the host bestows on a fellow symposiast, but, by extension, to political privilege too, all gesture towards this external domain. Evidence from archaic and classical Greece suggests that Kerykides could have parlayed his star turn at the symposium into primacy in politics: inscriptions from Miletus demonstrate that the Molpoi—

60 For greed as a topos in Ionian *iambos*, see particularly Archil. fr. 124 w. and Hippon. fr. 118 and 128 w. For discussion, see Miralles and Pòrtulas (1983) 34–35.

61 The charge of excessive appetites and a taste for solitary dining would be frequently reused by characters in Aristophanes in their attacks on contemporary politicians. And as the visual evidence also attests, the 'monoposiast' or symposiast who dines alone offers an image of the dinner party gone awry.

the elite group who sang, danced and officiated in honour of Apollo—occupied leading roles in the city's political hierarchy and supplied several among its chief magistrates (*Milet* 1.3 no. 122 and no. 133).⁶²

The purpose of Archilochus' finely-honed and *πυκνός* composition is, then, not just to display the artistry and mental acumen that the performance of Kerykides-the-monkey so plainly lacked, but to shame a rival by making him a laughing stock in a way that diminishes his civic standing (the explicit aim of the *ainos* in the Lykambes Epode, where, as fr. 172 w. asserts, the speaker makes his victim 'appear to the townspeople a source of much laughter', γέλως). Although the fable does not mention public mockery, the fox's words plainly invite ridicule, and the motif becomes explicit in the moral later appended to the Aesopic version of the fable.⁶³ The fate of Semonides' ape woman, who is deemed 'an object of laughter (γέλως) to everyone as she goes through the town', promotes the likelihood that public derision is the response that Archilochus intends for his victim; the same mocking laughter is directed against the (ape-like) Homeric Thersites (*Iliad* 2.270), the monkey in Babrius 56.5 and, in one version of the myth, the soon-to-be simian Kerkopes too.⁶⁴ All this by way of confirmation of what Catherine Connors succinctly remarks: 'calling a man a monkey is a strategy of precluding his social dignity and authority',⁶⁵ the attributes, I would add, that permit an individual to take his place in the co-extensive sympotic and political arenas.

The Visual Evidence

If Archilochus designs the *ainos* as a commentary on Kerykides' flaunting of upper class bodily decorum and dining ethics and his want of the necessary wherewithal for his self-styled role as 'Son of Herald', then the iambographer is not alone in featuring the ape as a choice site for articulating these critiques.

62 For the inscriptions, see Kowalzig (2004) 40 n. 2.

63 Οὕτως οἱ τοῖς πράγμασιν ἀπροσκέπτως ἐπιχειροῦντες ἐπὶ τῷ δυστυχεῖν καὶ γέλωτα ὀφλισκάνουσιν 'Thus those undertaking something without forethought bring ridicule upon themselves as well as misfortune'.

64 See *Lex.* Bekker 5 (Λέξεις ῥητορικαί) p. 1 271.13, Κέρκωψ ὁ ἐπὶ πονηρίαι [ἢς ἐπὶ νορίαι] κωμωιδούμενος. The desire publicly to shame his victim further explains Archilochus' choice to style himself *skutalē*: as noted earlier, like a herald, he performs an official, publicly-enacted communiqué that takes place within the (notional, as in Solon fr. 1 w.) civic space.

65 Connors (2004) 184.

Visual representations of the monkey from the archaic through to the classical period,⁶⁶ and these on articles expressly designed for sympotic use and/or integral to the lifestyle of the upper class symposiast, assign the animal a set of properties consonant with those privileged in Archilochus' fable and similarly exploit the elements of proximity and difference that inform the monkey's standing vis-à-vis an (elite) man.⁶⁷ Besides emphasizing the animal's signal ugliness, its contravention of normative standards of physical-cum-social decorum, and its status as outsider to the paradigmatic heroic world which the symposiasts view as most proximate to their own, artists show the monkey 'aping' the activities, frequently sympotic in character, proper to the high-class individuals handling the vessels and, by virtue of its simian body, necessarily distorting those practices and inadequately mirroring the aristocratic ideal. As my necessarily schematic review of the visual dossier also demonstrates, representations of simians on painted and molded vessels suggest several links between the apes and the fat dancers or komasts whom the concluding section further explores.

The first relevant item in William McDermott's very extensive catalogue is a work dated to the early seventh century, a Corinthian oinochoe (a typically sympotic vessel) featuring two sphinxes and an ape;⁶⁸ visible already here is not only the beast's characteristic mal-proportioned physique—its arms are much too thin—but also its embrace of behaviour that carries a social stigma: the

66 McDermott (1938) still offers the most comprehensive collection of the images; for a much briefer but more up to date discussion of some of the works, see the suggestive accounts of Lissarrague (1997) and (2000) and Brijder (1988); most recently, Walsh (2009) includes a very helpful analysis of the place of monkeys on vases that belong to the tradition of the mythological burlesque; his rich account coincides with my discussion by drawing attention to overlaps between komasts and monkeys (noted in passing at 109 and 352 n. 11), and includes much material which I have incorporated. While the bulk of the evidence that I present here dates to the sixth and fifth centuries, surveys of the visual corpus demonstrate a considerable continuity and overlap in the iconography and thematics of the earlier and later pieces, a coherence that makes the vessels from these later periods still relevant to Archilochus' composition. Note too that Archilochus' works would have been re-performed at symposia in Athens and elsewhere, and that fr. 185–187 w., as Aristophanes' 'citation' of the closing extant line in *Acharnians* attests, were among those very familiar to a late fifth-century Athenian audience.

67 Very apposite in this regard is a comment by Galen *Nat. Fac.* 1.22, who remarks that were an artist or sculptor seeking to parody a human hand in order to provoke laughter, he should take the ape's forepaw as his model.

68 McDermott (1938) no. 304.

ape squats,⁶⁹ adopting a posture associated with low-class individuals, slaves and craftsmen, or with satyrs and the padded dancers on the komast vases. Indeed, so close is the overlap between the squatting komast type and simians that some scholars designate a Middle Corinthian aryballos in the shape of a squatting, pot-bellied man with black dots on his front and sides a komast, while others describe the figure as a man dressed up as an ape.⁷⁰

A series of other representations from the archaic through the classical period imagines the monkey as equestrian, engaging in a pastime that is the preserve of the upper class, and awkwardly seated on a series of more or less conventional mounts. From the third quarter of the sixth century comes a plate in the Boeotian ‘orientalizing’ style, showing a monkey riding a lion;⁷¹ again, the deformations of human proportions are visible (the left hand lacks a thumb and the leg is reversed at the knee), while the monkey’s choice of animal, the exotic lion for the domesticated horse that Greek men ride, demonstrates the gap between simian and human mores. This last asymmetry is still more emphatic on a near contemporary black-figured kylix, its interior decorated with an ape perched on a horse.⁷² Everything about the monkey’s posture and appearance suggests the ridiculous, inept and transgressive nature of this would-be rider: again, the animal squats instead of sitting, it has positioned itself on the horse’s shoulders instead of its back, and, assuming that being ἄπυγος is already part of a familiar monkey typology, then the over-long arm that rests beneath the figure’s bottom calls attention to the all-but-missing feature. The finely executed horse highlights the ungainliness of the ape: its noble bearing and pleasing proportions suggest a mount more fitting for a hero or warrior than its simian rider. A Caeretan oinochoe of c. 500 presents a fresh variation on the theme:⁷³ a mounted soldier on the rump of whose horse a large-bodied ape squats, its knees drawn up, clutching the warrior’s shield with its forepaw. If, as one discussion suggests, ‘the ape is a caricature of the attendant of a mounted hoplite’,⁷⁴ then the monkey not only assumes a subordinate status, but it does so in a fashion that betrays how imperfectly

69 Compare the red-figure hydria in London (British Museum E171, *ARV*² 579, 87) discussed below; here too the monkey squats.

70 Amsterdam, Allard Pierson Museum 3402; for discussion, see Brijder (1983) 65 and fig. 7.

71 McDermott (1938) no. 315; Athens, National Archaeological Museum 12677.

72 McDermott (1938) no. 316; Athens, National Archaeological Museum 1054.

73 McDermott (1938) no. 318; see Walsh (2009) 45–48 for monkeys on Caeretan hydriai which, he suggests, following Bonaudo (2004) 20 and 28, were originally used in sympotic contexts.

74 Cited in McDermott (1938) 226.

it has interjected itself into the elitist sphere of equestrian warfare. One final example situates the burlesque in an Athenian context, giving it a possibly sharper political edge. On a red-figure cup in Vienna from the first half of the fifth century, a monkey is seated on a donkey in a patently Dionysiac and wine-fueled milieu;⁷⁵ David Walsh plausibly suggests a spoof on conventional scenes of young members of the cavalry setting out on their horses, and even of the annual inspection of the Athenian state cavalry, the so-called *dokimasia*.⁷⁶

Several other early vessels display images more immediately relevant to sympotic practices. A mid sixth-century artist fashions one side of a terracotta kantharos (Dionysus' drinking vessel of choice) into a monkey face with large perforated ears (fig. 5.1):⁷⁷ much in the manner of eye-cups used as drinking vessels and whose handles similarly function as 'ears', so this monkey face would impose itself onto the physiognomy of the individual who drained the vessel, transforming him into the smiling monkey for the amusement of his fellow diners.⁷⁸ In a similar spirit of mockery, a cup from the Villa Giulia dated to c. 520 offers two parodic visualizations of activities associated with the symposium and the *komos* that followed (figs 5.2a and b).⁷⁹ On one face, five monkeys are poised, knees bent and over-long arms extended, on a seesaw, attempting to maintain a precarious equilibrium (and perhaps simulating the sensation of drunkenness that the diner using the vessel might be experiencing; preserving one's balance in a series of equilibristic games, as Archilochus' fr. 2.5–6 w. already suggests, seems to have been a sympotic challenge, and one which the monkey on the far left, who is poised to fall, visibly cannot meet). The animal in the centre bends forward holding out a skyphos of exaggerated proportions, presumably filled with wine, while behind him another monkey brandishes a drinking horn, a vessel that regularly marks the uncouth drinker who lacks the greater dexterity required by the shallow wine cup. In his account

75 Archaeologische Sammlung der Universität 53a, ARV² 416, 9. See Padgett (2000) 63, fig. 2.6 and no. 65.

76 Walsh (2009) 52.

77 New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 74.51.369.

78 Note a second, albeit more remote, equation between monkeys and objects containing wine, this in the verbal rather than visual domain. While some ancient authors associate the name of Pithecussae (modern day Ischia) with the Kerkopes who were consigned to the island after being transformed into *pithêkoi*, others derive it from pithoi, amphora-like vessels regularly used to transport and store wine. For the sources, see Connors (2004) 186–187.

79 Rome, Villa Giulia, inv. 64224; *Paralipomena* 300. See further Lissarrague (1997) 463 and fig. 9, whose reading I follow here.

FIG. 5.1 *Terracotta kantharos with monkey face*
NEW YORK, METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, 74.51.369

of the image, Brijder suggests that the ape in the centre acts as the judge in the balancing competition, ready to award the skyphos to the winner of the (symptotic) *agôn*.⁸⁰ On the reverse face, a satyr seated on a rock plays the pipes while three goats caper in a chorus line on their hind legs. The drinking horn reappears on an askos in London, now clutched by a four-footed monkey positioned so as to face a second animal; as Lissarrague observes, the ape deploys the horn in just the manner of the fat dancers, for whom it is the

80 Brijder (1988).

FIG. 5.2A *Cup dated to circa 520*
ROME, VILLA GIULIA, INV. 64224; PARALIPOMENA 300

drinking vessel of choice throughout the visual repertoire.⁸¹ A series of figure vases reiterate the monkey's association with wine; a vessel in Oxford takes the shape of a monkey straining to lift an outsized bowl, and a second terracotta simian in New York, this one with its body similarly covered in the dots that indicate the hairy pelt and dated to c. 565–550, holds an amphora-like vessel in its elongated arms (fig. 5.3).⁸²

Monkeys have a fondness for food as well as drink (a craving for nuts causes the unmasking of some monkey dancers simulating men in another Aesopic fable, 463 Perry).⁸³ An oinochoe in Paris dated to the first part of the fifth century depicts a diminutive ape standing upright on spindly back legs, displaying a patent interest in the apple that a young man holds out in front of him.⁸⁴ The combination of ephebe, apple and approaching figure makes very plausible the reading endorsed by McDermott: the ape is 'a caricature of a boy loved by the ephebus' on whom the youth would bestow the love token.⁸⁵ The image would then offer a spoof on another practice closely associated with the symposium, pederasty.

81 Lissarrague (1997) 463.

82 Ashmolean Museum 1880.11; Metropolitan Museum of Art 26.60.92.

83 See n. 42 above for this.

84 McDermott (1938) no. 319; Paris, Louvre G 241; *ARV*²1648.

85 McDermott (1938) 227–228.

FIG. 5.2B *Cup dated to circa 520*
ROME, VILLA GIULIA, INV. 64224; PARALIPOMENA 300

Central to Archilochus' poem is the association of monkeys and dance, and Corinthian pottery includes two early representations of dancing ape-like creatures. In the right-hand corner of a frieze on a Transitional olpe—the small vessel used by athletes to carry oil for cleansing and anointing themselves after exercise—from the Villa Giulia (fig. 5.4a, b, and c),⁸⁶ an apish figure with an s-shaped body and shell-shaped ear cavorts about; its legs are deformed and twisted inward, and one ends in a club foot. In the remainder of the image, three men accompanied by a dog pursue a hare. As Axel Seeberg's detailed discussion notes,⁸⁷ the artist prompts the viewer to equate the human hunters with the ape: two of the men also display badly misshapen legs and twisted feet, while the third figure has an exaggeratedly distended arm and a grin so broad that its face resembles a comic mask. There is a striking affinity between these hunters and the padded dancers on komast vases, where figures with just such distorted limbs and feet participate in burlesque hunts.⁸⁸ A second dancing ape appears on a poorly preserved image on a Middle Corinthian aryballos found in

86 Rome, Villa Giulia inv. 46781.

87 Seeberg (1966) 57–59; see, too, Ogden (1997) 103, 112–113; I am not persuaded by these authors' view that we have a representation of an episode from the myth of Astrabacos and Alopekios. Walsh (2009) 144–145 returns to the object.

88 For hunting komasts see Steinhart (2007) 196–220. I return to these images in the section 4.

FIG. 5.3 *Terracotta figure vase of a monkey*,
ca 565–550
METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF
ART 26.60.92

Locri;⁸⁹ the small figure on the left has a monkey head, and one of his feet is also misshapen. It is not just the dance that the creature seems to be performing in partnership with a fat dancer that signals his affinity to men but also the *chitoniskos* that, komast-like, he wears.

A symposiast should have the capacity not only gracefully to dance, but also to perform on the pipes and lyre, and a musical education is the *sine qua non* for participation at the event.⁹⁰ On a red-figure hydria from the first half of the fifth century (fig. 5.5),⁹¹ a music lesson is in progress as a young man receives instruction from his lyre-teacher seated opposite him. Squatting next to another young musician in the scene, an ephebe sitting on a *diphros* and performing on the pipes, is a dressed-up monkey; like the youthful *aulos*-player,

89 Locri, Antiquarium 1248; see Brijder (1988) 63 and fig. 4.

90 For the close relations between training in *mousikê* and the symposium see the well-known hydria by Phintias pairing a music lesson with a sympotic scene in the register above (Munich, Antikensammlungen 2421).

91 London, British Museum E171; *ARV*² 579, 87.

FIG. 5.4A *Corinthian oil flask*
ROME, VILLA GIULIA INV. 46781

he wears the fillet suitable for a symposiast, bracelets, and bangles around his ankles (is he, perhaps, preparing to dance?). Both equivalent and other, he occupies a literally 'lower' position than his seated counterpart even as his fillet creates a visual link between the two.

Although there is no establishing the context in which the figurines would be displayed, a series of Boeotian and Corinthian terracottas dating to the archaic and classical period also show the monkey engaged in activities appropriate to a sympotic context: here apes eat, drink and play upon the lyre, albeit in a parodic or inappropriate manner.⁹² An ape depicted in a small terracotta figure from Clazomenae and dating to the fifth century⁹³ enjoys wine from a drinking-bowl while three more bowls stand ready on a table-shaped rock—no less sure a recipe for inebriation than the outsized skyphos on the Villa Giulia cup.

92 See Lissarrague (1997) 464 and figs. 11–14 for these.

93 Izmir, private collection; see Brijder (1988) fig. 14 and Lissarrague (1997) 464.

FIG. 5.4B *Corinthian oil flask*
ROME, VILLA GIULIA INV. 46781

FIG. 5.4C *Corinthian oil flask*
ROME, VILLA GIULIA INV. 46781

FIG. 5.5 *Red-figure hydria*
LONDON, BRITISH MUSEUM E171; ARV² 579, 87

Monkeys and Fat Dancers

As this sampling of the visual dossier has already signaled, representations of monkeys on visual artifacts from the late archaic and early classical age overlap on many counts with the typology of fat dancers featured on pottery that dates from the seventh century to ca. 540. As the many studies of komasts have documented,⁹⁴ and like the monkeys just described, fat dancers have misshapen anatomies, they squat, they consume wine in large quantities from askoi, and, of course they dance, very frequently in the context of the symposium.⁹⁵ On several more particularized, seemingly less likely counts, simians

94 For the recent bibliography, see Steiner (2009b) 240 n. 1.

95 See Smith (2000) for the fullest discussion of the sympotic setting in which many komasts appear; see, too, Steiner (2009b) for an account of the characteristics assigned to komasts and the overlap between their representation and the properties that contemporary iambographers regularly impute to their targets of mockery and abuse.

and the dancers on komast vases correspond; as already noted, pedal deformations characterize both sets of figures (all the more surprising given the propensity to dance typical of both), and just as some among the komasts prepare to throw the stones they carry as missiles in their mock brawls,⁹⁶ so stone-throwing monkeys appear very early in the visual repertoire.⁹⁷ Walsh identifies the curious figure covered in hair with a large nose and out-jutting jaw standing beneath the handle on the seventh-century Oresteia krater as having an 'ape-like appearance'; in each of its hands it carries a stone, seemingly ready to launch the projectiles at the mythological heroes in the principal scene.⁹⁸

Further confirming these affinities are the several vases considered above that combine monkeys and fat-dancers in ways designed to highlight the figures' proximity. Just as the olpe in the Villa Giulia locates in the same hunting scene komast-like individuals with distorted feet and a similarly deformed monkey, and the aryballos from Locri pairs two dancers, one a komast, the other an ape, so the Oresteia krater presents two curious characters who visually respond to the monkey-like creature described above; similarly marginalized by their position beneath the second handle on the krater, this pair of more human but no less grotesque figures also prepare to throw their stones, while with their free hands they seem to scratch at their buttocks—these emphasized by a patterning that stands out from the solid black used for the remainder of their bodies—in a gesture that anticipates the bottom-slapping gesture so typical of komasts.⁹⁹ Not just analogues, komasts and simians more broadly stand in inverse visual relation to one another: while the monkey is typified in visual and textual sources by its want of buttocks, this portion of the fat-dancers' anatomies is nothing if not over-endowed, frequently grotesquely exaggerated or bulked out with artificial padding.¹⁰⁰

96 Seeberg (1971) 104 catalogues these.

97 Walsh (2009) 66 suggests a Near Eastern prototype; a Phoenician gold-plated silver bowl found in the Bernardini Tomb in Latium includes a hairy ape that attacks a royal hunting party with a stone. The exoticism of apes, imported and not indigenous to Greece, would contribute to their 'otherness'. In the sympotic context, they might also be an indicator of the Eastern-style luxury and oriental mores that symposiasts typically embraced.

98 Walsh (2009) 40–41 with fig. 1a–b, who signals the parallel with the komast dancers. The vase (once East Berlin, Antikensammlung A 32) is now lost, but known through photographs and drawings.

99 I owe this point to Walsh (2009) 41.

100 For this, see Smith (2007) 56 with her fig. 14. Fehr (1990) 190 suggests that the bottom-slapping gesture may also be designed to put the viewer in mind of a style of dancing considered particularly obscene—the *kordax* cited earlier. For Fehr, the action carries

These overlaps in the appearance and conduct of the monkeys and fat dancers bear on the question of the function of these two sets of images and on the role that they play in the sympotic milieu where the objects featuring them would chiefly circulate. As recent discussion of the padded dancers suggests, artists portray the figures in ways that aim to articulate their simultaneous relations of likeness and difference, of identity and ‘otherness’ to the upper-class diners in whose company they disport themselves and whose physique, richly-ornamented dress, hair-styles and sympotic deportment they both mirror and distort.¹⁰¹ For the elite audience, these visions of the abandonment of bodily and ethical decorum are at once appealing and repellent, cathartic and monitory. While they allow the symposiasts a vicarious departure and release from the norms of conduct regulating their own physical and moral stance,¹⁰² they also warn them of the consequences of such transgressions—their transformation into a grotesque object of their fellow diners’ derision, disdain or sheer neglect.¹⁰³ Charting the distance between his own anatomy, (relative) sobriety and decorous conduct and that of the padded dancers, the symposiast finds his sense of social superiority reaffirmed while joining with his companions in laughter directed at the interlopers. The monkey images, I have suggested, work in very similar fashion, displaying deformations of sympotic mores in ways that are designed simultaneously to provoke hilarity, elicit mockery and deliver admonition.

In one further respect, and that will return us to the iambic mockery delivered by Archilochus’ fr. 185 w., the role of the painted simians and that of the komast dancers cohere. Following Burkhard Fehr’s demonstration of the kinship between the komasts on the vases and the *aklêtoi* in literary accounts (the uninvited guests whose outsider and even scapegoat-like position the sources

further implications; in his account, a number of vases on which one komast touches the buttocks or genitalia of another, or where bearded dancers approach beardless ones, appear reminiscent of—or more properly parodic of—homosexual courtship scenes. See too Steinhart (1992) 510.

- 101 For this, see Kaeser (1990) 283–288 and Schäfer (1997) 30–32. On some occasions, as though to highlight the separation between the different spheres, artists portray symposiasts who seemingly ignore the revelers cavorting about them. So on a cup by the Malibu Painter (Heligoland, Coll. Kropatscheck; Brijder (1983) no. 246, pls. 23c–d, 46e) two diners on their couches talk to one another while disregarding two of the four komasts who are turned to face them.
- 102 This is the reading advanced by Kaeser (1990) 286–288.
- 103 Here the images’ role resembles that of the satyrs featured on vessels used at the symposia, where their indecorous conduct serves by way of warning against the abandonment of all restraint.

so clearly mark), many of our monkeys are quite literally 'marginal' to the main event depicted on the main body or visual field of the vase, which is frequently mythological and heroic in character. In keeping with the ape-like figure located beneath the handle on the Oresteia krater, later monkeys are also consigned to the spatial periphery. A Caeretan hydria from c. 530–520 positions a spindly-legged monkey hiding behind a bush (and masturbating no less) looking on as Herakles attacks Nessos in the act of assaulting Deianeira,¹⁰⁴ while a second hydria in Paris (fig. 5.6a and b) displays that archetypal heroic endeavour, the Calydonian boar hunt, and includes in the scene a small-scale monkey (now very faint, but still discernible), half squatting and positioned off to the side.¹⁰⁵ The artist signals the creature's exclusion and remoteness from the world of mythological heroics to which the vessels' users might aspire by showing it gesturing towards Atlanta and her fellow hunters as they confront the boar—a spectator, not a participant in this paradigmatic elite hunt. Much as the komasts can do, with their debunking of aristocratic pretensions by re-performing upper-class sympotic activities (drinking from fine cups, pederasty and the rest) in their basest form, so the Caeretan monkey demystifies the hunt, inviting us to join in laughing at the scene and to note the comic elements that the artist has incongruously introduced into his account.¹⁰⁶ On a third Caeretan hydria in Vienna,¹⁰⁷ a Return of Hephaistos occupies one side of the vase while two symplegmas of satyrs and maenads fill the other; a diminutive monkey, 'no more than a doodle',¹⁰⁸ hangs from the line of the lower frieze. This marginality and 'extraterritorial' status is precisely what Archilochus' fragment would visit on Kerkykides; having proved himself unfit for inclusion at the symposium, and for the civic world beyond, he is effectively banished to that 'back of beyond' (ἐσχατήν) where the monkey-fox encounter occurs.

104 Rome, Villa Giulia (no inv. no.); Bonaudo (2004) no. 20; see Walsh (2009) 45–46. Compare the early sixth-century Corinthian kotyle (Paris, Louvre CA 3004) that combines another of Herakles' feats, his defeat of the hydra, with a line of komast dancers with comic and obscene names inscribed alongside. On the Caeretan vessel, the monkey's action clearly glosses that of the equally beast-like Nessos, although in more comic and solipsistic vein.

105 Louvre E 696; Bonaudo (2004) and Walsh (2009) 46, whose reading I largely follow.

106 For these, see Walsh (2009) 46.

107 Kunsthistorisches Museum 3577; Bonaudo (2004) no. 5.

108 Walsh (2009) 109, with discussion of the vase. Walsh (2009) 70–71 very suggestively compares the liminal position of these monkeys to the simians that appear in the marginalia of medieval illuminated manuscripts and whose role it was to parody, comment on, and demystify the central sacred text.

FIG. 5.6A *Hydria depicting the Calydonian boar hunt*
LOUVRE E 696

FIG. 5.6B *Hydria depicting the Calydonian boar hunt*
LOUVRE E 696

One concluding suggestion brings komasts, monkeys and Archilochus' song into a cohesive whole and draws attention to the performative element that unites all three.¹⁰⁹ While art historians still debate the precise identity of the fat-dancers, and the degree to which the painted figures are depictions of real-world performers familiar to late archaic audiences, several recent articles argue that the dancers should be understood as representations of costumed entertainers who would have appeared at public festivities and at symposia, both civic and private, where they would engage in proto-dramatic enactments of dithyrambic compositions.¹¹⁰ What makes the relationship with the apes particularly fascinating is that, if we examine the monkey images more closely, it turns out that like the fat dancers with their artificial padding and seemingly crippled feet, many of the figures are not monkeys, but men dressed in monkey costumes and 'aping' the animals in turn. So the 'balancers' on the Villa Giulia cup are nude youths equipped with wigs and monkey masks, participants, like the komasts, in a Dionysiac style revelry, and Brijder makes the same suggestion for the Corinthian aryballos also cited earlier, fashioned in the shape of a squatting monkey.¹¹¹ Following Matthias Steinhart's reading of the fat-dancers depicted in a handful of scenes that seem to involve some kind of narrative scenario, the apes are likewise costumed individuals role-playing in mimetic representations involving music, dance and some form of narrative; the Corinthian vase that combines the monkey figure with the komast-like hunters would, in this account, portray a performance that featured both padded dancers and monkeys in a burlesque enactment that inverted standard hunting practices and was accompanied by music and song.

Returning to seventh-century Paros, could Kerykides' unfortunate, and possibly notorious, bid for sympotic distinction have involved that individual's dressing up in some kind of archaic version of a monkey suit (or at least a mask) and taking on a role that might more usually have been reserved for professional entertainers or the uninvited at the dining party (indeed, some art historians read the figures on the komast vases as upper class symposiasts engaged in a seventh-century form of slumming)?¹¹² Or would Archilochus' song have taken its cue from, or even have generated, a mimetic dance performance with men dressed up as monkeys and foxes? Intriguingly, an archaic

109 For 'performativity' in the context of the symposium and particularly the *komos* that followed, see the key discussion in Bierl (2009).

110 For a particular strong statement of this view, see Steinhart (2007) 196–220.

111 Brijder (1988) 64–65.

112 For this, see Schäfer (1997) 30–34, endorsing the views of Kaeser (1990) 283–288.

Boeotian terracotta depicts precisely the encounter that the *ainos* describes, pairing a monkey with a fox.¹¹³ This figurine, we might further speculate, not only visualizes the Aesopic story, but mirrors the type of entertainment that a much later text describes; in his *Eikones*, Philostratus includes a painting of Aesop in the act of composing a fable, surrounding the story-teller with a 'chorus' of the animals and men included in his fables who will perform the tales (1.3).¹¹⁴ It comes as no surprise to discover the Aesopic-Archilochian fox in the role of chorus leader here.

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113 Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Antikensammlung 8229; Lissarrague (2000) fig. 5.6.

114 Lissarrague (2000) 144–145 also cites the text, although while making a very different argument. Extraneous to my discussion is the question of whether Philostratus has an actual image in mind or whether, as I prefer to think, it is clearly notional. Lissarrague (1997) 469 and fig. 25 presents a small bronze from the Imperial period showing an actor wearing a monkey mask.

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