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The Luck of the Draw: Ar. Ecc. 999

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THE LUCK OF THE DRAW: AR. *ECC.* 999

In the penultimate scene of the *Ecclesiazusae*, the young man who has come to see his lover is accosted in succession by three old women, each insisting that the new legal code requires him to sleep with her first. In lines 999–1000, the first of these old women, faced with his refusal to cooperate sexually, swears by Aphrodite:

μὰ τὴν Ἀφροδίτην, ἣ μ' ἔλαχε κληρουμένη,
μὴ γ' ὧ σ' ἀφήσω.

Thus, as commentators point out, she boastfully claims the goddess as her personal *δαίμων*, using language clearly appropriate to the allocation of a deity to a specific 'province'.¹ Her oath warrants further consideration, however, for much of its humour lies in the precise nature of the relative clause ἣ μ' ἔλαχε κληρουμένη.

Κληρώ and *λαγχάνω* denote closely related concepts, and it is of course natural that forms of *κληρώ* and of the noun *κλήρος* should commonly be found in close conjunction with *λαγχάνω* (cf., e.g., Joseph. *AJ* 9.211: *κληρωσαμένων ὄν ὁ προφήτης λαγχάνει*). A search of the *TLG* data-base, however, reveals only two other passages in which a middle participle of *κληρώ* agrees with the subject of *λαγχάνω*. Plato has the *xenos* in the *Politicus* use the collocation in a passage concerning the allotment of archons: *κατ' ἐνιαυτὸν δέ γε ἄρχοντας καθίστασθαι τοῦ πλῆθους, εἴτε ἐκ τῶν πλουσιῶν εἴτε ἐκ τοῦ δήμου παντός, ὃς ἂν κληρούμενος λαγχάνῃ* (298e). Similarly, Aeschines, speaking of the procedural abuses of unscrupulous contemporaries, comments: *ἂν δέ τις τῶν ἄλλων βουλευτῶν ὄντως λάχῃ κληρούμενος προεδρεύειν... ἀπειλοῦσιν εἰσαγγελεῖν* (*Ctes.* 3).

Given the nature of this evidence, it is reasonable to suggest that the phrase is in fact a technical formula for the allotment of Athenian officials. Moreover, if, as seems plausible, the Platonic passage provides an accurate picture of the manner in which the expression was used in actual decrees, then Aristophanes, in employing it in the relative clause of the woman's oath, may be parodying relative clauses such as *ὃς ἂν κληρούμενος λαγχάνῃ* in Athenian legislation:² such a parody, after all, would be thoroughly in keeping with the nature of the entire scene, in which all of the participants continually apply technical legal language to sexual matters.

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¹ R. G. Ussher, *Aristophanes. Ecclesiazusae* (Oxford, 1973), p. 215.

² The potentially formulaic character of the phrase did not escape the notice of B. Merritt and T. Wade-Gery, *JHS* 83 (1963) 110, who, adducing the Platonic passage, proposed it as an epigraphically plausible supplement to a decree of c. 448 B.C.: *Γλ]αγκος εἴπε: [τῆι / Ἀθελναιίαι τῆι Νί]κει ηιερῆαν ηῆ ἄγ [κλ/ερωμένη λάχ]ε] ἐχς Ἀθελναιόν ηαπα[σό/ν καθίστα]σθαι (*IG* i³. 35.3–6).*

AN ERRANT FRAGMENT OF THEOPHRASTUS

There are a number of fragments attributed to Theophrastus, as well as titles in Diogenes Laertius' catalogue of his writings (5.42ff.), of which it is uncertain whether they should be placed among his logical or rhetorical works. In this note I want to give my reasons for excluding one of them from my forthcoming edition of his logical fragments. It is not my intention here to discuss all the questions it raises; I hope to come back to them in a later volume of my commentary.