

Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* and Virgil's *Camilla*

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Resumen: El examen minucioso de varios pasajes del libro 11 de la *Eneida* de Virgilio revela la influencia de la Lisístrata de Aristófanes en la caracterización de la doncella guerrera volsca Camila. La apropiación virgiliana de la tradición aristofánica sirve para dilucidar y comentar ciertos aspectos de la naturaleza esquiva y enigmática de Camila, sobre todo en lo que respecta a la presentación que hace el poeta del problema de la guerra civil y de la condición de la mujer en la vida pública romana.

Abstract: Close consideration of several passages in Book 11 of Virgil's *Aeneid* reveals the influence of Aristophanes' depiction of his comic heroine *Lysistrata* on the characterization of the Volscian warrior maiden *Camilla*. Virgilian appropriation of Aristophanic lore is shown to elucidate and to offer a commentary on certain aspects of *Camilla*'s elusive, enigmatic nature, not least with respect to the poet's presentation of the problem of civil war and of the status of women in Roman public life.

Palabras clave: Virgilio; Aristófanes; Camila; Lisístrata

Keywords: Virgil; Aristophanes; Camilla; Lysistrata

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Among the numerous literary antecedents and sources for Virgil in his *Aeneid*, Aristophanes is not usually accorded a place of much if any note.¹ The difference in genres alone is enough to make it challenging to find compelling evidence for the influence of Aristophanes on Virgil, at least in his epic of war.² Close consideration of passages in the comic poet's surviving masterpiece *Lysistrata*, however, will reveal that Aristophanes may have been a significant (if hitherto unappreciated) part of the Virgilian *Vorleben* in the composition of the *Camilla* episode in *Aeneid* 11.³ While in the absence of new evidence it is impossible to prove that Virgil mined Aristophanic comedy for intertextual treasures, detailed investigation of several parallels between the *Camilliad* and the *Lysistrata* point to the influence of the Athenian dramatist on the Augustan epicist.

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¹ There is no entry for Aristophanes in the *Enciclopedia virgiliana*, and understandably so. The comic element more generally is treated by R.B. Lloyd, "Comico, stile," in Vol. I of the same, Roma: Istituto della enciclopedia italiana, 1984, pp. 853-855; cf. also C. Bourquin, 2019. Essential reading on Virgil's process of appropriation of his predecessors = N.M. Horsfall, 2016. I am grateful to the anonymous referee whose comments and criticisms improved this study, and to the editor, Professor José Carlos Miralles.

² For possible echoes of Aristophanes' *Ranae*, e.g., at *Georgic* 1.378 *et veterem in limo ranae cecinere querelam*, see R.F. Thomas, 1999, pp. 130-132.

³ Aristophanes' comedy has elicited numerous and diverse interpretive analyses, including, e.g., the ingenious argument that the women striking under *Lysistrata* are presented as "symbolic" patients in the Hippocratic tradition (so N. Tsoumpra, 2020, pp. 1-20). Our analysis will focus exclusively on the influence of the comic poet's mysterious creation on the Augustan epicist's equally enigmatic heroine.

Lysistrata, like *Aeneid* 11, commences at dawn (so too does another of Aristophanes' plays that focuses on women, the *Ecclesiazusae*).⁴ Beyond that seemingly superficial parallel between the comedy and the book of an epic, we may think that there is little to connect the plots of the two works. *Lysistrata* is concerned with a stratagem of enforced celibacy conceived by Greek women to bring a Greek civil war to a halt; *Aeneid* 11 reaches its climax with the great cavalry battle before the walls of Latinus' capital, in which Camilla performs brilliantly before her untimely death. The Camilla episode constitutes an epyllion that is integrated closely with the narrative of the Latin war; by the end of the book, Turnus has lost his chance to secure victory in the struggle in no small part because of his abandonment of his ambush plan for Aeneas, an ambush that he gives up in the wake of his emotional reaction to the killing of Camilla.

None of this, to be sure, would seem to resound with the world of Attic old comedy. And yet *Lysistrata* is a war play in which women take a significant role. We shall see how Virgil capitalized on this root commonality between his book and Aristophanes' play, so as to mine the *Lysistrata* for material with which to pepper his account of Camilla's involvement in the war against Aeneas.

We may begin our look at Aristophanes' influence on Virgil with a passage where the leader of the men's chorus makes comments that reference both the Halicarnassian Artemisia of the history of the Persian War, and the Amazons of mythology:

εἰ γὰρ ἐνδώσει τις ἡμῶν ταῖσδε κἄν σμικρὰν λαβήν,
οὐδὲν ἐλλείψουσιν αὐταὶ λιπαροῦς χειρουργίας,
ἀλλὰ καὶ ναῦς τεκτανοῦνται, κἀπιχειρήσουσ' ἔτι
ναυμαχεῖν καὶ πλεῖν ἐφ' ἡμάς, ὥσπερ Ἀρτεμισία. 675
ἦν δ' ἐφ' ἵππικὴν τράπωνται, διαγράφω τοὺς ἵππέας:
ἵππικώτατον γὰρ ἔστι χρῆμα κάποχον γυνή,
κοῦκ ἂν ἀπολίσθοι τρέχοντος. τὰς δ' Ἀμαζόνας σκόπει,
ὡς Μίκων ἔγραψ' ἐφ' ἵππων μαχομένας τοῖς ἀνδράσιν.
ἀλλὰ τούτων χρῆν ἄπασῶν ἐς τετρημένον ξύλον 680
ἐγκαθαρμόσαι λαβόντας τουτονὶ τὸν αὐχένα. (*Lysistrata* 673-81)⁵

Allow these wrestlers to obtain the slightest grip, the choregos opines, and soon they will be like the storied queen at Salamis, or like the Amazons you see fighting in equestrian battles in the painting of Micon.⁶ Certainly a play that centers on a conflict between women and men – in particular, a conflict involving women who are foregoing contact with men – fittingly would include some reference to the Amazons.⁷ The Amazons were the classic female warriors of mythology and pseudo-history; a woman like Artemisia who commanded units in battle might be considered Amazonian. In the contemporary world of Virgil, one might think of Cleopatra and her naval engagement at Actium.⁸ In *Lysistrata* the

⁴ On the affinities between the openings of both plays, and on the dawn hour, see R.G. Ussher, 1973, pp. 70-71. The first verse of *Aeneid* 11 = 4.129, the beginning of the hunt that witnesses the union of Dido and Aeneas; Camilla is something of an anti-Dido.

⁵ All passages from the play are cited from J. Henderson, 1987.

⁶ For the celebrated painting note the extensive commentary of J.G. Frazer, 1913, pp. 134 ff.

⁷ Useful here is L. Hardwick, 1990, pp. 14-36. "The plot and characterization in *Lysistrata* rely heavily upon two mythic patterns of domestic disruption, the Amazon myth and the story of the Lemnian women" (L.K. Taafe, 1993, p. 53; cf. D. Kanellakis, 2020, p. 88). On the seriousness with which such fears about women were taken in classical Athens, see Y. Zhou, 2010, pp. 182-3.

⁸ For a detailed appraisal of how the *Camilliad* reflects some aspects of the struggle against Cleopatra at Actium, see L. Fratantuono, 2016. At 11.624-8, the changing fortunes of the initial movements of the cavalry battle are compared to the ebb

women are seeking to end a war; their seizure of the Athenian acropolis, needless to say, leads to a civil conflict within a broader civil war as the men seek to reclaim the citadel. The protesting women thus are fairly or unfairly depicted as being like invading Amazons, or treacherous Lemnian women.⁹

Aristophanes' choregos recalls a celebrated Amazon painting. Here we may compare Virgil's reference at *Aeneid* 1.489-93 to the depiction of Eos' son Memnon and the Amazon Penthesilea in the temple murals in Dido's Junonian shrine at Carthage.¹⁰ The Virgilian description of the painting of Penthesilea is recalled in the simile in which the poet compares the Volscian heroine Camilla and her retinue to such Amazons as Hippolyta and Penthesilea (cf. 1.490-3 *ducit Amazonidum lunatis agmina peltis / Penthesilea furens, mediisque in milibus ardet, / aurea subnectens exsertae cingula mammae, / bellatrix, audetque viris concurrere virgo* and 11.659-63 *quales Threiciae cum flumina Thermodontis / pulsant et pictis bellantur Amazones armis, / seu circum Hippolyten seu cum se Martia curru / Penthesilea refert, magnoque ululante tumultu / feminea exsultant lunatis agmina peltis*).¹¹ The artwork looks back to the memory of the intervention of the Amazons on the side of Troy; it evokes the post-Iliadic, cyclic traditions of Arctinus' *Aethiopsis*; it anticipates the drama of the equestrian conflict of *Aeneid* 11. The Penthesilea picture is the last image that is glimpsed on the walls before the arrival of Dido interrupts the leisurely art gallery visit; Dido will be no Penthesilea, but we shall meet a new Amazonian in Italy in the person of Camilla.¹²

In the *Lysistrata*, the women of Greece unite to seek an end to the Peloponnesian War via an agreement to refrain from engaging in sexual activity until a treaty is ratified.¹³ Civil war in Greece is to be ended by the expedient of celibacy. In the second, Iliadic half of the *Aeneid*, there is something of a civil war in Italy, as Aeneas engages in battle ultimately for the conquest of Latinus' daughter Lavinia, his destined new bride.¹⁴ The Trojan Aeneas is fated to settle in Latium, and to marry a Latin princess; the war that erupts on account of the machinations of Juno and her avatar Allecto has shades of internecine strife that resonate in an Augustan Age that had so recently been convulsed by civil conflict – civil conflict that saw its climax in the naval battle of Actium. Aeneas' antagonist Turnus assembles Italian and Etruscan allies, not least the mysterious Camilla.¹⁵

Virgil's warrior girl enjoys an impressive *aristeia* before her eventual slaying at the hands of the Etruscan Arruns. Camilla is like an Amazon as she battles Aeneas' Trojans and their Etruscan allies, a

and flow of the sea, an interesting simile in context that may reflect on Virgil's evocation of the great naval battle in his account of the defeat of Camilla/Cleopatra.

⁹ Both subjects were featured in old comedy; see further A.H. Sommerstein, 2007 (corrected reprint of the 1998 original edition), p. 10.

¹⁰ For a start on the burgeoning bibliography on the murals, note M.C.J. Putnam, 1998, pp. 243-75; cf. R.A. Smith, 1997, pp. 26 ff.

¹¹ Quotes from the *Aeneid* are taken from G.B. Conte, ed., 2019 (*editio altera*).

¹² Penthesilea is featured prominently by position as the last figure mentioned in the artwork; Camilla, we shall see below, is given the same treatment as the final character in the catalogue of Italian heroes at the end of *Aeneid* 7. Foundational to the scientific study of Camilla is A. Brill, 1972.

¹³ On what (if anything) the comic poet intended to convey to Athens about the war, see e.g. H.D. Westlake, 1980, pp. 38-54.

¹⁴ The war is presented by Turnus and his partisans as a response to a *de facto* Trojan invasion of Latium; the poet plays on the contemporary bogey of civil war by focusing on the proleptic reality of the war as being internecine, given the destined union of Trojans and Italians.

¹⁵ With *Lysistrata* the element of mystery centers on age and marital status; with Camilla there is the significant, unexplained detail concerning how the infant daughter of the exiled Metabus of Privernum becomes the leader of the Volscian contingent in the Latin war. The poet is without concern for such biographical details; in this case, however, the mere fact of her transition from refugee to solitary huntress to leader of her people in battle redounds to the girl's credit.

new Penthesilea who fights not for Troy, but for her native Italy. One of her prominent victims is the Teucric Orsilochus.¹⁶ Scholars have studied the question of the source for this Trojan, who figures in Virgil only in the narrative of the cavalry battle. "Orsilochus" is the name of characters both Trojan and Greek referenced in both Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.¹⁷ And, too, there is an "Orsilochus" in the *Lysistrata*: at 723-5 the leader of the sexual strike complains about various attempted defections from her ranks, including one woman who tried (metaphorically at any rate) to ride a sparrow to Orsilochus' – a brothel owner and adulterer, if the scholiast can be believed.¹⁸ Lysistrata was able to impede the attempted avian escape to the house of Orsilochus, while Camilla is pursued by Orsilochus after she slays his comrade Butes, only to rely on her superior speed and agility to pursue her pursuer (*Aeneid* 11.694-5 *Orsilochum fugiens magnumque agitata per orbem / eludit gyro interior sequiturque sequentem*). The sparrow in Aristophanes is connected both to the goddess Aphrodite, to whom the bird was sacred – and via obscene *double entendre* to phallic imagery.¹⁹ No sparrows figure in *Aeneid* 11, though Camilla for her part will be compared to a raptor that eviscerates a dove – another sacred bird of the goddess of sexuality – in her slaying of the son of Aunus.²⁰ Amid phallic sparrows and scholiastic references to brothels and adultery, we are left to wonder about Orsilochus, and the recurrence of the name in the *Camilliad*.²¹

What were Aristophanes' (let alone Virgil's) intentions in introducing the figure of Orsilochus? "The plot would thicken if Orsilochus were the male counterpart of the Taurian goddess Orsilocheia."²² And yet we need not look for connections to Iphigenia and her Euxine sojourn to appreciate Aristophanes' point. The name "Orsilochus" has been connected with bear slaying, from a cult title of Artemis.²³ The connection to Artemis is relevant both in Virgil (on account of Diana's patronage of Camilla), and in Aristophanes via the reference in the play to the cult of Artemis at Brauron and the participation of Athenian women in the rituals there in which girls dressed as bears.²⁴ Diana's favorite Camilla thus appropriately first flees from the bear slayer Orsilochus – cf. *Aeneid* 11.694 *Orsilochum fugiens ...* – and then in turn slays the would-be slayer, via an elaborate virtual death ballet that recalls the dancing bear girls of Brauron: 11.694-5 ... *magnumque agitata per orbem / eludit gyro interior sequiturque sequentem*. The killing of Orsilochus thus recalls the Artemisian ursine rites of the girls at Brauron, while in Aristophanes part of the joke is that Lysistrata saves one of the women from going to the house of Orsilochus – that is, the house of the bear slayer, the procurer or adulterer who will seek to prostitute or to defile the Artemisian bear girl. Trickster imagery (via the allusive reminiscence of the deceitful, homonymous Cretan of the *Odyssey*); phallic allusions; even a reminder of the grim realities of civil war

¹⁶ Cf. 11.636-40; 690-8, with the notes *ad loc.* of K. W. Gransden, 1991; M. Alessio, 1993; N. M. Horsfall, 2003; L. M. Fratantuono, 2009; S. McGill, 2020.

¹⁷ Cf. *Iliad* 5.541-9, where Aeneas slays Crethon and Orsilochus, the twin sons of Diocles; *Odyssey* 3.488 ff. = 15.186 ff., where Telemachus stays overnight with Diocles; also *Iliad* 8.273-6, where a Trojan Orsilochus is one of eight casualties of Teucer; *Odyssey* 13.250 ff., where a Cretan Orsilochus is a son of Idomeneus of impressive speed, and a victim of an Odyssean ambush occasioned by his attempt to cheat the Ithacan. See further G.S. Kirk, 1990, pp. 114 ff.; A.M. Bowie, 2013, *ad* 13.260.

¹⁸ On this obscure Aristophanic reference see especially M. Janse and D. Praett, 2012, pp. 166-173; cf. M. Janse, 2011, pp. 629-631.

¹⁹ See further Henderson *ad* 722-3; cf. *Vespae* 207-8, with D.M. MacDowell, 1971, *ad loc.* For the goddess Aphrodite in the play, note G.W. Elderkin, 1940, pp. 387-396.

²⁰ *Aeneid* 11.721-4.

²¹ For the "extremely rare" employment of the sparrow as an erotic emblem in extant Greek and Latin, see F.E. Brenk, 1980, pp. 702-716; cf. J. Mynott, 2018, p. 398.

²² M. Silver, 2019, p. 92; Silver argues that the women involved in the sex strike are depicted as being cultic prostitutes.

²³ See here E. Kraggerud, 1960, p. 36.

²⁴ Cf. *Lysistrata* 641-7, on which note C. Sourvinou, 1971, pp. 339-342. See further here L. Kahl, 1977; M.B. Walbank, 1981, pp. 276-281; P. Pearlman, 1989, pp. 111-133; also E. Bevan, 1987, pp. 17-21.

(the name Orsilochus = both Trojan and Greek in the *Iliad*) may all factor in the Aristophanic reference, but evocations of bear slaying fit the contexts of both the *Lysistrata* and the *Camilliad*. Our ignorance of so much of the contemporary social milieu in Aristophanes' Athens makes it perilous more often than not to speculate overmuch on figures as obscure as the briefly mentioned Orsilochus, but the ursine associations work well to explain the otherwise curious coincidence that the name should appear in both *Lysistrata* and *Aeneid* 11.²⁵ This theory explains too the elaborate account at 11.694-5 of the nimble *Camilla*'s engagement with her opponent.

There are other passages in Aristophanes' play that can be connected to the *Camilliad*. We may note that in the dueling choral exchanges of 781-828 (i.e., in the wake of the attempted desertions from *Lysistrata*'s cause), the chorus of men relate the story of Melanion, an apparently notorious misogynist (781-804). The lore surrounding Melanion/Milanion (also known as Hippomenes) is complex, not least with respect to his association with Atalanta (herself a difficult mythological figure to disentangle), and also given the question of the "other" mythological male connected to Atalanta, Meleager.²⁶ Aristophanes' male chorus dispenses with any of the thornier problems of the mythology, content with focusing on how Melanion fled the company of women for the sake of the hunt.²⁷ Melanion is as relevant a figure for the men to invoke as the misanthrope Timon is for the women (805-28).²⁸ Melanion sought to escape the perils of female companionship, only to be doomed in the end for all his Hippolytus-like virtue early in life. The mention of him in Aristophanes' play adds another note of relevant intertext with Virgil's composition of his *Camilla*, who has pervasive associations and affinities with Atalanta.²⁹

Other details provide closer connection to Virgil's narrative. Toward the end of Aristophanes' play (1247-72), the Spartan ambassador dances and sings in celebration; he recalls the Greek victories over the Persians at Artemision and at Thermopylae. He calls on the goddess Artemis to bless the treaty by which Athens and Sparta have been reconciled:

ἀγροτέρα σηροκτόνε,	
μόλε δεῦρο, παρσένε σιά,	
ποττάς σπονδάς,	
ὡς συνέχης πολὺν ἀμὲ χρόνον.	1265
νῦν δ' αὖ φίλία τ' αἰὲς εὐπορος εἶη	
ταῖς συνθήκαισι, καὶ τᾶν αἰμυλᾶν	
ἀλωπέκων παυσάιμεθα.	
ὦ δεῦρ' ἴθι, δεῦρο,	
ὦ κυναγὲ παρσένε.	1270

²⁵ The connection of Orsilochus to bear hunting accords too with the detail at 11.690-1 *Protinus Orsilochum et Buten, duo maxima Teucreum / corpora ...*, where Orsilochus and Butes are renowned for size and strength.

²⁶ Melanion has occasioned considerable scholarly investigation as the "black hunter" beloved of structuralists and students of Athenian ephebeia, an Orion figure who hunts alone at night. For a start on the predictably vast bibliography on Atalanta, note especially J.M. Barringer, 1996, pp. 48-76.

²⁷ The unique focus on the misogyny raises its own problems; cf. N. Manousakis, 2020, p. 206 n. 26: "... Aristophanes in this case is distorting the mythical tradition concerning Melanion ..." (i.e., by ignoring Atalanta lore and positing a shunning of women that is difficult to attest elsewhere). It could be argued that the very absence of Atalanta serves in some way to highlight her.

²⁸ On the "detachable lyric" and its appropriateness for a wide range of misogynistic contexts, see J. Robson, 2009, p. 152.

²⁹ See here L.M. Fratantuono, 2008, pp. 342-352; and also 2005, pp. 185-193.

The goddess is invoked as the Spartan calls for an end to wily, vulpine deceits (1268 καὶ τᾶν αἰμυλᾶν ἄλωπέκων παυσάμεθα). The divine mistress of animals is an appropriate deity to call upon as animal-like trickery comes to an end.³⁰ This passage represents something of a pacification of Artemis after such earlier invocations of the goddess by *Lysistrata*'s women to come to their aid in the face of violence: cf. Myrrhine's invocation at 443-4, and Strayllis' at 447-8.³¹ Implicit peace with Artemis is celebrated as the conflict between women and men is resolved; the mechanism for the bringing of more irenic relations between the sexes was voluntary celibacy, an action that makes one think of the virginity so prized by both Artemis and Athena (i.e., the two key goddesses of the comedy).

At the very end of the play, the same Spartan references the "theriomorphic maiden-dances" familiar from his culture, as he compares Laconian girls to fillies as they dance and frolic in revel:

χᾶ̃ τε πῶλοι ται κόραι
παρ τὸν Εὐρωταν
ἀμπάλλοντι, πυκνὰ ποδοῖν
ἀγκονίωαί,
ται δὲ κόμαι σείονται
ἄπερ Βακχᾶν θυρσαδδῶν καὶ παιδδῶν.

1310

With this passage we may compare Virgil's celebrated equine simile at *Aeneid* 11.492-7, where the Rutulian Turnus is compared to a stallion that prances off to the mares just before he meets Camilla and her female companions in preparation for the great cavalry engagement.³² The leader of the maiden chorus envisaged by the Spartan is Helen (*Lysistrata* 1314-5). "... we are to think not of the unfaithful wife of heroic myth but of the maiden-goddess of Spartan cult ..."³³ In the exodos of the play we encounter more equestrian imagery, as the Laconian ambassador imagines Spartan girls who are like fillies; the image of Helen as leader of the mares, as it were, is complex and ambivalent. We need not seek some parallel between Spartan Helen and Volscian Camilla, but *Lysistrata* draws to a close with a picture that can be paralleled reasonably closely in *Aeneid* 11: an equine association for young women, women who in the grim context of the cavalry battle will be immersed in deadly combat and not frivolous, celebratory dance. Part of the point of the cult of the goddess Helen in Spartan liturgy may be her patronage of girls' preparation and suitability for marriage;³⁴ one of the sources of pathos in the Virgilian emphasis on the untimely deaths of the young is the idea that such youths should be proceeding to their nuptials.³⁵ We think at the close of the play not of Spartan Helen the unfaithful wife and seductive lover of Trojan Paris, but rather as the chaste spouse of Menelaus and divine patroness of Laconia. In this capacity, the goddess Helen is remembered as a protector of Spartan marriage.

Relevant to this point, there may also be an Aristophanic explanation (at least in part) for the association of Camilla with the myrtle when she is first introduced at the close of the catalogue of Italian

³⁰ See Henderson *ad* 1262-3 for the connection of Artemis both to the victory at Marathon, and more generally to cultic practices in both Athens and Sparta.

³¹ The women in *Lysistrata* are never depicted as the aggressors in their hostilities with men, in contrast to the Virgilian Camilla, who is an avid if not bloodthirsty fighter, whatever the justification or lack thereof for the Italian cause in the war.

³² For a start on this richly complex, celebrated poetic image (with antecedents in Homer; Apollonius; Ennius) see P.A. Johnston, 2006, pp. 20-31; cf. G. Williams, 1968, pp. 695-696, and 732-733.

³³ So Henderson *ad loc.*

³⁴ See further here W. Allan, 2008, p. 323; cf. *Thesmophoriazousae* 850, with C. Austin and S.D. Olson, eds., 2004, *ad loc.*; also L.L. Clader, 1976, pp. 81-82.

³⁵ On the key Virgilian theme of youthful demises see especially A. Sisul, 2018.

heroes at the end of *Aeneid* 7. Indeed, *myrtum* is in prominent position as the last word of that book: Camilla is armed with a Lycian quiver and a pastoral myrtle for the shaft of her spear:

... *Lyciam ut gerat ipsa pharetram*
et pastoralem praefixa cuspidē myrtum. (7.816-7)³⁶

The myrtle's significance is highlighted by its prominent position at the end of the first book of Virgil's epic of the war in Italy. Lysistrata's co-conspirator Myrrhine has been associated onomastically with the myrtle, and with possible obscene connotation.³⁷ At Camilla's first appearance in the *Aeneid*, both the youth of Latinus' city and a crowd of mothers is in awe of her (7.812 ff.) as they see her splendid entrance into the city. There is a hint here of the attractiveness of the girl both to the youth (who would desire her), and to the mothers who might wish her for a daughter-in-law. Later, on Camilla's return to the narrative in the celebrated Diana-epyllion in which the goddess provides the heroine's story to her nymph Opis (11.532 ff.), we learn that as an infant, she had been consecrated by her father Metabus to the service of the divine huntress. Camilla is a virgin devotee of Diana, who for reasons left unsaid by the poet has abandoned the sylvan, private world of the hunt for the more public realm of war. The tension between the private and the public lives is a key element, too, in the presentation of Aristophanic female characters, not least the women of *Lysistrata*.³⁸

Camilla leaves the forest, but Diana remains as loyal as she is able to be to her favorite: her life cannot be saved, but her body will be preserved from desecration and her death will be avenged. Camilla remains a virgin – a contrast, to be sure, to the figure of Carthaginian Dido from Books 1 and 4 and her highly sexualized assignation with Aeneas.³⁹ That said, Camilla presents a source of erotic temptation to her ally Turnus, who as aforementioned is compared on the cusp of battle to a stallion ready to go forth among the mares (with sexualized connotations). Indeed, it has been noted that it can be argued that Turnus' decision to abandon his planned ambush for Aeneas is a direct consequence of his overly emotional reaction to the news of Camilla's death in battle.⁴⁰

In short, the connection of the myrtle with Camilla offers a characteristically Virgilian web of allusive associations, one of which may well be a sexualization of the Diana-like virgin huntress as she proceeds from forest haunts to a public parade. *Aeneid* 7 features the celebrated invocation to Erato (7.37-45), an erotic, amatory note for the book that will depict the commencement of the war for Lavinia. Camilla, for her part, would involuntarily and unwillingly serve as an erotic image, one that would in so small way contribute to Turnus' downfall and, by extension, Aeneas' salvation.⁴¹ Camilla and her coterie of Amazonians present a striking image of suppressed sexuality, a suppression connected to the service of Diana (at least in Camilla's case), and not because of some temporary expedient to end a war. The myrtle strikes a discordant note as the first book of Virgil's Italian war draws to a close, we might think. And

³⁶ On this passage see especially N.M. Horsfall, 2000, *ad loc.*; on the myrtle in Virgil note G. Maggiulli, 1995, pp. 366-367; cf. also R. Armstrong, 2019, pp. 152-155; T. Mantero, 1987, p. 540.

³⁷ For the metaphorical association by which the myrtle signifies the *muliebria pudenda*, see J. Henderson, 1975, pp. 134-135 (same pagination in the 1991 New York: Oxford University Press second edition).

³⁸ Cf. here H.P. Foley, 1982, pp. 1-21.

³⁹ "La descripción virgiliana de esta joven amazona, no puede estar más lograda. Viene al frente de un escuadrón de jinites Volscos. Es la antítesis de Dido." (J. Moreno, 1984, p. 403).

⁴⁰ Cf. *Aeneid* 11.896 ff. with Fratantuono, *op. cit.*, *ad loc.* For the weighty problem of the Virgilian depiction of emotion, see J. Dion, 1993; W. Polleichtner, 2009.

⁴¹ Parallels to the contemporary Augustan reality of Cleopatra with Antony are present here too; Camilla in the cavalry battle recalls Cleopatra in the naval battle at Actium, even as Dido in *Aeneid* 4 evokes Cleopatra with Caesar as well as Antony at Alexandria.

yet it accords well with the erotic dimensions of the war, in which Camilla stands forth as an image of erotic unattainability in light of her celibacy – an image that fits exactly with the deliberate actions of women like Myrrhine in the *Lysistrata*. Camilla's chastity was imposed on her by her paternal dedication to Diana; the celibacy of Lysistrata's panhellenic sorority was an expedient adopted *ad tempus* for the sake of ending a war. The sexuality of Camilla is unintentional; that of Myrrhine and the other Lysistratan co-conspirators is employed deliberately.

Several points of connection, then, can be enumerated between *Lysistrata* and *Aeneid* 11. In summation, why did Virgil find Aristophanes' comic, obscene account of a sex strike to be a suitable source of any intertextual references in his story of Camilla? Beyond any of the aforementioned connections of the *Camilliad* with Aristophanic Artemis imagery, additional notes of correspondence may be highlighted to shed light on the question. Like Lysistrata, Camilla is a leader of women, with possible affinities to Athena/Minerva like the priestess Lysimache by whom Aristophanes' heroine may have been inspired.⁴² Caution is always appropriate when construing the problem of the sources of the names in old comedy, but the connections of Lysistrata, Myrrhine, and Camilla to the battle goddess Athena merit consideration.⁴³ Indeed, when Camilla is first introduced in the pendant to the catalogue of *Aeneid* 7, she is portrayed explicitly as one not given to the domestic arts of the goddess, but rather to battle (7.805-7 *bellatrix, non illa colo calathisque Minervae / femineas adsueta manus, sed proelia virgo / dura pati cursuque pedum praevertere ventos*).⁴⁴ Lysistrata's age and marital status are left unspecified, but whatever her personal situation, her strategy for ending the civil war in Greece is abstinence from sex. Virgil's Camilla is a virgin; she is an object of sexualized attention that remains unfulfilled and frustrated. Associated as she is with not one but two great virgin goddesses, her celibacy remains a defining feature of her character. Her transit from forest hunting exploits to leadership of her battle contingent reflects her dual associations with Diana and Minerva. Both Lysistrata and Camilla are enigmatic; both are imbued with effective qualities of leadership.⁴⁵

Virgil's Volscian heroine may well have been his own invention.⁴⁶ Her literary and historical antecedents are many: the Amazons Penthesilea and Hippolyta; the complex mythological heroine Atalanta; the legendary Cloelia; the historical Artemisia and Cleopatra. But among the diverse sources for the poet's enigmatic huntress turned battle maiden, we may include Aristophanes' Lysistrata. The comic heroine deprived Orsilochus of a would-be sexual conquest; the epic heroine deprived another Orsilochus of his very life. Elite women of classical Athens were privileged to perform the ritual bear dances for Artemis at Brauron; Virgil's Camilla performed something of her own ursine ballet, as she vanquished the presumptive slayer of bears. And as for Myrrhine, if Aristophanes' character both evokes the myrtle and recalls the historical Myrrhine, the daughter of Callimachus who was said to have been the first to tend the precinct of Athena Nike, then not without reason we may wonder if Camilla, her myrtle, and her Minervan associations were at all inspired by Callimachus' Myrrhine, the priestess of Athena.⁴⁷ Virgil's Camilla, too, fulfills the etymology of Callimachus' name – she combines elements of

⁴² The connection between Lysistrata and the historical Lysimache is one of the more popular problems of Aristophanic scholarship; foundational here is D.M. Lewis, 1955, pp. 1-36. Myrrhine too has been associated with Athena (see here J. Lougovaya-Ast, 2006, pp. 211-225. Comprehensive consideration of the onomastics issues for both women = N. Kanavou, 2011, pp. 130 ff. Camilla's associations with Minerva are explored in detail by L.M. Fratantuono, 2017, pp. 63-88.

⁴³ For the skeptical position, see K.J. Dover, 1972, p. 152 n. 3.

⁴⁴ Cf. the women of the *Lysistrata*, who are viewed by their husbands as neglecting the home for the sake of involvement in public affairs.

⁴⁵ Camilla is exemplary even *post mortem*; cf. her influence on the women of Latinus' city as described at 11.891-5.

⁴⁶ For a start on the difficult problems posed by Virgil's composition see F. Gianotti, 2021, pp. 25-56.

⁴⁷ Cf. the possible ludic anagram by which *Camilla* evokes *Callima-*.

both loveliness and of battle – and her episode is eminently Callimachean in style, a quasi-Alexandrian vignette amid his reimagining of Homer's *Iliad*.

Whatever the relative frequency of names such as “Myrrhine” in classical Athens, or the authorial intentions of associating either Lysistrata or Myrrhine with historical priestesses of Athena, we are left with a tantalizing array of connections that point to the influence of Aristophanes on Virgil, in which the deadly serious military realities that underpin the comedian's verse come to life again in the exploits of a girl who did not so much stop a war like her comic inspiration Lysistrata, as she invested it with an all too fleeting loveliness. Lysistrata's enforced celibacy served to end a war; Camilla's, in contrast, posed its own erotic challenge to the lustful Turnus stallion. And so Aristophanes could celebrate the end of a war with a call for Spartan dances in which Laconian girls suitable for marriage are like fillies, even as Virgil could preface a decisive cavalry battle with an image of frustrated sexuality, as a stallion goes forth among mares with whom there will be no union.⁴⁸

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⁴⁸ And so fittingly in the battle plan of *Aeneid* 11, Turnus will be separated from Camilla: the Rutulian manages the ambush plan for Aeneas, while the Volscian manages the cavalry engagement. This division of responsibilities is symbolic of how the simile of the stallion amid the mares will not result in a scenario familiar to observers of equine behavior, but rather one in which the virgin Camilla will not be joined with Turnus. And so the image of girls as horses is employed toward the close of the *Lysistrata*, when the treaty has been signed and the world of marriage will resume in peaceful course, while in *Aeneid* 11 it comes as the cavalry battle is about to start, a battle that will spell the untimely death of the young and no prospect of nuptial bliss.

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