What's in a drop? Making sense of ΨΑΚΑΣ in Aristophanes, Acharnians 1150–1151

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1 The meaning of ψακάς / ψεκάς in Ancient Greek: 'drizzle' and 'drop of rain'

The noun ψακάς (or ψεκάς) occurs in Greek from the 5th c. BCE ownwards.[1] Like most forms with the suffix -(ι)άδ-, its grammatical gender is invariably feminine.[2] There is no evidence of its use as a masculine nickname, with the exception of one passage in Aristophanes' *Acharnians*, which will be the topic of this paper.[3]

As for its meaning, ψακάς / ψεκάς denotes primarily the meteorological phenomenon of light rain falling in fine drops, Eng. 'drizzle', which can be extended metaphorically to other liquids:[4]

> φάσμα Αἰγυπτίοισι μέγιστον δὴ ἐγένετο· ὕσθησαν γὰρ Θῆβαι αἱ Αἰγύπτιαι, οὔτε πρότερον οὐδαμὰ ὑσθεῖσαι οὔτε ὕστερον τὸ μέχρι ἐμεῦ [...]· οὐ γὰρ δὴ ὕεται τὰ ἄνω τῆς Αἰγύπτου τὸ παράπαν· ἀλλὰ καὶ τότε ὕσθησαν αἱ Θῆβαι ψακάδι
>
> The Egyptians saw a most wonderful sight, namely, rain at Thebes of Egypt, where there had never been rain before, nor since to my lifetime; for indeed there is no rain at all in the upper parts of Egypt; but at that time a drizzle fell at Thebes.
>
> (Hdt. 3.10)

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1 The relation to ψάω 'vanish' is problematic on several accounts (see, for instance, *DÉLG* and *EDG*, s.v.). Lit. *spāgas/spakas* 'drop'is perhaps connected to ψακάς (see Derksen 2015, 418). As for the distribution of ψακάς and ψεκάς, cf. ψακάς Ἀττικοί· ψεκάς Ἕλληνες (Moer. ψ 5 Hansen).

2 For the prehistory of this suffix, see Rau (2004) [2010]. For its use in personal names, see Alonso Déniz (2017).

3 For the use as a woman's personal name, see *infra* § 5.

4 Unless otherwise indicated, English translations are taken from the *Loeb Classical Library* editions. However, I have slightly modified some of them.

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οἱ δὲ ὑετοὶ κατακλύζουσι [sc. τὰ δὲ ἴχνη τοῦ λαγῶ] καὶ αἱ ψακάδες

Heavy rains drown [the footsteps of the hare], and so do drizzles.
(X. *Cyn*. 5.4)

ἀναγομένου δὲ τοῦ ὑγροῦ αἰεὶ διὰ τὴν τοῦ θερμοῦ δύναμιν καὶ πάλιν φερομένου κάτω διὰ τὴν ψύξιν πρὸς τὴν γῆν, τὰ ὀνόματα τοῖς πάθεσιν κεῖται καί τισιν διαφοραῖς αὐτῶν· ὅταν μὲν γὰρ κατὰ μικρὰ φέρηται, ψακάδες, ὅταν δὲ κατὰ μείζω μόρια, ὑετὸς καλεῖται

Moisture then is always made to rise by heat and to fall again to the earth by cold; and there are appropriate names for these processes and for some of their sub-species – for instance when water falls in small drops it is called drizzle, when in larger drops, rain.
(Arist. *Met*. 347a.8–12)

κἀκφυσιῶν ὀξεῖαν αἵματος σφαγὴν / βάλλει μ᾽ ἐρεμνῇ ψακάδι φοινίας δρόσου

And he coughed up a sharp spurt of blood and hit me with a black drizzle of gory dew.
(A. *Ag*. 1389–1390)

The denominative verb ψακάζω ‘to drizzle’ and its compounds are attested already in classical authors:

ἐξ οὐρανοῦ δὲ κἀπὸ γῆς λειμώνιαι / δρόσοι κατεψάκαζον

Dews from the sky, and meadowy ones from the ground, drizzled over us.
(A. *Ag*. 560–561)

οὐ γὰρ ἔσθ᾽ ἥδιον ἢ τυχεῖν μὲν ἤδη ᾽σπαρμένα, / τὸν θεὸν δ᾽ ἐπιψακάζειν

Yes, nothing’s more delightful than having the seed in the ground, and the god pattering it with drizzle.
(Ar. *Pax* 1140–1141)

νιφέτω μὲν ἀλφίτοις, / ψακαζέτω δ᾽ ἄρτοισιν, ὑέτω δ᾽ ἔτνει

Let it snow with barley groats, drizzle with loaves of bread, rain with soup.
(Nicopho fr. 21 *PCG*)

A singulative sense, i.e. the expression of a unit ‘drop’ contained in a ‘drizzle’, is attested in the late lexicographers:[5]

ψεκάς· σταγών ‘*psekas*: drop’ (Hsch. ψ 111 Cunningham and Hansen), ψεκάδες· ῥανίδες, σταγόνες ‘*psekades*: drops, droppings’ (Hsch. ψ 110 Cunningham and Hansen), πρῶκες·

5 For the concept of ‘singulative’ or ‘unitizing’ as a semantic function, see Acquaviva (2015).

σταγόνες, ψεκάδες, σταλαγμοί '*prôkes*: drops, *psekades*, droppings' (Hsch. π 4143 Hansen), ψακὰς γὰρ ἡ ῥανίς 'for *psakas* is 'the drop'' (*Et. M.* 817.13), Lat. *gutta*: ψακάς. ψεκάς. στακτή 'drop: *psakas*, *psekas*, oil of myrrh' (*Gloss.*).

In some passages, it is difficult to determine if the author is referring to the eventive continuous meaning ('drizzle') or to the singulative one ('drop'):[6]

πλάστιγξ θ' ἡ χαλκοῦ θυγάτηρ ἐπ' ἄκραισι καθίζῃ / κοττάβου ὑψηλαῖς κορυφαῖς Βρομίου ψακάδεσσιν

And the disk, the daughter of bronze, sits upon the highest upper point of the cottabus-stand for Bromius' drops/drizzles.

(Critias fr. 1.9–10 *Vorsokr.* Diels-Krantz)

However, some instances in technical works attest to the singulative meaning 'drop of rain' for ψακάς / ψεκάς.[7] Furthermore, in two passages where the singular form is attested in combination with mass nouns (ἀργύριον 'money', ψάμμος 'sand'), the word conveys metaphorically a very small portion of solid entities, confirming the meaning 'drop':[8]

ἄχθομαι ὑμῖν, / ἡνίκ' ἂν αἰτίζητ' ἄρτον πάππαν με καλοῦσαι, / ἔνδον δ' ἀργυρίου μηδὲ ψακὰς ᾗ πάνυ πάμπαν

You annoy me, when you ask me for bread and call me dear daddy, and in our house there's nary a droplet of money at all. (Ar. *P.* 119–121)[9]

6 This is the reason for some mismatches in modern lexica. For instance, for Arist. *Met.* 347a 8–11, where the term has in all probability the eventive and continuous sense 'drizzle', we find the translation 'drop of rain' in *LSJ*, *BDAG* and 'goutte' in *DGF*. For *Ag.* 1389–1390 and Sim. 47.1–2, where ψακάς has the metaphorical sense 'drizzle of blood', *DGF* translates 'goutte' and *HWGS* 'Blutstropfen', as if it were a singular for plural (*LSJ* and *BDAG* interpret 'shower', which is closer to the original). I will deal in another paper with the interpretation of the singulative meaning of nouns related to meteorological precipitations.

7 E.g. Arist. *Met.* 348a 4–13 and [Arist.] *Mund.* 394a 29–33 = Posid. fr. 336a Theiler.

8 As for the dat. pl. ψᾰκᾰδῐσχίοις (*P.Petr.* 2, 35, A3.5–6, 3rd BCE), I will try to show in another paper that it is probably a dat. pl. of a diminutive noun ψακαδίσκιον 'small drop' > 'small spot' (cf. κοτύλη → κοτυλίσκος → κοτυλίσκιον); see already Mayser (1936, 101).

9 See for this expression Taillardat (1965, 125–128), Willi (2003, 181). The scholia to this passage are aware of the metaphor: ψακάς· τὸ σμικρότατον (Σ^{RVLh}, *Pax* 121b). They also consider it (perhaps mistakenly) a rural expression: μηδὲ ὀβολοῦ ὄντος ἡμῖν διὰ τὸν πόλεμον. γεωργὸς γάρ ἐστι· διὸ καὶ τῇ ψακάδι ἁρμοδίως ἐχρήσατο 'For we do not have even an obol because of the war'. He is a countryman and he uses "drop" accordingly' (Σ^{RV} *Pax* 121a). The same expression is found in Latin: *quoi nec parata est gutta certi consili* / [*neque adeo argenti*] 'Not a drop of

> ἶσον ἐπὶ ψαφαρὴν ἀντλεῖν ἄλα, κἀπὸ Λιβύσσης / ψάμμου ἀριθμητὴν ἀρτιάσαι ψεκάδα, / ἶσον καὶ παίδων στέργειν πόθον
>
> Like baling the sea on to the dry land and counting a drop from the Libyan sand is to court the love of boys. (*AP* 12.145.3–5)[10]

These two senses of ψακάς / ψεκάς are paralleled by νιφάς, another noun referring to a meteorological precipitation phenomenon, which usually denotes a 'snowstorm' (eventive and continuous), but occasionally can refer to a 'snowflake' (singulative):

> ὡς δ' ὅτ' ἂν ἐκ νεφέων πτῆται νιφὰς ἠὲ χάλαζα / ψυχρὴ ὑπὸ ῥιπῆς αἰθρηγενέος Βορέαο
>
> And as when from the clouds there flies snow or chill hail, driven by the blast of the North Wind that is born in the bright heaven.
>
> (Hom. *Il*. 15.170–171)

> ὥς τε νιφάδες χιόνος πίπτωσι θαμειαὶ / ἵματι χειμερί
>
> As flakes of snow fall thick on a winter's day.
>
> (Hom. *Il*. 12.278–279)

In sum, ψακάς / ψεκάς exhibits two meanings in Ancient Greek texts: 'drizzle', from which the denominative ψακάζω / ψεκάζω 'to drizzle' is derived, and 'drop of rain', which metaphorically can denote 'a small drop'or 'a small quantity' of a liquid or solid entity.

2 Aristophanes, *Acharnians* 1150–1155 and Antimachus

In one of the final scenes of the *Acharnians*, Lamachus is summoned to prepare himself to leave Athens and defend the northern Attic passes against an imminent Boeotian raid. Meanwhile, Dicaeopolis receives an invitation to attend a

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certain counsel is ready for you, or indeed of money' (Plaut. *Pseud*. 397–398). Cf. also Sp. *añadir al guiso una gota de sal* 'Add a little salt to the stew.'

10 The passage is difficult. The expression ἀριθμητὴν ἀρτιάσαι ψεκάδα was interpreted by Jacobs (1802, 307) as ἀριθμῆσαι ψεκάδα 'count one drop'. According to Gow/Page (1965, 564), it means "get the total of counted grains precise" (ἄρτιος), "square the total". I will study the image in another paper.

public feast organized by the priest of Dionysos (1069–1094). A swift dialogue follows, in which the former bemoans his luck as he prepares his meager food supplies and his weaponry, whereas the latter joyfully gets ready for the banquet (1095–1142). After reflecting on the disparate fortunes of Lamachus and Dicaeopolis in a short anapestic introduction which resembles a *kommation* (1143–1149), the chorus launches a bitter attack against some Antimachus in two lyric stanzas (iambo-choriambic rhythm),[11] which start with the following lines:[12]

Ἀντίμαχον τὸν Ψακάδος, †τὸν ξυγγραφῆ, τὸν μελέων ποητήν,† 1150–1151
ὡς μὲν ἁπλῷ λόγῳ κακῶς ἐξολέσειεν ὁ Ζεύς· 1152–1153
ὅς γ' ἐμὲ τὸν τλήμονα Λήναια χορηγῶν ἀπέλυσ' ἄδειπνον. 1154–1155

Antimachus son of *Psacas*, the draftsman, the composer of wretched lyrics,
to put it bluntly, may Zeus destroy him utterly!
For when he sponsored a Lenaean chorus he dismissed poor me without a dinner.

The chorus puts several additional curses on Antimachus: a bitch shall take away from him a sizzling squid when he is ready to eat it (1156–1161); he shall come at night on his horse and a drunk Orestes shall hit him on the head (1162–1168); when he looks for a stone to throw back at his aggressor, he shall find instead fresh dung with which he shall hit the comic Cratinus (1168–1173).

All that we know about this Antimachus is the information transmitted by the scholia. Most of them agree in considering him a poet and a *choregos*, but the reason for the chorus' resentment towards him seems to have been a matter of dispute among commentators. According to some, he behaved in a miserly manner towards the members of the chorus,[13] but others believed that he proposed a bill forbidding comic composers to mock citizens by name, and, as a result, several poets refrained from forming a chorus, so that *choreutai* allegedly starved.[14] A shorter version of the latter interpretation contends that the decree

11 See Parker (1997, 149–151). Although not strictly a parabasis, the chorus' intervention exhibits several parabatic characteristics (see Totaro 1999, 15–17 and Lauriola 2010, 222–226).

12 I reproduce the text and line division in Olson (2002). The translation is Sommerstein's (1980, 149), with slight modifications.

13 οἱ δὲ λέγουσιν ὅτι [*sc.* ὁ Ἀντίμαχος] ποιητὴς ὢν καλὸς (κακὸς?) χορηγῶν ποτε μικρολόγως τοῖς χορευταῖς ἐχρήσατο (Σ^{EGLh} 1150a; cf. *Suda* α 2683).

14 ἐδόκει δὲ ὁ Ἀντίμαχος οὗτος ψήφισμα πεποιηκέναι ὅτι μὴ δεῖ κωμῳδεῖν ἐξ ὀνόματος, καὶ ἐπὶ τούτῳ πολλοὶ τῶν ποιητῶν οὐ προσῆλθον ληψόμενοι τὸν χορόν, καὶ δῆλον ὅτι πολλοὶ τῶν τῶν ποιητῶν οὐ προσῆλθον ληψόμενοι τὸν χορόν, καὶ δῆλον ὅτι πολλοὶ τῶν χορευτῶν ἐπείνων.

that Antimachus had supposedly defended did not allow *choregoi* to give anything to the chorus, i.e., *choreutai* ceased to be paid.[15] Olson (2002, 348) supposes that the three Antimachi attested in Old Comedy, the one mentioned by Aristophanes in *Acharnians*, the one ridiculed in *Clouds* (1022–1023), and the banker mentioned by Eupolis (fr. 134*PCG* = Σ^{EM} Ar. *Nub*. 1022), could all be one and the same man.[16] Be that as it may, Antimachus must have been a real citizen who lived in Athens and was in all probability still alive around 425 (*pace* Wilson 2000, 320 n. 93).

As for Ψακάδος following Ἀντίμαχον in 1150,[17] a scholium in the Ravennas manuscript (R, ca. 950) suggests two alternative explanations:

> τὸν Ψακάδος ἔφη, οἱ μὲν ὅτι οὕτως ἐπεκαλεῖτο διὰ τὸ συνεχῶς πτύειν, ἢ διὰ τὸ μηδὲν ἀναλῶσαι.
>
> Some consider that [the chorus] says 'son of *Psakas*' because he was nicknamed in that manner for his habit of spitting, or because he never spent anything. (Σ^{R}1150c)

Conversely, the *Suda*, the paroemiographers and the scholia of the more recent codices (14th–15th c.) agree in sticking to the first explanation, i.e. that Antimachus spread an excessive amount of saliva droplets as he talked:

> ψεκάς. δρόσος. Ἀντίμαχος οὕτως ἐκαλεῖτο Ψεκάς. ἐπὶ τῶν πτυελωδῶν. οὗτος δὲ μελῶν ἦν ποιητής. οὕτω δὲ ἐκλήθη, διότι προσέρραινε τοὺς ὁμιλοῦντας (*sic*) διαλεγόμενος.
>
> *Psecas*. Dew. Antimachus was nicknamed so, *Psecas*. [It is said] of those who spittle. He was a poet of lyric verses. And he was so called because he spattered with saliva his conversation partners when he talked.
>
> (*Suda* ψ 39 Adler; cf. α 2683)[18]
>
> ψεκάς. ἡ δρόσος. οὕτως ἐκαλεῖτο Ἀντίμαχος πτυελώδης ὤν. οὗτος δὲ μελῶν ἦν ποιητής· οὕτω δὲ ἐκαλεῖτο, διότι προσέρραινε τοῖς ὁμιλοῦσι διαλεγόμενος.

ἐχορήγει δὲ τότε ὁ Ἀντίμαχος ὅτε εἰσήνεγκε τὸ ψήφισμα ($\Sigma^{EΓLh}$1150a; cf. *Suda* α 2683 and ψ 39 Adler).

15 φασὶ γὰρ αὐτὸν γράψαι ψήφισμα ὥστε τοὺς χοροὺς μηδὲν ἐκ τῶν χορηγῶν λαμβάνειν (Σ^{R}1150c).

16 The scholiasts say that the Antimachus mentioned in Ar. *Nub*. 1022 (cf. also *Suda* α 2684 Adler) was mocked for being a beautiful and effeminate catamite, and add that there was a second Antimachus, who was mocked for being a villain; a third, called "son of *Psakas*"; a fourth, a banker mentioned by Eupolis; and a fifth, a historian, who was perhaps the same as the first one.

17 The so-called 4th hand in the Laurentianus plut. 31, 15 (14th c.) and the *Suda* have Ψεκάδος.

18 The scholium of *Nub*. 1022 which enumerates the different *Antimachoi* (see n. 16) has ψαδακος in one of the versions (Σ^{E}), which is a *vox nihili* resulting from the transposition of *delta* and *kappa*.

> *Psecas*: the dew. Antimachus was dubbed in that manner because he used to spit. He was a poet of lyric verses. And he was so called because he spattered with saliva his conversation partners when he talked
>
> (Diogenian. 8.71)[19]

> Ψακὰς δὲ οὗτος ἐπεκαλεῖτο, ἐπειδὴ προσέρραινε τοὺς ὁμιλοῦντας (*sic*) διαλεγόμενος
>
> He was nicknamed *Psacas* because he spattered his conversation partners with saliva when he was talking. ($\Sigma^{E\Gamma}$1150a)
>
> Ψακὰς ὁ Ἀντίμαχος ἐπεκαλεῖτο, ὁ συγγραφεύς, ὁ τῶν μελῶν ποιητής ἐπειδὴ προσέρραινε τοὺς ὁμιλοῦντας (*sic*) διαλεγόμενος
>
> Antimachus, the *syngrapheus*, the poet of melic songs, was nicknamed *Psacas* because he spattered his conversation partners with saliva when he was talking. (Σ^{Lh}1150a [see app.crit.] and d)

Another man was allegedly nicknamed Ψακάς for identical reasons: ἦν δέ τις καὶ Ὀλυμπι<όνι>κος καλούμενος Ψακὰς διὰ τοῦτο ($\Sigma^{E\Gamma Lh}$1150a; cf. *Suda* α 2683 and ψ 39 Adler).

Olson (2002, 340) concludes that Ψακάς, which is nowhere to be found as a personal name in Attic literary or documentary texts, "is probably not a true patronymic, but a joke." The interpretation that Antimachus spread too much saliva as he talked and was consequently dubbed "son of Ψακάς" has been accepted by most modern scholars (see Ribbeck 1864, 262; Blaydes 1887, 437; Green 1892, 89; Leuween 1901, 184; Merry 1901, 64–65; Graves 1905, 129; Rennie 1909, 255; Starkie 1909, 223–224; Rogers 1910, 175–176; Radke 1959, 1355; Cantarella 1953, 223; Mastromarco 1979, 198, n. 169; Sommerstein 1980, 210; Thiercy 1988, 157; Rodríguez Adrados 1991, 75, n. 216; Macía Aparicio 1993, 134, n. 75; Henderson 1998, 207, n. 134; de Cremoux 2008, 152–153; Olson 2002, 340; Kanavou 2011, 47).

Some scholars translate Aristophanes' text literally: "illum Psacadis filium" (Longueville 1838), "filius Guttae" (Blaydes 1887), "le fils 'de la Goutte'" (van Daele in Coulon 1923), "τὸ γιὸ τοῦ Σταγονίδη" (Koumanoudis 1985), "figlio di Psakàs" (Cantarella 1953), "el de Psácade" (Rodríguez Adrados 1991), "figlio di Psacade" (Lauriola 2008, 185).

Others try to render the interpretation of the scholia: "the son of Spluttering" (Green 1892), "offspring of Sputter" (Rogers 1910), "son of Splutter" (Merry 1901, Rennie 1909), "figlio di Sputacchione" (Russo 1953), "il figlio di Scharac-

19 Cf. Greg. Cypr. [*Cod.Leid.*] 3.41, Apost. 18.51. The version in Erasmus' *Adagia* (2.9.44) is simply a misinterpretation of the Dutch scholar.

chio" (Mastromarco 1979, Lauriola 2010, 223), "son of Showers" (Sommerstein 1980), "Antímaco, el de Chaparrón" (Rodríguez Monescillo 1985), "le fils Ducrachin" (Thiercy 1988), "hijo de Tiraperdigones" (Macía Aparicio 1993) "el hijo de Espurreo" (Gil Fernández 1995), "son of Drizzler" (Henderson 1998), "fils de Postillon" (de Cremoux 2008), "son of sputter" (Kanavou 2011, 47).

3 Did Antimachus spread an excessive amount of saliva when he talked? The linguistic evidence

For all the unanimity of scholars, the interpretation of Antimachus as a person who used to shower his conversation partners with saliva as he spoke is hardly right.

To begin with, everything about Antimachus in the scholia is easily inferred from the text itself. Despite the metrical and textual problem of 1151,[20] it is clear from the text that he was a poet and probably a member of a board of ξυγγραφεῖς 'draftsmen' or 'commissioners'.[21] Antimachus was also a *choregos* at

20 The line exhibits τὸν ξυγγραφῆ, τὸν (τῶν R and P) μελέων ποιητήν in the manuscripts, with an initial iambic metron followed by a choriamb and a bacchiac, which is echoed by κᾆθ' ἕτερον νυκτερινὸν γένοιτο in the antistrophe (1163), with an initial choriamb instead. Some modern editors do not alter the transmitted text (e.g. Coulon 1923, Cantarella 1953, Sommerstein 1980), assuming that the contracted ξυγγραφῆ is possible and that an iambic metron can respond to a choriamb. But contracted forms of nouns and personal names in -εύς in 5th c. Attic drama are only found in Euripides' Doric songs: Ὀδυσσῆ (*Rh.* 708), Ἀχιλλῆ (*El.* 439), βασιλῆ (fr. 781.24 *TrGF* Kannicht). Elmsley (1830) deemed line 1151 to be an interpolation derived from the scholia, and he proposed to dispense with ξυγγραφεύς and read τὸν μέλεον τῶν μελέων ποιητήν 'the wretched poet of the wretched lyric songs.' A variation of this correction is τῶν μελέων τὸν μέλεον ποιητήν, conjectured by Dobree (1833, 193). A more radical approach is adopted by Bothe (1845, 108), who erases τὸν ξυγγραφῆ and αὐτῷ κακόν in 1162. For other substitutions of τὸν ξυγγραφῆ proposed by modern scholars, see Rogers (1910, 232). Other editors retain the noun ξυγγραφεύς and accordingly suggest other emendations for the verse: τὸν μέλεον ξυγγραφέα ποιητήν θ' 'the wretched composer and poet' (Blaydes 1882), ξυγγραφέα, τῶν μελέων ποιητήν 'composer, poet of the wretched lyric songs' (Rogers 1910), τὸν μελέων ξυγγραφέα ποιητήν θ' 'the composer and poet of the wretched lyric songs' (Elliott 1914).

21 In the legislative practice of Athens before 411 BCE, the συγγραφεῖς were citizens appointed to draft or compose (συγγράφω) proposals eventually ratified by the appropriate bodies (see the examples in inscriptions and historical sources in Smith 1920, 16–31; Kahrstedt 1932, 1387–1388; Rhodes 1997, 27). The acc. ξυγγραφῆ (*recte* ξυγγραφέα) is hardly an interpolation (see n. 20). Only if ξυγγραφέα was in the transmitted text, some ancient commentator could have

the Lenaia festival, and he did not offer the banquet to members of the chorus (1154–1155). The alleged *lex Antimachea* was made up by late scholars eager to find a connection between the chorus' grudge against Antimachus and the noun ξυγγραφέα in 1151 (Körte 1921, 1234–1235, Halliwell 1984, 86–87). The divergences in the content of the law and the use of expressions like ἐδόκει ($\Sigma^{EГLh}$, cf. n. 14) and φασί (Σ^{R}, cf. n. 15) point to a blatant invention.[22] Similarly, the second interpretation of Ψακάδος provided by the Ravennas scholium (διὰ τὸ μηδὲν ἀναλῶσαι 'because he did not spend anything' (Σ^{R}); see § 2) is mere guesswork, just like the scholium to ἀπέλυσ᾽ ἄδειπνον (1155) in later codices: ἀντὶ τοῦ ἀπεστέρησε τοὺς μισθούς 'Instead of saying "he despoiled me of my salary"' ($\Sigma^{EГLh}$1155c).

More importantly, all other scholia assumed incredibly that Ψακάς was Antimachus' nickname, rather than his patronymic: Ἀντίμαχος οὕτως ἐκαλεῖτο Ψεκάς (*Suda* ψ 39), Ψακὰς δὲ οὗτος ἐπεκαλεῖτο ($\Sigma^{EГ}$; cf. *Suda* α 2683), etc. (for the rest of the instances see § 2). This explanation is obviously at odds with the text of all the manuscripts, which unanimously exhibit Ἀντίμαχον τὸν Ψακάδος. Strangely enough, some modern scholars seem to have accepted this interpretation and dispense with the patronymic in their translations: "spuckender Antimachos" (Ribbeck 1864, 177), "de[r] sabbernde[r] Wicht" (Wissmann 1881), "das Spritzbüchsenmaul" (Seeger 1968), "τον Αντίμαχο [...] τον σαλιάρη" (Roussos 1992).[23] Some scholars (e. g. Starkie 1909) believe that the interpretation is based on a copy of *Acharnians* that had Ἀντίμαχον τὸν Ψακάδα in 1150. As far as I know, this variant appears only in the citation of the verse in a manuscript of the *Suda* (*Parisinus* gr. 2623, 15th c.): καί φησιν Ἀριστοφάνης περὶ Ἀντιμάχου "Ἀντίμαχον τὸν Ψεκάδα ὡς μὲν ἁπλῷ λόγῳ" 'And Aristophanes says about Antimachus: "Antimachus the Psecas, to put it bluntly"' (τ 424 Adler), instead of the reading Ἀντίμαχον τὸν Ψεκάδος of all other sources. Arguably, the interpretation as an epithet of Antimachus found in the scholia has been incorporated into the quotation of 1150 of the *Parisinus* gr. 2623. This intrusive gloss is paralleled by the *varia lectio* ἀπέκλεισε δείπνων (1155) of the Ravennas manuscript,

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eventually over-interpreted the technical term and made him the draftsman of the *lex Antimachea*. Furthermore, the discrepancy between συγγραφ- (Koine) in the scholia and ξυγγραφ- (Attic) in the text can be easily accounted for if we accept that the former was simply a gloss of the latter.

22 Arguably, other references in the scholia to laws against ὀνομαστὶ κωμῳδεῖν have no factual base at all and are drawn from Hellenistic views on censorship in Classical Athens (Halliwell, 1991, 56; pace Gil Fernández 2007, 68–69).

23 See also Hug 1929, 1831.

instead of ἀπέλυσ᾽ ἄδειπνον or ἀπέλυσεν ἄδειπνον of later manuscripts, which in all probability originated in the explanatory note of the scholia (ἀπέκλεισε δείπνων $\Sigma^{EГ}$).[24]

The above evidence raises serious doubts about the explanation of the patronymic Ψακάς in the scholia. As generally happens with Aristophanic scholia, "plain ignorance is rampant" (Wilson 2007b, 54) and "the great bulk of annotation upon ἱστορίαι is [...] untrustworthy or entirely worthless" (Rutherford 1905, 383).

Linguistically, the interpretation of the scholia of ψακάς as 'drizzler' > 'sputterer' assumes a backformation of the verb ψακάζω. Leaving aside the fact that this sense never occurs in Ancient Greek (see § 1), ψακάς could hardly be understood as a backformation of ψακάζω by the 5th c. BCE Greek speakers. To begin with, deverbative adjectives in -άδ- are for the most part not based on -άζω verbs: κρεμάννυμι (cf. aor. κρεμάσαι) 'hang up' (Hom.+) → κρεμάς 'beetling' (A.), φθίνω 'waste' (Hom.+) → φθινάς 'wasting' (S.+), μείγνυμι (cf. aor. ἐμίγην, Hom.+) → μιγάς 'mixed pell-mell' (Eur.+). A similar pattern is found in deverbative nouns in -άδ-, which are perhaps nominalizations of ancient adjectives: μαίνομαι 'to be mad' (Hom.+) → μαινάς 'frantic woman' (Hom.+), φυγεῖν 'escape' (Hom.+) → φυγάς 'fugitive' (Hdt.+), λάμπω 'shine' (Hom.+) → λαμπάς 'lamp' (Hdt.+), ἴσχω 'restrain' (Hom.+) → ἰσχάς 'anchor' (Soph.+).[25]

Conversely, whenever an -άζω verb is found alongside a deverbative -άδ- adjective or noun, the former is the derived form: σποράς 'scattered' (Hdt.+) → σποράζω 'scatter' (*IG* II^2, 8388, 3rd c. BCE), ἰλλάς 'rope' (Hom.+) → ἰλλάζει· δεσμεύει. συστρέφει. ἀγελάζει 'bind up' (Hsch. ι 574 Latte), λιβάς 'anything that drips' (Soph.+) → λιβάζομαι 'run out in drops, trickle' (Antiphan. Megalop. *AP* 9.258), λαμπάς 'torch' → λαμπάζω 'give light' (Man., 4.318),[26] πεμπάς 'group of five' (X.+) → πεμπάζομαι 'reckon up on the five fingers' (Hom.). Incidentally, πτυάς 'sputterer', a kind of serpent, according to Dioscorides (*Eup*. 2.125) directly derives from πτύω (**πτυάζω is never attested). Furthermore, some -άδ- forms are denominative: νομή 'pasturage' (*h.Ven.*+) → νομάς 'roaming, grazing' (ἵπποι, S. *Tr*. 271; cf. νέμω), Βρόμιος (Pi.+) → βρομιάς 'of Bacchus (fem.)' (Pi.), ἵππος → ἱππάς 'of the horse' (Hdt.), λίθος 'stone' → λιθάς '(group of) stone(s)' (Hom.+), ἀμοιβή 'change' (Hom.+) → ἀμοιβάς 'as change of raiment' (Hom.+; cf. ἀμείβω 'to change'). The -άζω verbs associated with the mentioned forms can

24 Elmsley (1830) preferred the text transmitted by Ravennas and printed ἀπέκλεισ᾽ ἄδειπνον.

25 Similar pairs are attested with different root vocalism: νομάς 'roaming about for pasture' (Hdt.): νέμω 'pasture' (Hom.+), λογάς 'chosen' (Hdt.+) : λέγω 'pick up' (Hom.+).

26 A deverbative is also possible (see *DÉLG*, s. v. λάμπω).

either be based on the the secondary -άδ- noun or on the primary form: νομάζω 'graze' (Nic. *Th*. 950), βρομιάζομαι 'be in a frenzied state' (Glauc. *AP* 9.774.2), ἱππάζομαι 'drive horses' (*Il*.+),[27] λιθάζω 'fling stones' (A.+), ἀμοιβάζω 'exchange' (Men. *Prot*. p. 22). Be that as it may, a backformation of the type supposed in ψακάζω 'to drizzle' → ψακάς 'drizzler' does not account for any of these forms.

More importantly, the expected derivation ψακάς 'drizzle' → ψακάζω 'to drizzle' matches other non-deverbative or non-denominative nouns in -άδ-: ψιάς 'drop' (Hom.+) → ψιάζει· ψακάζει 'drizzle' (Hsch. ψ 170 Cunningham and Hansen), χερμάς 'large pebble' (Pi.+) → ἐχερμάζομεν· τὴν γῆν εἰργαζόμεθα (Hsch. ε 7609 Latte), κασαλβάς 'whore' (Ar.) → κασαλβάζω 'behave like a whore' (Hermipp. fr. iamb. 5.2 *IE*^{2}). Consequently, the signification 'drizzler', of ψακάς = ψακάζων, can hardly have been conceived by Aristophanes even as a pun, since a natural linguistic rationale for its success, i.e. the backformation of -άδ- nouns from -άζω verbs, is lacking. Like all other interpretations found in the scholia (see *supra*), this one is also a mere guess, which relies on a false analogy (νομάζω 'graze' : νομάς 'one who grazes' :: ψακάζω 'drizzle' : x, where x = 'one who drizzles'), which happens to be unsupported by the linguistic and textual evidence.

That the explanation of Ψακάς in the Greek scholia is an invention is confirmed by two more similarly absurd pieces of scholarly ingenuity. The first one appears in the *Etymologicum Magnum*:

> Ψακάς. ὄνομα αὐλητρίδος· οὕτως δὲ ἐκαλεῖτο, ἐπειδὴ ἀπὸ πότων θᾶττον ἀπέτρεχε, πρὸς ὀλίγον παραμένουσα. ψακὰς γὰρ ἡ ῥανίς
>
> *Psakas*. Name of a flute player. She was so called because she used to go out running from drinking-bouts and only stayed for a little while. For *psakas* is 'the drop'.
>
> (*Et. M*. 817.11–13)

The second is attested in a scholium to Juvenal's famous misogynistic *Sixth Satire*, where the poet describes a despotic and fatuous mistress who mistreats her house staff (474–511) and in particular a slave girl named *Psecas*, who is beaten for not making her more beautiful:

> disponit crinem laceratis ipsa capillis/ nuda umeros Psecas infelix nudisque mamillis
>
> Unlucky Psecas will be arranging her hair with her own strands torn, with her shoulders and her breasts stripped bare.
>
> (Iuu. 6.490–491)

27 Perhaps analogical on αἰχμάζω (see Risch 1974, 29).

The scholium explains the passage as follows:

> psecazin (ms. pseucazin) Graeci dicunt, quando minutum sive rarum pluit. ornatrices igitur componentes rarum ac parvum aquae solent mittere ac velut psecazin (ms. pseucazin). ergo nominis etymologiam ab arte sumsit
>
> The Greeks say ψεκάζειν when it rains a little or for a short time. Therefore, when the adorners set it (sc. the hair) up, usually they put in and sort of drizzle a bit of water. (Juvenal) has extracted the etymology of the name from the job. (Σ^{π})[28]

This interpretation, accepted by Radke (1959, 1354–1355) and Courtney (1980, 283), echoes the one assumed by the Greek scholia to Ar. *Ach.* 1150 and it equally amounts to nothing:[29] *Psecas* was just a frequent slave name in imperial Rome (see infra § 5). Although Juvenal's *scholia vetustiora* only mention Aristophanes once (cf. the scholium *ad* 2.92), it is possible that the interpretation of *Psecas* ultimately depends on a scholar's work on the Athenian playwright.

In sum, there is no reason to believe that ψακάς might have been used by Aristophanes with any other sense than 'drizzle' or 'drop of rain'.

4 Two problematic modern explanations: ὁ ψακάδος ξυγγραφεύς and τὸν ψακαδᾶν

Some modern scholars disregard the scholiasts' opinion and interpret ψακάδος as a noun instead of a name.

Hall and Geldart (1906) and Wilson (2007a) print Ἀντίμαχον τὸν ψακάδος, †τὸν ξυγγραφῆ†, τὸν μελέων ποιητήν (1150–1151).[30] As for the syntax and sense, Hall and Geldart write in their apparatus: "τὸν ξυγγραφῆ] fortasse ξυγγραφέα, ut ψακάδος pro ψηφίσματος sit παρ' ὑπόνοιαν." They assume that ψακάδος is an objective genitive and it is used instead of ψηφίσματος: τὸν ψακάδος ξυγγραφέα is therefore "the draftsman of a drizzle" or "of a drop", which should be understood metaphorically as τὸν ψηφίσματος ξυγγραφέα "the draftsman of a decree." However, this hypothesis rests exclusively upon the alleged *lex Antimachea* mentioned in the *scholia*, which, as I have shown *supra* (§ 3), must have

28 The *scholia recentiora* are less explicit: ψεκάς. *nomen ancillae quae comebat crinem dominae* "*psecas*. Name of a servant who arranged her mistress's hair" (Σ^{UTE}).

29 On the history and nature of the *scholia vestustiora* (Σ^{π}), see now Bernadó Ferrer (2015).

30 For the textual problem of 1151, see supra n. 20.

been invented by some ancient scholar. Furthermore, the rationale for understanding a decree metaphorically in terms of a drop or a drizzle is hard to imagine. Even if we assume that ψακάς was used here metaphorically (a very small, insignificant thing, see § 1), the pun is obscured by the fact that the phrase τὸν ψακάδος ξυγγραφέα leaves the alleged underlying reference to a decree totally undetermined. Moreover, the lack of any grammatical deixis is detrimental to this hypothesis. Unsurprisingly, Hall and Geldart, who were not fully convinced by their own proposal, left the transmitted text untouched.

Combining Hall and Geldart's emendation, the interpretation of the scholia which take Ψακάς as Antimachus' nickname, instead of his patronymic, and Ψακάδα as a v.l. in the *Suda* (cf. supra § 3), Starkie (1909)[31] proposes to read Ἀντίμαχον, τὸν ψακαδᾶν ξυγγραφέα, τὸν μέλεον ποιητήν 'Antimachus, the spluttering draughtsman, the scald rhymer.' The noun ψακαδᾶς, which is attested nowhere else, is supposedly an equivalent of ψακάζων, and similar to other deverbative nouns in -ᾶς: φαγᾶς 'glutton', κατωφαγᾶς 'gluttonous' (: φαγεῖν), τρεσᾶς 'coward' (: τρέσαι 'flee from fear'). However, for all its originality, Starkie's proposal is hard to accept, since the parallels given by Starkie are all deverbative, whereas ψακαδᾶς could only be a denominative (see § 3).

Starkie's proposal *ψακαδᾶς can be seen as a denominative similar to other formations found in late Greek: κλειδᾶς, from κλειδοποιός 'locksmith', ὀρνιθᾶς 'poulterer', ῥαφιδᾶς 'embroiderer' (see Masson 1972, 99–101). The colloquial ending -ᾶς was particularly favored by Attic writers for the creation of humorous nicknames (see Peppler 1902, 40–41): Βακχᾶς, a mock term for Dionysus used by Sophocles in one of his satirical plays (fr. 674 *TrGF* Radt), Κοννᾶς (Ar. *Eq*. 534 and Cratin. fr. 349.2 *PCG*), derived from κόννος 'fringe of hair' (Curbera 2013, 130–131). Terms of derision also exhibit -ᾶς in comic writers, cf. σαννᾶς 'idiot' (Cratin. fr. 489 *PCG*; see Curbera 2013, 140). As it happens, the denominative of ἐμβάς 'slipper' (gen. -άδος) has a derivate in -ᾶς, ἐμβαδᾶς 'cobbler', which, according to one scholium (*schol*. Plat. *Ap*. 18b Greene), was a nickname of Anytus, Socrates' accuser, used by two contemporaries of Aristophanes (Theopomp. Com. fr. 58 *PCG* and Archipp. fr. 31 *PCG*; for the connotation of the nickname, see Gavrilov 1996).

Had Aristophanes created *ψακαδᾶς as an insult for Antimachus, the interpretation should have been, as the parallels above show, 'seller of drizzle' or 'seller of drops'. However, Starkie's emendation is methodologically problemat-

31 According to Starkie, τὸν ψακαδᾶν ξυγγραφέα = τὸν ψακάζοντα ξυγγραφέα, but there is no evidence that the verb could apply to persons.

ic, since it requires replacing the transmitted text Ψακάδος, which does not seem to be corrupt, with a created word attested nowhere else.

To sum up, the hypothesis that links ψακάδος to the following noun (ξυγγραφῆ or ξυγγραφέα) does not satisfactorily explain Aristophanes' line. Consequently, Ψακάδος must be constructed with Ἀντίμαχον.[32]

5 An alternative interpretation of *Ach.* 1150: drops and the smallness metaphor in Ancient Greek onomastics

I have shown before that the metaphorical meaning of ψακάς connoting smallness is attested in Aristophanes (ἀργυρίου ψακάς 'a droplet of money'; see § 1).

Personal names derived from adjectives meaning 'little, short' (βραχύς/βροχύς, (σ)μικρός, μικ(κ)ός, τυννός, etc.) are fairly common in Ancient Greek (Bechtel 1898, 9–12 and Bechtel 1917, 484–486). Arguably, the smallness conveyed by ψακάς / ψεκάς is also behind the use of the noun as a woman's personal name. There are some isolated examples in Greek sources,[33] but most cases appear in Latin sources (*Psacas* and much more frequently *Psec(h)as*).[34] According to the *TLL*, Caelius *apud* Cicero and Juvenal (see § 3) apparently used *Psecas* as a generic term for 'a slave woman', but the instances of this form are more likely to be personal names.[35]

Other nouns (or derivatives of them) signaling small entities are attested as personal names. After σπιθαμή, the very small space one can embrace between

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32 The construction name + patronymic is attested at the beginning of the verse: Ἀμυνίας μὲν ὁ Προνάπους (*V*. 74; see Poultney 1936, 22–23 for other cases).

33 See Risch (1975, 110–112). In *IGUR* 535 (Rome, ἐνθάδε κεῖται πᾶσιν [π]οθινὸς [Ἐ]ξετέων [Ἀ]μασεύς καὶ [Ψ]ε̣κάδος), [Ψ]ε̣κάδος is probably the matronymic (see Klaffenbach 1953, 290). Similarly, in a late dedication to Kore from Pisidia (*SEG* 19, 828, *Kaynar Kalesi*), the formula Κλωδία Μανοῦ Ψεκάδος perhaps contains the name of the mother, Μανοῦ (nom. Μανοῦς), and the name of the grandmother, Ψεκάδος (see Bean 1960, 49). For the inflexion of personal names in -οῦς in Pisida, see Dubois (2010, 412–413).

34 See Solin (1996, 531) and Solin (2003, 1206) for other spellings (*Spechas, Psaechas*). It is also a nymph's name in Ovid (*Met*. 3.172).

35 See *TLL*, X 2 (2006), p. 2408. Although *psecas* is interpreted as the profession of *Arcelaus* in a Roman inscription (*CIL* VI, 9840; now lost), an interpretation as two personal names in asyndeton cannot be ruled out.

the thumb and little finger, are created Σπιθαμαῖος and perhaps Σπιθάμης.[36] In MGk the expression άνθρωπος μιας (σ)πιθαμής indicates a very short person (cf. also σπιθαμιαίος). The word πάσσαλος (Att. πάτταλος), a 'pin', can also signify an insignificant thing,[37] hence the personal names Πάτταλος and Πασσαλᾶς.[38] MGk πινέζα 'drawing pin' (from Fr. *punaise*) is used colloquially for a very small person. Other small entities are behind the personal names Πάταικος, Γρῦττος, Κολλυβᾶς, Νόσσος and Φόρυς (see Curbera 2013). Cross-linguistically, babies and little people are conceived as small things or animals (cf. Eng. *peanut, midge, mite, tad*, *Thumbling*).

Nouns in the same semantic sphere as ψακάς provide additional evidence of the use of precipitation phenomena as a smallness metaphor in onomastics. The noun νιφάς can mean 'snowstorm', but also 'snow-flake' (see § 1). According to the scholium to *Pax* 121, νιφάς was also used for a very small thing: ψακάς· τὸ σμικρότατον, ὃ καὶ νιφὰς καλεῖται (Σ^{RVLh}; cf. n. 9). Νιφάς is probably a woman in Atrax in the 3rd c. BCE (Bouchon *et al.* 2016, n. 316),[39] and this name is widely attested in Latin sources (Solin 2003, 1216).

The word σταλαγμός 'dripping' is attested metaphorically for a small quantity in Attic drama, like ψακάς:

> σὺ δ' ἀλλά μοι σταλαγμὸν εἰρήνης / ἕνα εἰς τὸν καλαμίσκον ἐνστάλαξον τουτονί
>
> No, please drip me just one drop of peace into this fennel stalk!
>
> (Ar. *Ach*. 1033–1034)

> θέλω τύχης σταλαγμὸν ἢ φρενῶν πίθον
>
> I want a drop of luck rather than a jar of intellect.
>
> (Diog. fr. 2.1 *TrGF*)

36 According to Tavernier (2007, 314 with previous references), the patronymic in the epitaph Σατραβατης Σπιθάμεω (*Ios PE* II 381, Hermonassa, 4th BCE; cf. *CIRB*1066) is considered a hypocoristic form of the Iranian name Σπιταμένης, cf. Σπιτάμας and Av. *Spitāma-*. But, despite the Iranian son's name, the hypothesis of an Iranian loan cannot account for the use of <θ> instead of <τ> (see Zgusta 1955, 149). Crucially, Schmitt (2006, 193–195) does not even mention Σπιθάμης in his discussion of Σπιτάμας.

37 ἀλλὰ σπεύσαθ', ὡς εἴωθ' ἐκεῖ / τοῖς μὴ παροῦσιν ὀρθρίοις ἐς τὴν πύκνα / ὑπαποτρέχειν ἔχουσι μηδὲ πάτταλον 'Now hurry, because the drill on the Pnyx is, in by dawn or go home with nary a clothespin' (i.e. no part of their fee) (Ar. *Ec*. 282–284).

38 Another explanation is found in Robert (1963, 149) and Robert (1978, 520).

39 According to Casevitz (1981, 158) we have a masculine Νίφας or Νιφᾶς. The editors print Νιφᾶς (but Νίφας in the index).

In fact, a famous fragment of the comic poet Anaxandrides shows that σταλαγμός was used in Athens as a nickname for a short person:

> ἐὰν δὲ μικρὸν παντελῶς ἀνθρώπιον, Σταλαγμόν (sc. καλεῖται)
>
> If he's a very small individual, you call him Drop.
>
> (Anaxandr. fr. 35.3 *PCG*; see Millis 2015, 170)

Moreover, *Stalagmus* is the name of a slave in Plautus' *Captivi* and the title of a lost play by Naevius (fr. 70 *CRF*).

Last but not least, σταγών 'drop' and the diminutive σταγόνιον are attested as women's personal names in Greek and Latin sources (see Schmidt 1878, 268 and for some forms Bechtel 1917, 599).[40] In my opinion, ῥανίς and λιβάς (from λείβω), both attested as woman's personal names (*CIL* XIV, 2737 and Solin 2003, 1215), convey the same metaphor of smallness.

According to some scholars, the idea of smoothness ("moisture is soft") is behind the use of δρόσοι for 'small animal' (cf. also ἔερσαι) and personal names like Δρόσος and Δροσίς, as well as other entities mentioned in the preceding paragraphs (see Bechtel 1902, 114–115, Irwin 1974, 35–37). Arguably, the smallness image contained in these words when they indicate 'drop' (cf. δρόσοι· ψεκάδες [Hsch. δ 2408 Latte] and ἔερσαι· δρόσοι, ψεκάδες [Hsch. ε 583 Latte]) is a better semantic option than moisture.

Finally, ψιάς 'drop', used by Homer,[41] is a synonym of ψακάς and also of the rare ψίαξ with a well-known depreciative suffix:[42] ψίακα· ψακάδα (Hsch. ψ 174 Cunningham and Hansen). Crucially, the form is attested as the name of an Athenian painter who worked around 520 BCE: Φσίαχς ἔγραφσεν (Immerwahr 1990, 59, n. 314; cf. also n. 315, 318 and 319).

The above evidence shows that small things, including drops, could be used as nicknames. Metaphorically, infants can be depicted as small things. Other words etymologically related to ψακάς also connote smallness. The rare

40 Cf. also *Stagonio CIL* VI, 24891 and *AE* 1991, 323b. The alleged Στάγων, a masculine personal name, given by Bernabò Brea/Cavalier/Campagna (2003, n° 277) is probably a ghost-word. The inscription only shows the genitive, which corresponds to a feminine personal name. According to Hesychius, σταγόνες can refer to daughters: σταγόνες· ῥανίδες. θυγατέρες (Hsch. σ 1578 Hansen).

41 αἱματοέσσας δὲ ψιάδας κατέχευεν ἔραζε 'But he shed bloody rain drops on the earth' (*Il.* 16.459). The word survives in Mod. Cypr. ψιάδιν 'drizzle'.

42 The grammatical gender is unknown.

nouns ψάκαλον and perhaps ψάκαλος designate new-born animals,[43] and the personal name Ψακελίας is attested in Thessaly.[44] Probably related to these forms are Att. [Φ]σακύθε̄,[45] with the suffix -υθ-, which is particularly well attested in personal names derived from adjectives conveying the idea of smallness; cf. Μικύθη, Σμίκυθος, Σμικυθίων. The association with smallness also explains MGk ψιχάλα 'drop of rain' (ψιχαλίζει 'drizzle'), a by-form of AGk ψεκάδα, which has been assimilated by folk etymology to ψίχουλο / ψίχαλο 'crumb of bread' (cf. AGk ψίξ, ψικίον).

Finally, the connotation of smallness plays an important role in a list of adjectives and nicknames that Pollux puts together εἰς τὸν ὀλίγα ὑπ' ἀσθενείας λέγοντα 'for a person who says very little due to weakness' (VI, 145). Some adjectives in the passage signal the idea of a speech-impaired or stupid person (cf. Eng. *dumb*): ἄλογος 'speechless', ἄφωνος 'voiceless', ἄγλωττος 'dumb', ἀμήχανος 'incapable', ἀδύνατος 'powerless', ἀσθενής 'weak'. In particular, the adjectives on Pollux's list associated with smallness or shortness had an offensive meaning: ὀλίγος, βραχύς (cf. Sp. *corto* 'dim'), σμικρός. The two nouns meaning 'drop' mentioned by the lexicographer in the same list, ῥανίς and ψακάς, were in all probability also used with a belittling or derogatory connotation.

Returning now to Ψακάς, Antimachus' patronymic, there is no other evidence of its use as a masculine personal name. The editors of *LGPN* IIIA (accepted by Kanavou 2011, 47 n. 203) mistakenly quote a *Hirtius Psacas*, but in the document (*CIL* IV, 3905, Pompeii) a woman *Hirtia Psacas* is mentioned (see Risch 1975, 108). As for the name of the Olympian victor mentioned by the scholia to *Ach.* 1150 (see § 2), there is no evidence of its declension, and consequently its accentuation Ψακᾶς in *LGPN* IIIA is merely conjectural. A form Ψακᾶς is excluded in the case of Ar. *Ach.* 1150, since the typical Ionic declension in -ᾶδ- is never attested in 5th c. Athens for local citizens (see Threatte 1996, 86–87). With

43 τὰ δὲ τῶν ὀρνίθων καὶ τὰ τῶν ὄφεων καὶ τῶν κροκοδείλων ἔνιοι ἔμβρυα καὶ ψακάλους (ψάκαλα Nauck) καλοῦσιν, ὧν εἰσὶ καὶ Θετταλοί 'The babies of birds, snakes and crocodiles are called *psakaloi (*or *psakala*?*)* by some people, and in particular by Thessalians' (Ar. Byz. fr. 205A Slater), cf. ψά{ι}καλον· ἔμβρυον, βρέφος (Hsch. ψ 29 Cunningham and Hansen), ψακαλοῦχοι· ψάκαλα ἔχουσαι. εἰσὶ δὲ ἔμβρυα (Hsch. ψ 32 Cunningham and Hansen, cf. Soph., fr. 793 *TrGF* Radt).

44 *SEG* 29, 546.12; Olosson < Erikinion, ca. 375–350 BCE (see in particular Helly 1979, 176). For the form of the name, cf. ψάκελον· μέγα (Hsch. ψ 33 Cunningham and Hansen), probably related to ψάκαλον. Since the semantic evolution 'small' > 'big' is unnatural, the sense 'big' of ψάκελον might have drawn from a false interpretation of the context. A parallel is found in Sp. *nimio* 'insignificant' < Lat. *nimius* 'great beyond measure'.

45 *IG* I^3, 656.1 (ca. 510–500 BCE ?).

the suffix -ίας, Ψακαδίας seems to be attested as a Thessalian masculine personal name.[46]

Based on the fact that Ψίαξ was also used as a masculine personal name in Athens, Ψακάς might have also been a nickname for boys, by which Athenian citizens were still known in their adulthood.[47] Crucially, some deverbative nouns in -άδ- were masculine (φυγάς 'fugitive'), and adjectives could also apply to masculine entities:

> νῦν ὦν προσδεόμεθά σευ τὸν παῖδα καὶ λογάδας νεηνίας καὶ κύνας συμπέμψαι ἡμῖν
>
> Now therefore, we beseech you, send your son, and chosen young men and dogs.
> (Hdt. 1.36.2)

> Ἀργείων οἱ χίλιοι λογάδες
>
> The thousand picked [sc. men] of the Argives.
> (Th. 5.67.2)

> μονάδα δὲ Ξέρξην ἔρημόν φασιν οὐ πολλῶν μέτα [...] μολεῖν
>
> And Xerxes himself, they say, alone and forlorn, with only a few men [...] has arrived.
> (A. *Pers*. 734–736)

This might account for the use of the noun ψακάς, a feminine noun, as a metonymy for babies of both sexes.

6 Humorous patronymics in Old Comedy and Ψακάς

It is a well-known fact that Aristophanes and other Old Comic poets resort to patronymics with humorous intent. Admittedly, the joke is easy to understand when the relationship with a known word or entity is evident:

> Διόνυσος, υἱὸς Σταμνίου
>
> Dionysus, son of *Stamnion*.
> (Ar. *R*. 22)

46 *CID* 2, 9.7 (Delphi, ca. 350 BCE).
47 A metronymic seems to me less likely.

καὶ Καλλίαν γέ φασι / τοῦτον τὸν Ἱπποβίνου / κύσθου λεοντῆς ναυμαχεῖν ἐνημμένον

And Callias, we're told, that son of *Hippobinos*, fights at sea in a lionskin made of pussy.
(Ar. *R.* 428–30)

Εὐριπίδου δὲ δρᾶμα δεξιώτατον / διέκναισ' Ὀρέστην, Ἡγέλοχον τὸν Κυντάρου / μισθωσάμενος τὰ πρῶτα τῶν ἐπῶν λέγειν

He ruined *Orestes*, Euripides' most clever play, by hiring Hegelochus, the son of *Kyntaros*, to play the leading role.
(Stratt., fr. 1.2–4 *PCG*, cf. Orth 2009a, 49)

In the first passage, Dionysus is associated with στάμνιον 'little jar (for wine)' (cf. Ar. *Lys*. 196). In the second one, the transformation of Callias' patronymic Ἱππόνικος into Ἱππόβινος (with βινέω 'fuck'), or if one accepts Sternbach's (1886, 238–239) emendation, into Ἱππόκινος (with κινέω 'screw'), creates a salacious limerick (Callias was reputed to be a philanderer). In the third one, the patronymic of the actor Hegelochus is probably a wordplay on the adjective κύντερος 'more dog-like', 'shameful' (Cannatà 1998; see Orth 2009a, 53–54 for previous hypotheses).

The absence of context can blur the comic intent of the patronymic, as in the following fragment:

τὸν Κλεόμβροτόν τε τοῦ / Πέρδικος υἱόν

Cleombrotus the son of *Perdix*.
(Phryn. fr. 55 *PCG*)

Ancient and modern scholars have assumed that the patronymic Πέρδικος indicates Cleombrotus' uncontrolled sexual appetite (Stama 2014, 282).[48] Admittedly, partridges were conceived as lascivious birds, but also as lame and deceivers (Thompson 1895, 137–138).

In other cases, the wordplay signaled by the patronymic clearly depends on the intertextuality within the passage or with other verses early in the play. Since Lamachus' father's name was Xenophanes, we can assume that the patronymic Γόργασος was a nickname used with comic effect in the following verse:

48 The interpretation is based on the phrase that follows Phrynichus' quotation: τὸ δὲ ζῷον ἐπὶ λαγνείας συμβολικῶς παρείληπται 'The animal is used to symbolize lust' (Ath. 389a). It is certainly an insertion (see Olson 2008, 305 n. 130).

κἀνθάδ᾽ εὔδηλος γέρων / κλάειν κελεύων Λάμαχον τὸν Γοργάσου

Here too an old man is visible, telling Lamachus, son of Gorgasus, to go to hell!
(Ar. *Ach*. 1130–1131)

Lamachus has just described his shield as γοργόνωτος 'with the Gorgon on it' (*Ach*. 1124). The chorus has invoked Lamachus before as ὦ γοργολόφα 'You of the fearsome crest' (*Ach*. 567), an epithet connected to Athena and war (cf. Ar. *Eq*. 1181), and Lamachus uses the metonymy Γόργων for his shield (*Ach*. 574). Arguably, Dicaepolis uses the name of the obscure (to us) hero Γόργασος to mock Lamachus as a warmonger (see also Kanavou 2011, 29–30).

Patronymics are particularly exploited as a comic expedient in three passages of *Wasps*:

ἀτὰρ ἄθλιός γ᾽ εἶμ᾽ ὡς ἕτερος οὐδεὶς ἀνήρ, / ὅστις πατρὸς νυνὶ Καπνίου κεκλήσομαι

Really, no one else has the trouble I have! I'm all set to be called the son of *Kapnias*!
(*V*. 150–151)

Bdelycleon's joke has a straightforward sense: early in the scene Philocleon has tried to escape his house disguised as smoke (καπνός), and his son Bdelycleon has successfully prevented it. However, καπνίας may have resonated ambiguously enough to an Athenian ear. The comic poet Ecphantides was nicknamed Καπνίας, supposedly for his obscure style,[49] and modern scholars have suggested that there is a comic allusion to this playwright of a previous generation (see Biles/Olson 2015, 134–135).[50] Furthermore, the wine that had a smoky taste or was made from the vine with smoke-colored grapes (κάπνειος ἄμπελος) was referred to as καπνίας.

Bdelycleon plays with the name of Aischines' father in another scene:

49 Ἐκφαντίδης ὁ τῆς κωμῳδίας ποιητὴς Καπνίας ἐπεκαλεῖτο διὰ τὸ μηδὲν λαμπρὸν γράφειν (Hsch. κ 716 Latte; cf. Ecphant. T 5 *PCG*).

50 A certain Theagenes was dubbed Καπνός, according to the scholia, for his continuous bragging (see Eup., fr. 135 *PCG*). Theagenes and Proxenides, mentioned by Aristophanes (Ar. *Av*. 1126–1129), are two blusterers (see Dunbar 1995, 595), as deduced from the context and the fake demotic of the latter, Κομπασεύς 'Bragsman' (κόμπος 'boast'). Proxenides is again mentioned in the *Wasps*, where he and the "son of Sellos" are equated with smoke (*V*. 326–327), which is also interpreted as an allusion to empty talk (cf. Biles/Olson 2015, 193).

καὶ σὺ προσθεὶς Αἰσχίνην ἔντυφε τὸν Σελλαρτίου

And you, suffocate them by applying a billow of Aeschines, son of *Sellartios*!
(Ar. *V*. 459)

Bdelycleon mocks again one Aischines, son of Sellos, at *V*. 1243–1244 and another "son of Sellos" is mentioned by Philocleon, who calls him ψευδαμάμαξυς 'a false vine' (Ar. *V*. 324–326). Arguably, Aristophanes has modified the patronymic, making up the second part of a compound with ἄρτιος 'perfect' (Molitor 1970, 126 n. 1; for another interpretation, see Kanavou 2011, 90–91).[51]

Finally, a certain Amynias, also "son of Sellos", is ridiculed at the beginning of the so-called "second parabasis":

πολλάκις δὴ ᾽δοξ᾽ ἐμαυτῷ / δεξιὸς πεφυκέναι καὶ / σκαιὸς οὐδεπώποτε, / ἀλλ᾽ Ἀμυνίας ὁ Σέλλου / μᾶλλον, οὐκ τῶν Κρωβύλου

I've very often thought that I am naturally intelligent and never ever stupid, but Amynias son of Sellos, he who descends from those of *Krobylos*, is even more so.
(Ar. *V*. 1265–1266)[52]

Men with long hair piled it up on the back of the head in a bun called κρωβύλος (Bremer 1911, 47–72, Biles/Olson 2015, 450–451). Amynias' long hair has already been referred to in the mock compound Κομηταμυνίας (*V*. 466; see Biles/Olson 2015, 234). Κρωβύλος was also a nickname of the orator Hagesippus (Aesch. 3.118), was the name of a comic poet (Körte 1922, 1941), and is attested elsewhere (see Bechtel 1898, 79–80).

Some of the above evidence (Ἱπποβίνου, Κυντάρου and Σελλαρτίου) could support the hypothesis that Aristophanes may have modified Antimachus' real patronymic in *Ach*. 1150, but conclusive proof is lacking, since Antimachus' father remains for the time being unidentified. Moreover, some patronymics exhibit a noun as a nickname (Σταμνίου, Πέρδικος, Καπνίου, Κρωβύλου; cf. also Κόρακος mentioned *infra*). Scholia and modern commentators may still be right, and Antimachus' patronymic resonated with a joke. It could be argued, however, that if the line's punch depended on the patronymic, Aristophanes would have placed it in a prominent position, in order to provoke laughter ἐκ τοῦ παρὰ

51 One scholium to *V*. 459 preposterously connects Σέλλος with σέλας 'flame' and with the use of καπνός as a nickname for braggarts (see n. 50): παρὰ τὸ "σέλας". ὁ γὰρ καπνὸς τοῦ σέλαος γέννημα. τὸ σέλας γὰρ ποιεῖ τὸν καπνόν 'From *selas* 'flame'. For smoke is generated by flame. For flame produces smoke' ($\Sigma^{VΓLhAld}$).

52 The reading Κρωβύλων of some manuscripts is undoubtedly a mistake.

προσδοκίαν (see Starkie 1909, LXVII–LXVIII for a list of examples). Since Antimachus is not mentioned early in *Acharnians*, the pun can only be expected to have been activated by the pragmatic information that the audience and Aristophanes shared about Antimachus (information that in all probability already escaped ancient commentators and scholiasts, and unfortunately still eludes us), by some gesticulation made by the chorus as they danced and sang, by the context of the ode, or by a combination of the above.[53]

As far as the text is concerned, the dissimilarity between the 'nobler' name Ἀντίμαχος and the 'lower' patronymic Ψακάδος presents a startling contrast. Furthermore, Ψακάς in 1150, with its metaphorical connotations ('small thing', but also 'dumb', see § 5), in all probability prepared the listener for the real joke at the end of 1151. Despite the textual problem in this verse, and whatever the preferred solution to it,[54] Aristophanes arguably played on the ambiguity of the genitive μελέων, which can be related either to μέλη / μέλεα 'lyric songs' or to μέλεα 'useless, unhappy things' (the Homeric adjective μέλεος is often used by Attic tragic writers).[55] As Elmsley (1830) brilliantly saw, this pun could suit Aristophanes' humorous characterization of a rival as a verse-monger.[56] Informatively, the poet and draftsman Antimachus is the focus of the utterance, and, quite unsurprisingly, has been syntactically promoted to a relevant position at the beginning of the phrase. Combining the patronymic Ψακάς and μελέων, Aristophanes skillfully highlights the object of derision of the entire ode.

Aristophanes' use of Ψακάς as a comic patronymic has a striking parallel in a fragment of an unidentified playwright:

> Λάμπωνα δὲ τὸν Κόρακος θεῶ
>
> Contemplate Lampon, the son of Raven.
>
> (*Com.Ad.* fr. 1105.98 *PCG*)

53 According to some modern scholars (see Moulton 1981, 22–23, Lauriola 2010, 224–225), Antimachus could immediately be associated with the political war faction of the city, on account of the second member of the compound (°μαχος). In my opinion, this is farfetched.

54 See supra n. 20.

55 Aristophanes uses the uncontracted forms of neuters in -ος in other lyric songs, and in particular μελέων at *Av*. 744, 749, 1374 (cf. also ἐπέων in *Av*. 908).

56 For the wordplay see οἱ νῦν δὲ κισσόπλεκτα καὶ / κρηναῖα καὶ ἀνθεσιπότατα μέλεα μελέοις ὀνόμασι / ποιοῦσιν ἐμπλέκοντες ἀλλότρια μέλη 'Whereas today's poets produce miserable (μέλεα) ivy-woven, spring-fed, flower-flitting, bizarre songs (μέλη), and fold miserable (μελέοις) vocabulary into them' (Antiph. fr. 207.7–9 *PCG*). For the interpretation of Antiphanes' passage, see Ieranò (2013, 384–385).

Lampon was a member of a board of ξυγγραφεῖς and a famous seer, often depicted by Attic comic writers as deceitful and gluttonous (see Dunbar 1995, 358).[57] His patronymic is unknown, but Κόραξ, attested as a personal name (cf. Masson 1973–1974), is evidently used here as Lampon's patronymic (see Orth 2009b, 58). Its combination with the the imperative of θεάομαι[58] might humorously denote Lampon's activities in the field of ornithomancy.[59] Ravens and omens are frequently associated (Dillon 2017, 146–148),[60] and Aristophanes ridicules Lampon for swearing by a bird, instead of by a god: Λάμπων δ' ὄμνυσ' ἔτι καὶ νυνὶ τὸν χῆν', ὅταν ἐξαπατᾷ τι 'Even today Lampon swears "by Goose!" when he's up to something crooked' (*Av*. 521). Furthermore, ravens are depicted as thieves in Attic drama (Crat. fr. 76 *PCG*)[61] and MGk κοράκι refers metaphorically to a swindler or to a duplicitous person who takes advantage of others, which suits perfectly the characterization of Lampon in the following verses in the fragment.

All in all, the best translation to serve the purpose of the joke and the metaphorical meaning conveyed by ψακάς as a personal name is probably Lat. *filius Guttae*, since the Latin word also denotes smallness (see n. 9). Fr. "Antimachos, fils de Sipeuquerien" (Debidour 1965, 106), although capturing the essence of Aristophanes' pun, is less felicitous because it resorts to a lexical innovation.

7 Conclusion

The interpretation of Antimachus in *Acharnians* 1150 as a man who emitted an excessive amount of saliva as he spoke, on the basis of the patronymic Ψακάς, is nothing but an invention of an ancient scholar. It is based on an unwarranted reanalysis of ψακάς as a backformation from ψακάζω.

57 The identification of Lampon, ξυγγραφεύς in *IG* 1^3, 78.59–60 (ca. 440–435 BCE), with the oracle interpreter mentioned by ancient comic writers was first suggested by Foucart (1880, 247), and his hypothesis has been almost universally accepted. However, *LGPN* II s.v. Λάμπων hesitantly mentions them as two separate individuals (3 and 5), cf. also the *Athenian Onomasticon* online (4) and (5) (http://www.seangb.org/, accessed 31.07.2017).

58 For θεάομαι in the context of divination, see Pi. *Py*. 8.45–46.

59 Orth (2009b, 58) sees here a reference to the expression ἐς κόρακας 'go and be hanged'.

60 The tomb of Strymon, Alexander's favorite seer, was decorated with a raven (Posidipp. *Epigr*. 35 Austin and Bastianini).

61 The Scholia were aware of this metaphorical meaning of κόραξ as thief, cf. *Sch*. *Av*. 1292a ($\Sigma^{RVE\Gamma M}$) and *Sch*. *P*. 1125 (Σ^{VTLh}).

I have tried to show that the use of ψακάς 'drop of rain' as a personal name depends on the metaphorical connotation conveyed by the noun, i.e. 'a very small thing'. In this sense, Ψακάς belongs to the group of Ancient Greek nicknames which served as endearing designations of newborns and children, often represented metaphorically as small entities. These nicknames could eventually accompany an individual throughout his or her adult life.

Consequently, in *Acharnians* 1150–1151 the success of Aristophanes' joke does not depend exclusively on the personal name Ψακάς, as the scholia and modern scholars have assumed. Arguably, one of the two meanings of the deliberately ambiguous μελέων 'useless things' (1151) matches the connotations of smallness expressed by the immediately preceding nickname Ψακάς (1150).

Abbreviations

BDAG = Montanari, Franco *et al*. (2015), *The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek*, Leiden.
DÉLG = Chantraine, Pierre *et al*. (2009), *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque. Avec un supplément*, Paris.
DGF = Bailly, Antoine (1963[26]), *Dictionnaire grec-français*, Paris.
EDG = Beekes, Robert S.P. (2010), *Etymological Dictionary of Greek*, Leiden.
HWGS = Passow, Franz (1841–1857), *Handwörterbuch der griechischen Sprache*, Leipzig.

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