

Steklá, Jana

Greek verbs denoting sexual intercourse in Aristotle's *Historia animalium*

Sborník prací Filozofické fakulty brněnské univerzity. N, Řada klasická. 2006, vol. 55, iss. N11, pp. [79]-89

ISBN 80-210-4140-4

ISSN 1211-6335

Stable URL (handle): <https://hdl.handle.net/11222.digilib/114033>

Access Date: 16. 02. 2024

Version: 20220831

Terms of use: Digital Library of the Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University provides access to digitized documents strictly for personal use, unless otherwise specified.

JANA STEKLÁ

GREEK VERBS DENOTING SEXUAL INTERCOURSE IN ARISTOTLE'S *HISTORIA ANIMALIUM*

A number of papers about the language of Old Attic Comedy, particularly about various obscene words and double entendres have been published recently. This fact is connected with the increasing interest in the life of Ancient Greeks and their sexual practices. As a matter of fact, in order to investigate the language of sexual intercourse two approaches can be adopted. The first one chosen by most scholars lies in the analysis of the comedy because a significant amount of ancient Greek sexual vocabulary can be found there¹. The thing is that comedy satirizes lechery. Speeches of the main characters are consequently full of invectives, insults and obscenities. Besides, we can assume that the language of comedy is closer to the real spoken language than that of any other literary genre. The other and more scholarly approach means studying scientific literature which deals with nature and its parts – that is, especially with man as well as animals and their “obligation” to propagate. Passages of ancient works in which the above-mentioned problems are treated provide us with a source of understanding of individual sexual terms. A lot of useful information may also be discovered in Byzantine lexica, but we have to be cautious and always keep in our mind that they were written more than one millennium after the language they are dealing with was actually spoken.

The aim of my investigation is not to study the entire vocabulary regarding sexual intercourse. I am rather going to look specifically at verbs which were used to describe this activity. For this paper I have chosen the second of the above-mentioned methods and my subject will be the work of the biggest ancient scientist - that is, Aristotle. In the treatise entitled *Historia Animalium* (*History of Animals*, *HA*) Aristotle deals with animals, their species, features, anatomies as well as with their ways of procreation. Verbs meaning “to pair, to copulate” can obviously be found in relevant chapters. In contrast to the writings of Aris-

¹ One of the most comprehensive works on this subject is *The Maculate Mus: Obscene Language in Attic Comedy* by Jeffrey Henderson, first published in 1975.

tophanes all those verbs are polite as well as correct and they do not have vulgar shades.

1) The verb ὀχεύω

“To copulate, couple, mate, cover, Czech (Cz.) kopulovat, pářit se, rozmnožovat se pohlavně”. Vox propria for the sexual intercourse of animals. Undoubtedly most frequently used in *HA* regardless of the species of the animal. Speaking about males Aristotle uses the active voice („pokrývá, kopuluje”) whereas to describe the sexual behaviour of females he employs the passive voice („je oplodňována, páří se”). When the subject is indefinite and general, Aristotle utilizes the middle voice („pářit se”). In some cases the verb can mean simply “to reproduce sexually” in contrast to an asexual procreation – this applies, for example, to some species of fish and insect.

Πρῶτον μὲν οὖν περὶ τῆς ὀχείας λεκτέον, ὅσα ὀχεύεται,... 539^b14
Nejprve je nutno promluvit o kopulaci těch zvířat, která se rozmnožují pohlavně.²

Ὀχεύει δ' ὁ ἵππος ὁ ἄρσῃν μέχρι ἐτῶν τριάκοντα καὶ τριῶν, ἢ δὲ θήλεια ὀχεύεται μέχρι τετραράκοντα ἐτῶν, ὥστε συμβαίνει σχεδὸν διὰ βίου γίνεσθαι τὴν ὀχείαν· 545^b15

Samec koně se páří až do stáří třiceti tři let, samice kopuluje až do stáří čtyřiceti let, takže žijí pohlavně téměř po celý život.

Οὐ μὴν ἀλλ' ἤδη τισὶ καὶ ὀκτωκαίδεκα ἔτη γεγονόσι καὶ εἴκοσι συνέβη καὶ θηλείαις ὀχευθῆναι καὶ ἄρσῃσι γεννηῆσαι. 546^a30

Ale již se (u psů) stalo, že ve stáří osmnácti i dvaceti let byla samice obskočena a samec zplodil mládě.

From this verb the noun ὀχεία is derived, “a covering, Cz. kopulace, páření”. When this noun is connected with a verb with the general meaning “to do, to be, to accept, Cz. dělat, přijímat”, it denotes the action of sexual intercourse and the sense of the whole phrase is the same as that of the verb ὀχεύω. This noun has no other meaning and was used only for animals.

² All texts in this paper were taken from the electronic database Thesaurus Linguae Graecae. Each verb or phrase is first translated into English and only then into Czech. I have also decided to translate the whole examples into Czech because so far there is no Czech translation of this work. Only a few paragraphs were translated into Czech by Ferdinand Stiebitz in *Aristoteles o člověku*, Praha 1931. The English translation by D'Arcy Wentworth is available at http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/history_anim.html. In the examples from *HA* quoted in the footnotes, only the main part of the sentence is always translated into Czech, so that it becomes obvious what Aristotle actually describes. In these cases I give an English equivalent only for the species of the animal which is discussed.

1a. ἡ ὀχεία γίγνεται

Ἡ μὲν οὖν ὀχεία τῶν ζώων τοῦτον γίνεται τὸν τρόπον πάντων... 542^a18³
 Všichni živočichové se rozmnožují tímto způsobem ...

1b. πλησιάζω ἐν τῇ ὀχείᾳ

The verb πλησιάζω was used by itself for sexual intercourse (see below), but it does not always have this meaning. For this reason it is better to use another word which is more specific.

Ἐχουσι δέ τι εἰς ὃ οἱ πόροι συνάπτουσιν καὶ ᾧ ἐν τῇ ὀχείᾳ πλησιάζουσιν, οἷον φρῶναι καὶ βάτραχοι καὶ πᾶν τὸ τοιοῦτον γένος. 540^a31

(Vejcorodá zvířata) mají cosi, kde se stékají kanálky a čím provádějí kopulaci, jako například ropuchy, žáby a cely tento druh.

1c. (προς)δέχομαι τὴν ὀχείαν

Literally “accept the copulation, Cz. přijímat pohlavní styk”. This verb by itself was also used in isolated cases for sexual intercourse,⁴ but for the sake of avoiding any misunderstanding a noun was added to it so as to specify the meaning - either what or whom the animal “accepts” (i.e. copulation or mate).

Δέχεται δ' ὀχείαν κύοντα μάλιστα τῶν ζώων γυνὴ καὶ ἵππος. 585^a3⁵

Žena a klisna kopulují i tehdy, když jsou březí.

1d. ποιῶμαι τὴν ὀχείαν / ὀχείας

“To do the act of copulation, Cz. provozovat pohlavní styk”. In this phrase the verb is always in the middle (mediopassive) voice, independently of the sex of the animal.

Αἰ δ' ἄρκτοι τὴν μὲν ὀχείαν ποιοῦνται, ὥσπερ εἴρηται πρότερον, οὐκ ἀναβαδὸν ἀλλὰ κατακεκλιμέναι ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς. 579^a18⁶

Medvědi kopulují, jak již bylo řečeno dříve, ne tak, že na sebe naskakují, ale v leže na zemi.

³ For other examples in *HA*, see 536^a19 (of frog; žáby kopulují většinou v noci), 541^a12 (of fish; vejcorodé ryby kopulují), 541^a33 (of fish; vejcorodé ryby kopulují již řečeným způsobem), 542^a18 (of animals; tímto způsobem živočichové kopulují), 545^b17 (of horse; koně kopulují téměř po celý život), 546a11 (of pig; u prasat je kopulace kratší).

⁴ See *Semon*. 7.49W.

⁵ For another examples in *HA*, see 575^b17 (of cow; krávy kopulují), 577^b15 (of mare; ani ko-byla nepřijímá osla).

⁶ For another examples, see 488^b6 (of bird; ptáci zřídka kopulují), 540^a2 (of bear; medvědi kopulují ve stoje), 540^a17 (of camel; velbloudi kopulují v ústraní), 540^a28 (of quadruped; čtyřnozí živočichové kopulují), 540^b5 (of lizard; v podobném spletnenci kopulují ještěrky), 540^b20 (of shark; žraloci byli pozorováni, jak se páří), 542^a12 (of spider; tímto způsobem se páří jedovatí pavouci), 542^a24 (of animals living in water; zvířata žijící ve vodě se páří a množí se na podzim), 542^b3 (of bird; většina ptáků se páří na začátku léta), 550^b23 (of insect; hmyz kopuluje), 572^a5 (of animals generally; zvířata, která kopulují často...), 573^a29 (of animals generally; zvířata se páří), 578^b6 (of hind; laň se páří), 579^a18 (of bear; medvědi kopulují), 579^a25 (of bear; medvěd kopuluje).

1e. ὀχεία ἐστὶ

This phrase with meaning “the intercourse is, Cz. je pohlavní styk” is attested only in the Aristotle’s work we are dealing with.

Τοῦτο δ’ ἐστὶν αἰδοῖον, ὃ τοῖς μὲν μικροῖς ἄδηλον, ἐν δὲ τοῖς μείζουσιν, οἷον ἐν χηνὶ καὶ τοῖς τηλικούτοις, φανερώτερον γίνεταί, ὅταν ἡ ὀχεία πρόσφατος ᾖ. 509^b31⁷

Toto je přirození, které u malých druhů (vejcorodých živočichů) je nezřetelné, ale u větších, jako je husa a podobně, se po pohlavním styku stává zřetelnějším.

1f. προσίημι τὴν ὀχείαν

On the other hand, this phrase occurs also in Plutarch (*Moralia* 962e6) and it means “to accept the sexual intercourse, Cz. přijímat styk”.

Ἐν δὲ τῷ χρόνῳ τούτῳ οὐ προσίενται ὀχείαν, ἀλλ’ ἐν ταῖς μετὰ ταῦτα ἑπτὰ ἡμέραις. 574^a33⁸

V tomto období (menstruace) (feny) nekopulují, ale páří se v následujících sedmi dnech.

2) The second large semantic category comprises verbs which basically mean “to go, to mount, Cz. jít, vystupovat, naskakovat”, i.e. verbs of motion, all cognate verbs and their composites.

2a. βαίνω

This is the most widespread verb in this category as far as its sexual meaning is concerned. It is attested not only in the work of Aristotle, but also in other literary sources⁹ and was used for both human and animal sexual intercourse¹⁰. This verb is no longer general, and so it implicitly expresses the sexual position the participants take. The verb describes the situation when the male mounts the female from the rear, which is a position common for land mammals. That is why in *HA* this verb is used predominantly to refer to elephants and only once to a bull¹¹.

Ὅδ’ ἐλέφας ἄρχεται μὲν βαίνεισθαι ὁ μὲν νεώτατος δέκ’ ἐτῶν, ὁ δὲ πρεσβύτατος πεντεκαίδεκα. 546^b7¹²

Slon začíná s pohlavním životem nejdříve ve stáří deseti let, nejpозději patnácti let.

ἀναβαίνω

In the following compounds of the verb βαίνω, the motion becomes more obvious. From corresponding Czech expressions the most appropriate one seems to me “obskočit, naskočit”.

⁷ 500^b13 (of deer; takže jelen snáže kopuluje).

⁸ 574^a33 (of bitch; feny nekopulují), 575^a15 (of cow; kráva posečká dvacet dní a pak znovu kopuluje).

⁹ For example Achae. 28, Ar. *Fr.* 329, Ar. *Av.* 558.

¹⁰ For animal intercourse apart from Aristotle: Hdt. 1.192, Luc. *Eun.* 13.10, Aesop. 16, Longus 3.13.

¹¹ 575^a13 (of bull; býk naskakuje na samici tak silně, až poklekne).

¹² For the intercourse between elephants see also 546^b8 (of elephant; slon se páří ve věku), 546^b9 (of elephant; slon pak znovu kopuluje za tři roky).

Οί δὲ κάμηλοι οὐκ ἀναβαίνουσιν ἐπὶ τὰς μητέρας, ἀλλὰ κὰν βιάζηται τις, οὐ θέλουσιν. 630^b31¹³

Velbloudi neobskakuji samice, které vodí mláďata, a nechtějí, ani když je někdo nutí.

ἐπαναβαίνω

Ὁ μὲν οὖν ὄνος ἐπαναβάς διαφθείρει τὸ τοῦ ἵππου ὄχρευμα, ὥσπερ εἴρηται· 577^a26

Osel obskočí klisnu a zničí tím zárodek koně, jak již bylo řečeno.

ἐπιβαίνω

This compound was used to denote the intercourse of all animals, not only mammals.

Θᾶπτον δὲ πληροῖ ἐπιβαίνων ὄνος ἢ ἵππος. 575^b29¹⁴

(Klisna) zabřezne rychleji, když ji obskočí osel, než když ji obskočí kůň.

2b. βιβάζω

This is a causal verb derived from the verb βαίνω. In the active voice it means “cause to mount, put the female to the male, Cz. připouštět samce k samici”. From the meaning it is clear that this verb can be used only about domestic animals. In the passive the subject is female and the meaning is “to be mounted, Cz. být obskočena”.

Τεκοῦσα δὲ βιβάζεται ἐβδόμη ἡμέρᾳ, καὶ μάλιστα δέχεται τὸ πλῆσμα ταύτη βιβασθεῖσα τῇ ἡμέρᾳ, λαμβάνει δὲ καὶ ὕστερον. 577^a29¹⁵

Sedm dní po porodu je (klisna) připouštěna a tohoto dne nejlépe zabřezne, je-li připuštěna, ale zabřezne i později.

προβιβάζω

Ὁχεύειν δ' εἴωθε χορτασθεὶς καὶ μὴ προβιβάσας ἄλλην· 546^a10

(Kanec) obvykle kopuluje nažraný a pokud předtím nebyl připuštěn k jiné samici.

2c. ἐπιβιάσκω

“Put the male to the female, Cz. dát připustit”. This verb has the same meaning as the two foregoing.

¹³ 539^b24 (of hare; u zajíců nejprve samice naskakuje na samce), 541^b28, 29 (of crab; nejdříve menší krab naskakuje zezadu; a když naskočí, menší se otočí na bok), 560^b27, 28 (of pigeon; když samec holuba hodlá naskočit na samičku, nejprve se políbí ... starší holub naskakuje, i když se nepolíbili), 560^b30 (of pigeon; samičky holubů naskakují samy na sebe), 572^b4 (of cows; krávy naskakují na býky), 577^b21 (of mule; když mezek naskočí na klisnu), 631^a5 (of horse; kůň v neznalosti obskočil (matku).

¹⁴ 510^b3 (of bull; býk nahl na krávu, spánil se a oplodnil ji), 539^b26 (of quadruped; u čtyřnohých zvířat samec naskakuje na samici), 539^b29 (of bird; u ptáků sameček naskakuje na samičku sedící na zemi), 540^a28 (of oviparous; vejcorodá kopulují jako živorodá), 540^b9 (of fish; ryby naskakují), 541^b34 (of insect; u hmyzu menší naskakuje na většího), 550^b23 (of insect; u hmyzu je sameček menší než samička a kopuluje seshora), 555^b19 (of insect; kobyly se páří tak, že...; kobyly se páří tak, že menší naskakuje na větší), 574^a20 (of dog; psi oplodňují samičku, jakmile ji jednou obskočili), 575^b29 (of horse; klisna zabřezne rychleji, když ji obskočil osel, než když ji obskočil kůň).

¹⁵ 573^b7 (když se svině hárá, nesmí být připuštěna hned).

Κυῖσκονται δ' ἐκ μιᾶς ὀχείας, ἀλλὰ πολλακίς ἐπιβιάσκουσι διὰ τὸ ἐκβάλλειν μετὰ τὴν ὀχείαν τὴν καλουμένην ὑπὸ τινων καρσίαν. 573^{b1}
 Svině mohou zabřeznout po jednom styku, ale připouštějí je často, protože po styku vypouští látku, kterou někteří nazývají kapria.

2d. πλησιάζω

It was used in both sexual and non-sexual sense. There is no difference whether it is employed for animal or human intercourse¹⁶. In *Historia Animalium* this verb was also used for both animals and people. For the phrase ἐν ὀχείᾳ πλησιάζειν see above.

Τὰ μὲν γὰρ ζωοτόκα καὶ ... οὐ μὴν ὁμοίως γε πάντα πλησιάζουσιν, ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν ὀπισθορητικά συνιόντα πυγηδόν, οἷον λέοντες τε καὶ δασύποδες καὶ λύγκες· 539^{b21}¹⁷

Živorodá a suchozemská zvířata se ne vždy páří stejně, ale ta, která močí dozadu, i zezadu kopulují, jako například lvi, zajáci a vlci.

2e. σύνειμι

“Go or come together, assemble, Cz. scházet se, stýkat se”. In sexual context this verb was used only to denote the copulation of animals. So we can find it in *Historia Animalium*.

Οἱ δ' αἰλουροὶ οὐκ ὀπισθεν συνιόντες, ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν ὀρθός, ἡ δὲ θήλεια ὑποτίθησιν αὐτήν· 540^{a10}¹⁸

Kocouři nekopulují zezadu, ale vzpřímeně, zatímco kočka se nasouvá pod ně.

2f. συνέρχομαι

This verb with the same meaning as the preceding one was used more frequently for human¹⁹ than for animal intercourse. Referring to animal intercourse the verb is also attested in Artemidoros 1.79 and naturally in *Historia Animalium*.

Τὰ δ' ἔντομα συνέρχεται μὲν ὀπισθεν, εἴτ' ἐπιβαίνει τὸ ἔλαττον ἐπὶ τὸ μείζον· 541^{b34}

Hmyz kopuluje zezadu tak, že menší naskakuje na většího.

3) The third category includes verbs meaning to “join, to bring together”. These verbs are very often used to describe human intercourse. Nevertheless, we can also find them in HA as expressions denoting animal intercourse.

¹⁶ For human intercourse elsewhere in Greek literature see Plu. *Sol.* 20, Plu. 2.769a, D. *In Neaeram* 67, D. *Contra Boeotum* 2 8, 27, Luc. *VH* 1.8, 2.28, Luc. *DMeretr.* 5.2, Luc. *Asin.* 32, Aesop. 31.3, Is. *De Pyrrho* 10, Hyp. *Lyc. Fr. Ar.* 3.25.

¹⁷ 541^{b2} (of mollusca; měkkýši kopulují tímto způsobem), 546^{a26} (of pig; prasata kopulují), 578^{b12} (of sheep; beran se páří i s jinými samicemi), 584^{a30} (of women; ženy, které mají před porodem styk s mužem).

¹⁸ 539^{b22} (opisthouretica; nazpět močící zvířata kopulují zezadu), 579^{b30} (of hare; zajáci kopulují tak, že se stýkají zezadu).

¹⁹ About human intercourse in Hp. *Mul.* 2.143, X. *Mem.* 2.2.4, Pl. *Smp.* 192e, Str. 15.3.20, D. S. 3.58, Philogelos 251, Parth. 13, Ach. Tat. 5.12.

3a. μείγνυμι

“To join, to bring together, to mix, Cz. mísit se, spojit se”. One of the most common verbs for human sexual intercourse. In this sense the verb can be found in literature from Homer onwards. As the expression for animal intercourse the verb is also attested outside scientific literature e.g. *Batr.* 20, *h. Merc.* 493. Aristotle used this verb only for the description of the intercourse of mammals.

Ἐὰν δὲ συνεχῶς μίσηται καὶ μὴ διαλείπη χρόνον τινὰ οὕτως ὀχευόμενα, ταχέως ἄγονον τὸ θῆλυ γίνεται· 577^b12²⁰

Jestliže se samička (klisna) neustále páří a neponechává nějaký čas mezi jednotlivými styky, rychle se stává neplodnou.

3b. συνδύαζω

This verb appears frequently in the general sense “to join, to couple, to marry, Cz. družít se, spojovat se” and less frequently about sexual intercourse with the meaning “to copulate, Cz. pářit se” — in the latter case it appears only in the middlepassive voice. If the verb refers to people, its meaning is more usually “to marry”. Since the verb was so frequent, we can meet it anywhere in literature employed for animal intercourse as well²¹. Because of Aristotle’s brevity in some places we are not able to distinguish whether συνδύαζεται means “to have intercourse, Cz. pářit se” or simply “to live in pair, Cz. žít v páru”²².

Ἐχουσι δὲ τὸ ἄρρεν καὶ τὸ θῆλυ, ἐκ τούτων συνδύαζομένων γίνεται μὲν τι... 539^b9²³

Ze zvířat, u kterých se rozlišuje sameček a samička, se po kopulaci rodí cosi,...

συνδουασμός ἐστι

As in the case of the verb ὀχεύω there is a noun συνδουασμός “mating, copulation, Cz. styk, páření” derived from it. When it is used together with some more common verb it expresses sexual intercourse.

Πολὺν γὰρ χρόνον ὁ συνδουασμός ἐστι τῶν τοιούτων. 542^a8

Kopulace (much) trvá dlouhou dobu.

ποιοῦμαι συνδουασμόν

Πολλὰ δὲ καὶ πρὸς τὰς ἐκτροφὰς τῶν τέκνων στοχαζόμενα ποιεῖται τὸν συνδουασμόν ἐν τῇ ἀπαρτιζούσῃ ὥρᾳ. 542^a31²⁴

Mnohá zvířata kopulují ve vhodnou roční dobu, s ohledem na zajištění potravy pro mláďata.

20 577^b6 (of horse; K potratu dojde spíše, když se kůň páří s oslicí nebo osel s klisnou, než když spolu kopulují stejné druhy), 577^b8 (of donkey; kdykoli se spojí osel a kůň), 577^b13 (of horse; proto koně nekopulují neustále), 607^a2 (of wolf; také v Kyrénii se páří vlci se psy).

21 For animals X. *Cyn.* 5.6, Pl. *Lg.* 840d.

22 The same in 570^a28 (of fish; v období kopulace se ryby párují), 610^b8 (of fish; některé ryby žijí v hejnech, jiné v párech).

23 541^b26 (of crab; krabi kopulují), 566^a27 (of fish; ryby se nepáří s příbuznými rody), 597^b10 (of quail; křepelky se páří).

24 539^b25 (of quadrupeds; většina čtvernožců kopuluje tak...), 540^b7 (of fish; všechny ryby kopulují...).

3c. συγγίγνομαι

This verb belongs to expressions very often employed to denote human intercourse²⁵. As regards its use for animal intercourse, I found only one example.

Ἐν τούτοις γὰρ ὁ ἄρρην ἐπιπηδῶν ὀχεύει τὴν θήλειαν, καὶ συγγίνεται ὥσπερ καὶ τὰ στρουθία ὀξέως. 539^b32

U těchto zvířat (jeřábi) sameček obskakuje samičku jako útokem a páří se prudce jako vrabci.

3d. σύνειμι

Another verb which was plentifully used to denote human intercourse in Ancient Greek literature²⁶, but only seldom can be found to designate animal intercourse. There is only one place in *HA* where this verb expresses sexual (animal) intercourse.

Εἰσὶ δὲ τὴν φύσιν αἱ θήλειαι ἀφροδισιαστικάι, καὶ προσάγονται τοὺς ἄρρενας εἰς τὰς ὀχείας, καὶ συνοῦσαι κράζουσιν. 540^a13

Kočky od přírody rády kopulují, svádějí samečky ke styku a při kopulaci mňoukají.

3e. συνέχω

“Keep together, Cz. spojovat”. If the verb refers to intercourse, it occurs only in the middlepassive voice.

Εἰσὶ δὲ τινες οἱ ἑωρακέναι φασὶ καὶ συνεχόμενα τῶν σελαχῶν ἔνια ὀπισθεν, ὥσπερ τοὺς κύνας. 540^b14²⁷

Některí lidé říkají, že viděli nějaké žraloky kopulovat zezadu.

4) There are several verbs which cannot be included in any of the above determined categories.

4a. ἄπτομαι

This verb is attested also in other works where it has the meaning “to touch a woman, to have sexual intercourse, Cz. mít pohlavní styk”,²⁸ but in *HA* it occurs only twice and in both cases it refers to elephants. Besides, it was always used in the middlepassive voice with a male as its subject.

Ὅν δ' ἂν ἐγκύμονα ποιήσῃ, τούτου πάλιν οὐχ ἄπτεται. 546^b11²⁹

(Slon) se pak už nepáří s tou samicí, kterou oplodnil.

²⁵ For example: Pl. *R.* 329c, 390c, Pl. *Lg.* 930d, Hdt. 2.121e, X. *Smp.* 8.29, Plu. *Sol.* 23, Ar. *Ra.* 57, Aesop. 299.1, Vit. Aesop. 129, Parth. 30 etc.

²⁶ For example: Luc. *Merc. Cond.* 41, Part. 17.5, 35.1, Artem. 1.78. The thing is that it is often very difficult to determine whether the verb means simply „to be with, to be joined with“ or whether it has a hidden sexual meaning „have sexual intercourse with“.

²⁷ 540^a24 (of seal; tuleni kopulují dlouho).

²⁸ Pl. *Lg.* 840a, Arist. *Pol.* 1335^b40, 1 *Ep. Cor.* 7.1, E. *Ph.* 946.

²⁹ The same in 630^b22.

4b. ἀφροδισιάζω

“To have sexual intercourse, Cz. pohlavně se stýkat”. This verb was not used for animals, in *HA* it is also used only for men and women.

Γίνεται δὲ τοῦτο μᾶλλον τοῖς πειρωμένοις ἀφροδισιάζειν· 581^a22³⁰

Toto se stává u těch (mužů), kteří zkoušejí žít sexuálně.

4c. ποιῶμαι ὀμιλίαν

The verb ὀμιλέω, “be acquainted with, associate with, Cz. stýkat se”, was very often used to denote human intercourse. However, in *HA* it does not occur at all. Aristotle used only once the phrase of the noun ὀμιλία together with the verb ποιῶμαι (cf. similar constructions pointed out above) while the noun ὀμιλία occurs in his work more frequently.

Βούλεται μὲν οὖν ἡ φύσις τῶν πλείστων περὶ τὸν αὐτὸν χρόνον ποιεῖσθαι τὴν ὀμιλίαν ταύτην, ὅταν ἐκ τοῦ χειμῶνος μεταβάλλῃ πρὸς τὸ θέρους· 542^a21

Přirozenost nutí většinu živočichů, aby kopulovali v té roční době, kdy přechází jaro do léta.

4d. τρίβω

“To rub, Cz. třít, drhnout”. This verb has also erotic connotations. In the active voice, it means “to rub the penis, Cz. třít penis” (regardless of whether the action is done by a woman or a man) and in the middle voice, “to masturbate, Cz. masturbovat”. It is utilized only about people.

Συμβαίνει δὲ περὶ τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον τοῖς τε πειρωμένοις τρίβεσθαι... 581^a29

To se stává i těm, kteří se v tomto věku pokoušejí masturbovat...

διατρίβω

This compound with the meaning “to spend time, employ oneself, Cz. trávit čas, pobývat”, unlike other compounds of τρίβω, was not used as a term having sexual connotations, but there is one place in *HA* where an animal intercourse of sheep is described in this way.

Μεταλλάττει δ' ὁ ἄρσῃν καὶ οὐ πρὸς μιᾷ διατρίβει, ἀλλὰ διαλιπῶν βραχὺν χρόνον πλησιάζει ἄλλαις. 578^b11

Beran mění partnerky a nekopuluje pouze s jedinou, ale po krátké době se páří s jinými.

This list shows that the language – that is, especially the terminology of scientific literature differs from that of other literary genres. On the one hand, this difference is caused by the very distinction of the literary genre concerned and on the other hand it has to do with the fact that Aristotle described above all the sexual intercourse of animals and not of the human race. If we examine the discrepancy based on the literary genre itself in detail, we can see that the disparity lies mainly in the plenitude of expressions which were used for sexual inter-

³⁰ 518^a29 (nic z toho se nestane žádnému muži, který nezačal žít pohlavně), 518^b10 (a řasy začnou člověku vypadávat, jakmile začne žít sexuálně), 572^a12 (a tato urážka se přenesla na ty (ženy), které jsou nezřízené v pohlavním životě), 581^b17 (všechny mladé dívky, které žijí sexuálně, se stávají neřestnějšími).

course. In the comedies we can find approximately a hundred of various verbs which denote sexual practices. Some of them are of course hapax legomenon or expressions of non-Attic origin or dialectal words, but in this context we always have to keep in our mind that only a very small portion of the comedies actually written has been preserved until now, so that what we now state as hapax legomenon could have been a common word. On the contrary, the vocabulary of *HA* is less rich and limited only to a number of expressions. Altogether, in Aristotle's work *Historia Animalium* there is to be found a total of twenty nine expressions or phrases which describe both human and animal sexual intercourse. This number includes compounds as well as combinations of words derived from the verbs from our list, so that one and the same word can be counted twice. If we count only the stem words, we will arrive at the number of fifteen expressions. Generally, we can say that the language of Aristotle's *Historia Animalium* is very simple, the same phrases and words are repeated, and as a whole this work gives the impression that it is only notes to the life of animal which Aristotle did not manage to rewrite.

The second discrepancy – that is, the one connected with the fact that Aristotle in *HA* describes mainly animal intercourse, lies in the expressions which were used to denote it. On the basis of the frequency of occurrence of individual verbs, we can conclude that the primary verb denoting sexual intercourse of animals was unambiguously the verb ὀχεύω which was very seldom used for human intercourse. In comparison with the recurrence of this verb, all the other expressions from the list seem to be marginal and unusual for the description of animal intercourse. Nevertheless, we have to realize that we do not have a lot of ancient works with roughly the same content, so we do not know what is a matter of Aristotle's own way of writing and his personal preferences, and what has to do with the general language usage. With the exception of the verb βαίνω and its compounds the listed verbs can be found only at several places. The verb βαίνω has a special position among all the other verbs. As it has been said above, this verb is no more unmarked and it denotes the form which is taken by the participants during the sexual intercourse. There is another difference: talking about animal reproduction Aristotle had to use only verbs for heterosexual vaginal intercourse. The work simply lacks expressions for other sexual practices such as masturbation and oral sex.

It is feasible that the verbs concerning sexual congress used in such works as *Historia Animalium* were not meant to be vulgar or offensive because there was no reason for that. Aristotle's intention was to describe the reproduction of animals and not to arouse laughter or indignation as the writers of comedy did. Logically enough, if any of the above-listed words occurs in comedy, the obscene trait we can recognize in it does not lie in the word itself but in its context and other non-verbal means — comedy was after all not based on speech only. In my opinion, there is a significant correlation between the literary genre and the amount of vulgarity of the individual expressions it uses as it has been shown (at least as I hope) by the above presented analysis.

LITERATURE

Texts

Thesaurus Linguae Graecae [Online Digital Library]. Irvine: University of California, 2001 [quoted 2006]. Available at <http://www.tlg.uci.edu/>

Dictionaries

LIDDEL, H. G. – SCOTT, R. – JONES, H. S. (1996). *Greek–English Lexicon. With a Revised Supplement*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.

ADRADOS, F. R. (1989-2002) *Diccionario Griego – Español. I-VI*. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1989-2002.

Secondary sources

BAIN, DAVID (1990). Greek Verbs for Animal Intercourse Used of Human Beings. *Sileno*, 1990, 16, 253-261.

HENDERSON, JEFFREY (1975). *The Maculate Muse. Obscene Language in Attic Comedy*. Yale, 1975.

LENAIOS, EUIOS (1935). *ΑΠΟΡΡΗΤΑ*. Thessaloniki, 1935.

RESUMÉ

V dochovaném starořeckém literárním materiálu jsou patrné rozdíly ve slovní zásobě, konkrétně slovesech, která se týká sexuálního styku. Tento rozdíl je způsoben jednak literárním žánrem (komedie × vědecká próza), jednak tvory, kteří pohlavní styk provozují (lidé × zvířata). Aristotelés ve svém spise *Zoologie (Historia Animalium)* popisuje převážně kopulaci živočichů, ale nevyhnul se také zmíncek o pohlavním životě člověka. V použitém lexiku jsou patrné rozdíly oproti jazyku komedií, které spočívají převážně v množství a pestrosti použitých výrazů.

Jana Steklá
Ústav klasických studií FF MU
(22490@mail.muni.cz)

