

#### 4. Tullia Spinedi

##### Metaphors, adages and riddles: features of wise women's expressions

Plutarch, in a famous anecdote, describes Corinna reproaching the young Pindar about his abuse of figures of speech and myths (*De glor. Ath.*, 347f-348a). This passage has long been analyzed in relation to Corinna's date and production. Even though it perhaps cannot conclusively resolve any chronological or stylistic issue, nevertheless some observations about the representation of female literary competence can be proposed.

Some aspects have already been examined: Corinna is described as a wise woman who distances a naïve artist from the risk of ἀμουνσία, and to be οὐκ ἀπόμουνσος was a litotes adopted in framing female intellectual activity (De Martino 2013, 140 ff.). Her behavior shows a pedagogical character, a typical trait of the description of learned women too.

Less attention has been paid to the words Corinna pronounces, synthesizing her teachings in a proverb: "one has to sow with the hand and not with the entire bag".

Adages, as like riddles, represent a special form of expression, since they use metaphors, *i.e.*, they indicate something adopting words from a sphere which differs from the object they describe (Arist., *Rh.*, 3, 2, 12; 3, 11, 14).

In Athenian drama, female language is mainly characterized by lament, allusion to obscene topics, and ambiguous deception. Nevertheless, women are also represented adopting metaphorical expressions, *i.e.*, uttering proverbs (e.g., Ar., *Lys.* 139; *Thesm.*, 413 and 528-30) and speaking by riddles (e.g., Alexis, 242 K.A.; Antiphanes, 194 K.A.; see also Cleobulina). Female prophetic activity, and the representation of prophetesses too (e.g., Aesch., *Ag.*, 1253-55), engages with ambiguous linguistic formulations.

The presentation aims to investigate both the model of prophetesses speaking enigmatically, as well as the tradition reporting women adopting popular metaphorical expressions such as proverbs and riddles, to detect their possible influence, within the sphere of authoritative wisdom, on later descriptions of female poetic activity.

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