



Classics

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

Dogs, Wasps, Pigs, and Dung-Beetles: The Animal Identities of Old Women in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*

presented by
Jordan Ardoin

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Mary E.V. McClanahan
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HUMN
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Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* is a comedy about gender roles in Athenian society in the fifth century BCE. It (comically) reinforces the traditional view that wives are to look after the home and family while their husbands handle matters of politics, economy, and war. But where do older women, past their child-bearing and rearing years, fit in? This talk will demonstrate how the chorus of old women in *Lysistrata* navigate their gendered society by assuming various animal identities. Through language, they become war dogs, angry wasps, protective mother sows, and vengeful dung-beetles, thereby empowering themselves to traverse gender boundaries and seize authority in both the feminine realm of the *oikos* (the household) and the masculine realm of the *polis* (the city).

