Sophocles, fr. 316 comprises matching entries in Photius, *Lex.* p. 489 Porson and the *Suda* p166, which are thought to derive from Pausanias the Atticist’s dictionary. Erbse presents the following text (p5):¹

*ρικνούσθαι: τὸ διέλκεσθαι καὶ παντοδιάς διαστρέφεσθαι κατ’ εἶδος, λέγεται δὲ καὶ τὸ καμπύλον γίγνεσθαι ἀσχημόνος καὶ κατὰ συνουσίαν καὶ ὀρχισιν, κάμπτοντα τὴν ὀσφύν. Σοφοκλῆς Ἰχνευταῖς.

“ρικνούσθαι”: being twisted and variously skewed in appearance; it is also used for lewdly making oneself curved, during sex or dancing, by curling the lower spine (Sophocles in the *Ichneutai*).

How the verb fitted in to the *Ichneutai* has gone unanswered. Radt ad loc. merely comments ‘vix ad F 314.302 referendum’.³ I agree: the lexicographers cannot be trying to gloss that description, also from *Ichneutai*, of the tortoise from which Hermes has fashioned a lyre:

[\[\text{βροχίς, χυτροίδης, ποικίλη δορά καταρρικνωμένος.}\]

It is short, pot-shaped and shrivelled up with a spotted skin.

Nevertheless, when the tragedians use a rare stem twice in the same play, the recurrence often forms an intratext to which one can attach some interpretative weight. Can one conjecture a significance-bearing reason why Sophocles might have used the extremely rare forms an intratext to which one can attach some interpretative weight. Can one nevertheless, when the tragedians use a rare stem twice in the same play, the recurrence often forms an intratext to which one can attach some interpretative weight. Can one conjecture a significance-bearing reason why Sophocles might have used the extremely rare ρικνόομαι and καταρρικνόομαι in very different senses within the same play?⁴

I believe we can. The key is the remarkable ‘coincidence’ that the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* – a text with much the same plot as Sophocles’s *Ichneutai* – regards itself as an important source for Sophocles – also employs a phrase for ‘to sway the lower spine sexily’.⁵

As Hermes first leaves his cave the narrator, giving Hermes’ focalization, describes a tortoise σαῦλο ποσίν βαίνουσα (28). Aristophanes’ use of σαῦλοπρωκτικῶ (Vesp.

* My thanks to Lyndsay Coo and CQ’s reader for advice, and to Georgios Kazantzidis for interesting me in the uses of ρικνός.

¹ Pausanias’ entry had earlier been paraphrased by Moeris p2 (ρικνόοται: τὸ ἀσχημόνος κινεῖται. Ἀττικοῖ) and abbreviated by Hesychius p319. A similar sense is attributed to Pausanias (δ13) τὸ διαρρικνοῦσθαι: τὸ τὴν ὀσφύν χυτρικῶς περιάγειν. Κρατίνος Τροφονίως (= *PCG* fr. 234). Both Catinus’ fragment and the similar phrasing at Pollux 4.99 refer to dance. The only other non-lexicographical use of infinitive ρικνοῦσθαι is Oppian, *Hal.* 5.593, of the apparent shrivelling-up of marine molluscs with the waning moon.

² H. Erbse, *Untersuchungen zu den Attizistischen Lexika* (Berlin, 1950), 206.

³ Similarly e.g. A.C. Pearson, *The Fragments of Sophocles*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, 1917), 269; E.V. Maltese, *Sofoclé: Ichneutai* (Florence, 1982), 65.

⁴ Taking Gregory of Nyssa, who uses both verbs, as a cut-off, and excluding lexicographers, *TLG* finds seven uses of ρικνόομαι and only Sophocles’ use of καταρρικνόομαι.

⁵ The relationship of *Hom.* *Hymn Herm.* and *Ichm.* is argued for by L. Koettgen, *Quae ratio inter Addagastes fabulam Sophocleam et Hymnum in Mercurium qui fertur Homericus* (Bonn, 1914); Pearson (n. 3), 225–8; J.A. Fernández Delgado, ‘La lucha entre Hermes y Apolo del Epos al teatro: el *Himno a Hermes* como hipotexto de los *Sabuesos de Sófocles*’, in J.V. Bafúns, F. de Martino and C. Morenilla (edd.), *El teatro clásico en el marco de la cultura griega y su pervivencia en la cultura occidental* (Bari, 2007), 113–56, at 121–55; A. Vergados, *The Homeric Hymn to Hermes* (Berlin, 2013), 79–86.
1171–3) and διασαυλόμαι (PCG fr. 635) shows what motion is intended – swaying the bottom from side to side, as tortoises indeed do as they walk. This swaying can imply vanity (as in e.g. Semonides, IEG2 fr. 18 and the Aristophanes passages), but also sensuality. The satyrs, according to Euripides, Cyclops 39–40, once approached Althaea’s house drunk, σαυλόμενοι, and prepared to serenade her with a barbitos. Anacreon used the word similarly, according to Clement of Alexandria (Paed. 3.11.69):

αἵ δὲ γυναίκειοι κινήσεις καὶ θρύψεις καὶ χλίδαι κολοσσέται παντελῶς· τὸ γὰρ ἀθροδίναν τῆς περὶ τὸν περίπτωτον κινήσας καὶ τὸ “σαυλὰ βαίνειν”, ὡς φησιν Ἀνακρέων [PMG fr. 113], κομιδὴ ἐταιρικά, ὡς γὲ μοι φαίνεται.

Feminine movements and airs and luxuries must be completely curtailed: for pampered practices in one’s gait and “σαῦλα βαίνειν”, in Anacreon’s words, are utterly meretricious, in my humble opinion.

That σαῦλα connotes sensuality in the Hymn to Hermes is confirmed just a few lines later, with Hermes’ remarkable greeting (31):

χαίρε φωνή ερόεσσα, χοροττύση, δαιτός ἐταιρή.6

Be kindly, you gorgeous-bodied girl, who stamps in the chorus, who is a companion of the feast.

The Hymn to Hermes poses us a puzzle: how can Hermes see a sexy strut in the lumbering gait of a tortoise? This is not the place to discuss how that puzzle is gradually resolved.7 For our purposes, it is enough that the hymnist took an apparently unalluring specimen, and redescribed its walk in such terms.

Putting the lexicographers’ entries together with σαῦλα βαίνειν in the Hymn to Hermes produces a plausible account of fr. 316 and its relationship to Ichn. 302. Ῥικνοῦσθαι could describe the ‘sexy dance’ of the tortoise – or, perhaps, of the satyrs imitating a tortoise as they come to terms with its delightful music in the latter portion of the play.8 But the verb would also recall the preceding, accurate description of the tortoise as κατερρικνωμένος (‘shrivelled’). This leaves us with an interesting new case of how satyr-plays pick up on and rework themes from epic, visible most obviously in Euripides’ use of Odyssey 9 in his Cyclops.9 I submit that Sophocles not only took over the Hymn to Hermes’ paradoxically sexy tortoise, but gave her a further ‘twist in the tail’, by encapsulating both sexiness and unsexiness intratextually into a single verb.

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doi:10.1017/S0009838814000913

6 Sophocles’ only use of φωνή, in the discussion of the tortoise’s form at Ichn. 307, may owe something to this very line.

7 See my forthcoming ‘Sparring partners: fraternal relations in the Homeric Hymn to Hermes’, in L.-G. Canevaro, P. Bassino and B. Graziosi (edd.), Conflict and Consensus in Early Greek Hexameter Poetry.

8 In 93–128 they imitate hunting-dogs. It could be that at 118–22, while describing the impossible prints of the cows, they try to clarify their report by enacting what they infer to have been the cows’ stance. In any case, Silenus is astonished by their all-fours posture at 124.

9 See recently P. O’Sullivan and C. Collard, Euripides’ Cyclops and Major Fragments of Greek Satyric Drama (Oxford, 2013); R. Lämmle, Poetik des Satyrspiels (Heidelberg, 2013), 327–50.