



Music and the Muses: The Culture of Mousike in the Classical Athenian City

Penelope Murray (ed.), Peter Wilson (ed.)

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CHAPTER

6 Choral Forms in Aristophanic Comedy: Musical Mimesis and Dramatic Performance in Classical Athens

Claude Calame

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Abstract

This chapter is concerned with the ritual and cultic meaning of choral performances in the comedies of Aristophanes. Such choruses adapt traditional forms of melic poetry for the stage, mimic ritual addresses to the gods, and contribute indirectly to the celebration of Dionysus. But what of the authority of the choral voice? Unlike previous studies which have approached this question from the point of view of the comic parabasis, the chapter focuses on the *exodoi*, the final choral songs. These bring together poet, performers, and audience in a happy ending which anticipates the victory celebration in which all will participate. At the same time they also evoke the atmosphere of the Dionysiac cult in which the comic drama itself is one of the acts.

Keywords: Aristophanes, cult, ritual, Dionysus, *Exodoi*

Subject: Classical Drama, Religion in the Ancient World, Ancient Greek History

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The wholly mimetic mode of tragedy and comedy seems to preclude any direct invocation of the Muse by the poet, the composer and director of the dramatic action which was staged in the theatre. But that does not mean that the Muse, the inspirer of song, was absent from the Attic stage. In the comedies of Aristophanes she appears, for example, in the *Frogs* in the *agôn* between Euripides and Aeschylus, over which Dionysus himself presides as judge.⁵ It is, of course, not by chance that the tragic Muse is summoned to the stage at the moment when the contest moves from the spoken verses of the prologues to the songs

(μῦθ' ἤ).

1297, 1307) of the choral parts. In the parody of his adversary's choral songs Aeschylus summons the Muse of Euripides, whose presence

Aristophanic Poetry

Laura M. Stone



Aristophanic Poetry:

Aristophanic poetry Carroll Moulton, 1981 *Philosophy, Poetry, and Power in Aristophanes's Birds* Daniel Holmes, 2018-11-23 Aristophanes was clearly anxious about the role of the sophists and the new education in Athens After the perceived failure of *Clouds* in 423 and its subsequent unperformed revision Aristophanes this book argues returned in 414 with *Birds* a continuation and deepening of his critique found in *Clouds* Peisetaerus or persuader of his comrades the protagonist of *Birds* though an old man is clearly a student of Socrates phrontisterion Unlike Socrates however he is political and ambitious and he understands the whole of human nature both rational and irrational Peisetaerus employs the various deconstructive techniques of Socrates and his allies which is summed up on the comic sage in the image of father beating to overturn not just human society but with the help of his new allies the divine and musical birds the cosmos After his new gods and bird city Cloudcuckooland are actually established however the hero re introduces the old ways justice moderation and obedience to law but now under his personal authority and thereby becomes the highest of the gods Thus the author postulates in 414 Aristophanes has come to acknowledge the potency of the apparent civic minded turn or element of the sophists while aware of the self aggrandizing nature of their ambition Peisetaerus unlike Socrates is successful he is establishing a just polis and cosmos and therefore must be victorious But the consequence or cost of this success is illustrated through the Bird Chorus After the polis is founded the birds never again sing of their musical reciprocity with the Muses the source of melodies for men The birds are now political and the policemen of human beings The sophist run cosmos has lost its music The new Zeus is an ugly bird mutant The gods and all nomoi have lost their beauty honor and reverential nature *Birds* in its finale hilariously but boldly illuminates the inherent tension between philosophy reason and poetry divinely inspired tradition

The Political Theory of Aristophanes Jeremy J. Mhire, Bryan-Paul Frost, 2014-04-09 This original and wide ranging collection of essays offers for the first time a comprehensive examination of the political dimensions of that madcap comic poet Aristophanes Rejecting the claim that Aristophanes is little more than a mere comedian the contributors to this fascinating volume demonstrate that Aristophanes deserves to be placed in the ranks of the greatest Greek political thinkers As these essays reveal all of Aristophanes plays treat issues of fundamental political importance from war and peace poverty and wealth the relation between the sexes demagoguery and democracy to the role of philosophy and poetry in political society Accessible to students as well as scholars *The Political Theory of Aristophanes* can be utilized easily in the classroom but at the same time serve as a valuable source for those conducting more advanced research Whether the field is political philosophy classical studies history or literary criticism this work will make it necessary to reconceptualize how we understand this great Athenian poet and force us to recognize the political ramifications and underpinnings of his uproarious comedies

Aristophanes and the Definition of Comedy M. S. Silk, 2002 All Greek in the text is translated the versions offered seek to convey the distinctive character of the original

BOOK JACKET **Action, Song, and Poetry: Musical and**

Poetical Meta-performance in Aristophanes and Ben Jonson Alessandro Grilli, Francesco Morosi, 2023-01-30 This study aims to provide a comparative analysis of the dynamics of musical and poetical meta performance as they emerge both from the surviving corpus of ancient Attic comedy which adds up for our purposes to Aristophanes eleven extant plays and from Ben Jonson's comedies As a matter of fact both corpora show a huge presence of meta performative elements that is of moments in which musical and or poetical performance is explicitly thematized or enacted in the drama Those moments are hardly ever fortuitous or not significant On the contrary they play each time a vital role in the development of the plot in the portrait of characters or in the definition of the ideology of the play By means of a comparative analysis between the two authors the book aims at providing a taxonomy of meta performance in Aristophanes and Ben Jonson with particular attention to its role in the definition of the characters poetic ability Such comparison will show that despite using similar comic and performative strategies the two authors draw a completely different ideology around the crucial themes of culture and titularity

Aristophanes, 1 Aristophanes, 1998 Directness vivid imagery and rhetorical music prevail **Costume in Aristophanic Poetry** Laura M. Stone, 1984 **Costume in Aristophanic Poetry** Laura M. Stone, 1981 Spirit of Aristophanes Dustin W Dixon, Mary C English, 2024-06-30 The Spirit of Aristophanes is a wide ranging collection of new studies of ancient literature and culture from fifth century drama to the Roman novel The essays use an array of approaches that will appeal to scholars and students interested in classical studies gender and sexuality literary history performance and textual criticism This volume has been prepared in tribute to Jeffrey Henderson William Goodwin Aurelio Professor of Greek Language and Literature Emeritus of Boston University and General Editor of the Loeb Classical Library His vibrant research on classical literature political ideology civic culture identity obscenity and translation has shaped scholarly discourse for decades and has inspired each of the essays in this volume Aristophanes and the Poetics of Competition Zachary P. Biles, 2011-01-27 Athenian comic drama was written for performance at festivals honouring the god Dionysos Through dramatic action and open discourse poets sought to engage their rivals and impress the audience all in an effort to obtain victory in the competitions This book uses that competitive performance context as an interpretive framework within which to understand the thematic interests shaping the plots and poetic quality of Aristophanes plays in particular and of Old Comedy in general Studying five individual plays from the Aristophanic corpus as well as fragments of other comic poets it reveals the competitive poetics distinctive to each It also traces thematic connections with other poetic traditions especially epic lyric and tragedy and thereby seeks to place competitive poetics within broader trends in Greek literature The Plutus of Aristophanes Aristophanes, William Charles Green, 1881 **The Plays of Aristophanes: The frogs. The trial of Euripides, "The Thesmophorians." The clouds. The wasps** Aristophanes, 1930 *Rhetoric, Comedy, and the Violence of Language in Aristophanes' Clouds* Daphne Elizabeth O'Regan, 1992 This is an intelligent and unusually thought provoking reading of Aristophanes Clouds O'Regan focuses on logos or the power of argument and its effects and on the self awareness

of the second Clouds as a comedy of logos directed toward an audience made resistant by devotion to the body Within and without the play logos meets defeat when confronted with human nature and desire The argument conveys much insight into fifth century thought and the play s workings the more so because it balances rhetoric with comedy and reminds the reader that this is a comic logos explored in the comic mode and connected with the intentions and vicissitudes of the first and second Clouds The Plays of Aristophanes ... Aristophanes,1909 *Eddic poetry* Guðbrandur Vigfússon,Frederick York Powell,1883 **Poet Lore** ,1915 *The Birds of Aristophanes. Translated Into English Verse, with Introduction, Notes, and Appendices. By Benjamin Hall Kennedy* Aristophanes,Benjamin Hall Kennedy,1874 Aristophanic poetry Carroll Moulton,Peter Kussmaul,1981 **The Facts on File Companion to Classical Drama** John E. Thorburn,2005 Surveys important Greek and Roman authors plays characters genres historical figures and more Red Cotton Night-cap Country Robert Browning,1887

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