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BOOK REVIEW

Greek Comedy and the Discourse of Genres. Edited by EMMANUELA BAKOLA, LUCIA PRAUSCELLO AND MARIO TELÒ. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. xvi + 404 pp. $110.00. ISBN 978-1-107-0333103.

These fourteen welcome contributions show how profoundly engaged Aristophanes and other Greek comic poets were with virtually all genres of literature: epic, *iambos*, choral lyric, monody, tragedy, fable and ethnography. One chapter considers the influence of the Dionysiac festival itself; two final chapters discuss the reception of comedy by Plato and Alexandrian scholarship.

In an introductory chapter on theoretical approaches to comedy, tragedy and satyr-play, Michael Silk begins by making a distinction between text and context. A context, such as the competition at the Greater Dionysia, suggests that a dramatic work is (for example) a *tragoidia*, but the texts themselves can provoke different interpretations. There is relatively little on the other types of intergeneric dialogue addressed the subsequent chapters; in fact readers would do well to read Silk's discussion of comedy as a supra-genre in his *Aristophanes and the Definition of Comedy* (2000, esp. Ch.2). I found myself wishing he had written an "Afterword" with reactions to the other contributions in the volume.

Eric Csapo, suggests, with his characteristically thorough knowledge of vases and drama, that a group of performers depicted on vases with *phallos*-sticks or phallic appendages, and often thought to be comic actors or chorus members, were actually participants in the *Pompe* of the Great Dionysia. Csapo shows that the *Pompe* was as boisterous as any *komos*, but is less persuasive in arguing that animal costumes, other than dolphin-riders, originated in the *Pompe* (p. 65). He identifies a reverse process in the fourth century, whereby participants in the *Pompe* were assimilated to performers in the theater.

Ralph Rosen's chapter answers Ewen Bowie's 2002 attempt to minimize the similarities between *iambos* and Old Comedy that Rosen collected in *Old Comedy and the Iambographic Tradition* (1988). Bowie compared length, audience, and mode of performance; Rosen focuses instead on the issue of how (for example)

Hipponax and Aristophanes would answer the question: "What are you really trying to do when you make fun of your targets?" Rosen's approach resembles the *Poetics* in that Aristotle was interested in the natural bent and *telos* of poets.

If "paratragedy" is parody of tragedy, "paraepic" looks to epic. Cues include the use of Homeric *Kunstsprache*, dactylic hexameter, and narrative motifs. Martin Revermann notes that paraepic is on full display in Strato's *Phoenicides* (fr. 1), in which a pompous cook comically uses Homerisms. Revermann suggests that in *Odysseus Automolos* Epicharmus was writing "against" the Homeric model to create a Western Greek cultural identity: fragments suggest that the Trojans lorded their power over the cowardly Greeks—a reversal that would have appealed to the Syracusans, who may have seen themselves as geographically marginal. This chapter nicely teases out another strand of interwoven genres.

Mario Telò suggests (among much else) that the encounter in *Peace* between Trygaeus, who seeks agricultural peace, and the son of Lamachus, who sings martial songs, recalls the moment in *Iliad* 4 when Agamemnon prods Diomedes and Sthenelus into combat. Trygaeus plays the part of the dutiful and paternal Diomedes, while the boy plays the reckless Sthenelus. For Telò a crucial clue is the fact that the historical Lamachus had a son named Tydeus; Telò suggests that we are meant to recall Tydeus, the headstrong father of Diomedes. The *Epigonoi*, in which Tydeus and Sthenelus boldly and ambitiously attacked Thebes, is thought to be a further model. While it is possible that the Iliadic heroes offer parallels with *Peace*, there are too many links in the argumentative chain to allow me to agree that *Iliad* 4 was a direct model. This contribution may be a misconceived adventure, but it is learned and stimulating.

Chris Carey explores the relationship between choral songs outside comedy (paeans, *partheneia*, dithyrambs, and epinician odes) and those in comedy. In some ways comedy is closer to these non-dramatic types than to tragedy in that, like archaic lyric, comedy shows awareness of the occasion of the performance. In victory odes the choral voice can melt into the authorial voice; so too comedy has its "parabatic glide." The gap between chorus and character is also elided when the chorus of the *Thesmophoriazusae* (an "intra-fictive" role) aligns with what we would expect of women singing at the Thesmophoria (an "extra-fictive" role). I found this one of the most illuminating contributions to the volume.

Richard Rawles maintains that whereas Aristophanes turned to Pindar to evoke the language of high-register epinician poetry, for a lower register he resorted to Simonides, an ally in mockery. Some points depend on ambiguities being resolved in Rawles's favor. For example, Strepsiades asked Pheidippides to

sing a song by Simonides (fr. 507) that apparently criticized Krios, but Pheidippides refused on the grounds that the song was old-fashioned (*Clouds* 1353-8). Rawles, however, suggests that Simonides was criticizing Krios for being an Aeginetan aristocrat and the request to sing the song marks Strepsiades as a commoner. Not all of surviving Simonidean poetry fits this demotic pattern, but Rawles acknowledges that Aristophanes was probably cherry-picking.

The *Wasps*, as Matthew Wright sees it, is a series of competitive encounters between comedy and tragedy, especially in the final scenes. Wright suggests that what is claimed to be unique (*Wasps* 1536) is that the chorus was sent off dancing in a tragic style. Wright is interested less in the reception by the performance audience than by a text-reading audience which would recognize recondite allusions. At times Wright writes as if these allusions and encounters were the only things that mattered in *Wasps*, though elsewhere he concedes that the paratragedy is not "overt" (*Wasps* had relatively few citations in Rau's *Paratragoedia*). A few assertions are ingenious if speculative: Wright suggests that *Wasps* and *Proagon* were "composed to be read in dialogue with one another," with the (lost) *Proagon* as the comedy engaging in dialogue with tragedy. The possibility is tantalizing.

Emmanuela Bakola proposes that Cratinus modeled the divinities of Wealth ("Plutoi") in his *Plutoi* of 429 B.C. on the Erinyes of Aeschylus' *Oresteia*. Both Plutoi and Erinyes believe that the unjust acquisition of wealth should be punished. In the *Oresteia*, we witness ill-gotten loot; Cratinus takes aim at the unjustly wealthy Hagnon. Both Cratinus and Aeschylus thus share an "antihegemonic political stance." Some might disagree with a few conclusions. Against the "antihegemonic" *Oresteia* one could balance Mark Griffith's "Brilliant Dynasts" (*CA* 14 [1995], 62-129). Nor am I yet ready to believe that Orestes is punished for his crimes against the ecology of the earth. On re-reading the fragments of the *Plutoi* I wasn't sure that I saw a necessary debt to the *Oresteia*, but the parallels are worth highlighting.

Marco Fantuzzi and David Konstan have written about the "guessing game" which is played when one interlocutor teases out an answer from a second. In the *Frogs* Heracles has to guess what Dionysus wants, and only gradually is the answer revealed: Euripides. A notable example is in the Euripidean *Rhesus*, where Hector has to guess what reward Dolon wants for spying on the Greeks; the answer: the horses of Achilles. For comically lower stakes (ownership of a cheese shop), Daos in Menander's *Perikeiromene* spies for Moschion. I would want more evidence to

be persuaded that this scene really borrows from the *Rhesus*, as the authors propose, but the suggestion is certainly thought-provoking.

Aesopic fable and Old Comedy, as Edith Hall points out, both rely on "knowingness," a claim to superior wisdom. Men may try to camouflage their true natures, but the knowing viewer, aided by comedy, can see through them. The strategy that is required of readers of fables is like decoding an allegorical oracle in that both involve animal imagery. One advantage of fables is that they constituted a mode of communication common to poor and rich alike, and capable of expressing various relationships between master and slave.

Jeffrey Rusten examines passages in *Birds* (1470-93, 1553-64, 1994-1705) that parody accounts of strange and far-off peoples: the chorus sings of the Cleonymus tree beyond Kardia, the dark land of Orestes, the lake of the *Skiapodes*, and the *Englottogastores*. The joke is that these lands are one place: Athens, which will become a destination for cultural tourism. The genre being parodied is, of course, ethnography, already known from Hecataeus, Herodotus, and the Hippocratic *Airs, Waters, Places*. Rusten lays this out with wit and economy, noting a pattern in ethnographic writing whereby wings (appropriate for this play) are needed to see exotic peoples like the Hyperboreans.

Lucia Prauscello addresses Plato's assessment of Old Comedy. Comedy, of course, represents inferior people, whom no decent man could imitate in performance unless in a playful spirit; in fact at *Laws* 816d3-817a1 Plato restricted dramatic parts to slaves and foreigners as a safe way to expose citizens to morally bad models. Plato also understood that comedy entails something *kainon* ("unfamiliar"), echoing Aristophanes' claim to be an innovator. Another occasional feature of Old Comedy is the "madness" of the poet or comic hero, which resonates with Plato's descriptions of insanity.

Nick Lowe writes about the "Pleiad," the Alexandrian tragedians, including Lycophron, who penned treatises on comedy. What they wrote is lost, but it is clear that they were writing about Old Comedy, even composing handbooks on individual plays, which diverted attention away from contemporary New Comedy and helped shape the literary canon that would be studied by the next generation of critics.

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This volume bristles with attractive suggestions and brandishes a remarkable range of scholarly approaches. I found myself wondering if a fruitful chapter could have been commissioned on Aristophanes' literary relationship with even more distant literary kin like Thucydides. I cannot help but observe that one would

never guess from reading these chapters that Aristophanes was ever thought to have harbored conservative inclinations; instead we frequently hear of equality, leveling, free speech, and a populist stance. In this book, comedy is a genre of refreshingly open-minded poets.

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