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Recommended Citation

Nelson, Max. (2009). Aristophanes: The Complete Plays (review). *Mouseion: Journal of the Classical Association of Canada*, 9 (1), 85-89.

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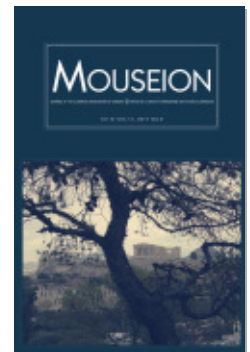
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Aristophanes: The Complete Plays (review)

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Mouseion: Journal of the Classical Association of Canada, Volume 9, Number 1, 2009, LIII—Series III, pp. 85-89 (Article)

Published by University of Toronto Press
DOI: [10.1353/mou.2010.0017](https://doi.org/10.1353/mou.2010.0017)



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from expansion in several ways. As Shanske himself says, “succinctness is not always a virtue” (14). Indeed.

Most will agree with the underlying premise of this book, that Thucydides created a new way of looking at the world which, like the Greek tragedies to which Shanske compares it, continues to resonate with successive societies since antiquity. Where some may have difficulty, however, is with Shanske’s introduction of new terms to describe and explain Thucydides’ remarkable achievement. By devising his own definitions for these terms, which he then employs in very particular ways, Shanske leaves himself open to the perception, at least, of circular argumentation. Furthermore, the distinctions between these terms do not always appear consistent; for example, the line between his very specific usage of the verbs “disclose” and “found” sometimes appears elided. Nevertheless, Shanske offers some very perceptive and original observations on Thucydides and grounds him in an explicitly philosophical context, both ancient and modern. And this book may well provide the added service of bringing Thucydides to the attention of philosophers, by whom he has until now been somewhat neglected.

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PAUL ROCHE, trans. *Aristophanes: The Complete Plays*. New York: Signet, 2005. Pp. 736. US \$18.95. ISBN 978-0451214096.

Paul Roche (1916–2007), as well as having been an associate of the Bloomsbury group and an author of poetry, novels, fables, and a travel memoir, was a prolific translator of ancient Greek and Roman drama, having published versions of Aeschylus’ *Prometheus Bound* and the *Oresteia*, all of Sophocles, and nearly all of Euripides, as well as three plays by Plautus. His last endeavour was to turn his attention to Aristophanes, providing accessible translations of all eleven of his surviving plays.¹ The result is a large volume (700+ pages) which is a handy and cheap (less than \$20) means of obtaining all of Aristophanes in a fresh, contemporary transla-

¹ Roche had already published translations of *Lys.*, *Ran.*, *Eccl.*, and *Plut.* in *Four Plays by Aristophanes* (New York: Signet, 2004).

tion and thus it is particularly well suited to undergraduate survey courses. It must, however, be used with great caution.

The work begins with a short introduction about Aristophanes, his plays, their production, and Roche's translations. Then, for each of the eleven plays, Roche briefly discusses the theme, gives a list of the characters and silent parts, provides a short synopsis of the story, and adds some observations as well as the time and setting of the play. Roche has some unorthodox ideas: Aristophanes was an all-out pacifist (as implied at ix and 66) and in *Thesmophoriazusae* he proposes that Aristophanes believed that "in truth women are our only hope" (481). For many of the plays, Roche does not provide the etymologies of the names of the characters (such as the meaningful Cinesias and Myrrhine in *Lys.*) but when he does they are often incorrect: for instance, Phidippides is "Shyhorse" (131), Peisetairus is "Mr. Trusting" (335), and Cario is "shrimp" which means "Smarty" (667). In *Thesmophoriazusae* Roche names Euripides' in-law Mnesilochus without acknowledging that this name is not to be found in the manuscripts; he is also confused about his relationship to Euripides, calling him a relative (481) and implying at one point that he was Euripides' nephew (491) and at another point his father-in-law (530).

For the plays themselves, no line numbers are provided (either of the original Greek text or of the translation). Notes are kept to a minimum, thus not distracting too much from the reading. However, there are no cross-references between plays and information is often repeated from play to play. Thus, for example, we are told again and again that Boeotia is pronounced *Bee-o-sha* (13, 294, 346, 421, and 505, and see 72 for *Bee-o-shan*) and there are three substantially similar notes on silphium (407, 662, and 705). Sometimes notes from different plays are contradictory: at one point Roche says that "grasshopper" (that is, cicada) brooches were worn in Athens because these creatures had sprung from the earth, as the Athenians had (125 on *Eq.* 1331), but he later claims that these insects were chosen because they were common in Attica (176 on *Nub.* 984).

In the notes Roche cites Jeffrey Henderson's Loeb about 80 times² and freely admits that Henderson is his "unfailing savior and source of information" (266). Roche also once uses Liddell and Scott on κότταβος (28-29);³ however, he later says that according to the Loeb γλάνις is a kind of shad and that he was not able to find the word in his lexicon even though

² Pp. 8, 9, 15, 26, 28, 38, 44, 45, 73, 85, 88, 90, 93, 100, 115, 161, 169, 178, 224, 237, 238, 255, 256, 261, 270, 277, 290, 291, 295, 296, 308, 310, 311, 315, 317, 340, 358, 366, 369, 374, 377, 383, 384, 396, 399, 400, 401, 407, 430, 431, 432, 448, 471, 472, 486, 488, 490, 494, 499, 509, 512, 514, 517, 520, 544, 573, 583, 584, 589, 625, 628, 630, 640, 659, 674, 690, and 693.

³ Note also his reference to "the lexicon" at p. 407.

it is in the *LSJ* as “sheat-fish” (110). He also seems to have ignored *LSJ*’s *fellare* for λεσβιάζειν (or Henderson, *The Maculate Muse*, 183–184), understanding the word instead as “performing cunnilingus” (599, on *Ran.* 1308, and see 651, on *Eccl.* 920).⁴ Usually Greek words are transliterated when mentioned in the notes; when the Greek is given it is inevitably without the proper accentuation (91, 301, 520, 554, 597, 644, 662, and 712) and sometimes also inaccurately (560 and 655).

More disturbingly, Roche never cites any of the *editiones maiores* nor, for instance, Alan Sommerstein’s work. Too often, Roche says in a note that a person is unknown or a joke obscure when it is not the case. For instance, on p. 312 (at *Pax* 883) he says that Ariphrades is “unknown” and on p. 620 (at *Eccl.* 846) he even assumes that he is “obviously one of the women.” At p. 47 (on *Ach.* 887) he says that Morychus is “a rich glutton” and at p. 253 (on *Vesp.* 1142) calls him “a noted glutton” but also says that he cannot find anything about Morychus (225, on *Vesp.* 506) and that he is unknown (317, on *Pax* 1008). Similarly, Neocleides goes from being “a politician known for his aggressiveness” (624, on *Eccl.* 254) to “not known” (696, on *Plut.* 665). And, to give one last example, Roche notes that he could find nothing about the artist Mikon (450, at *Lys.* 679), though he is several times mentioned by Pausanias (1.15, 1.17.3, 1.18.1, 6.6.1, and 8.11.3).

In fact, much of the material in the notes is incorrect. For instance, Roche correctly states that Aristophanes’ rival Cratinus won the prize (that is first prize) nine times (45, 85, 91, and 556) but mistakenly says that he wrote twenty comedies (91) when almost thirty are attested. He also says that Cratinus died in 423 B.C. (91) at the age of 96 (556) or rather 97 (45 and 303), though he further notes (303) that he was “some seventy-two years older than Aristophanes” and since he places Aristophanes’ birth possibly in 445 B.C. (ix) this would make Cratinus about 94 at the time of his death. It is plausible that Cratinus died shortly after 423 B.C. since no surviving fragments can be dated after this time, and Lucian for one believed that he died shortly after his *Pytine* of 423 B.C. at the age of 97 (*Long.* 25 = T3 Kassel-Austin). This, however, is a relatively minor quibble compared to some of the howlers in the notes. Roche, for instance, believes that the Aeschines mentioned by Aristophanes (257 [*Vesp.* 1243], 324 [*Pax* 1154], and 376 [*Av.* 821]) is the famous orator and that Theophrastus (261 [*Vesp.* 1302]) is the famous philosopher, even though neither had yet been born. In the first cases, many different Aeschineses are mentioned (see Sommerstein, *Indexes* p. 87) and in the latter it is not Theophrastus but Thoupfrastus, who in this case really is otherwise unknown. In short, much of the comic material is provided not by the text but by the notes.

⁴ All this makes one assume that Roche was not using the ninth edition of *LSJ* but perhaps the intermediate lexicon based on the seventh edition.

On this note, let us finally turn to the translations. Roche admits only to using the Loeb as his text (86), and often plunders lines directly from it, occasionally with acknowledgment (69, 213, 228, 254, 355, 562, 631, and 643) but sometimes without (e.g., 453 on shucking flax at *Lys.* 737). He also once acknowledges taking lines from David Barrett's Penguin translation (507). This is not to say that there is not much which is original. Roche makes an effort at imitating the ancient meters and comes up with some interesting efforts (see, for instance, 145), and on top of being quite serviceable, his translations are often lots of fun too. Although American spellings are used throughout, British expressions sometimes creep in (see, for example, "flats" on p. 110 [*Eq.* 1001]). Roche also sometimes includes a bit more than the original without warning; thus beer is added in two plays (233 [*Vesp.* 676] and 438 [*Lys.* 466]) as well as extra indecencies ("fuck" at 110 [*Eq.* 1010], "fucking" at 420 [*Lys.* 2], and "fucks" at 432 [*Lys.* 295 and 305], and note "Snakeshit" for Dracontides at 211 [*Vesp.* 157]). There are also a few missing words (e.g., 260, missing Lycon at *Vesp.* 1301) and lines (e.g., 502, missing *Thesm.* 498-501).

On a few occasions, Roche provides his own original editorial suggestions. At 83-84, for instance, he proposes that the Μιλησίους at *Eq.* 361 should be read as Μιτυληναίους (presumably, though he simply gives the incorrect English "Mitylenian" rather than "Mytilenian") though this would wreck havoc with the iambic tetrameter line. Different line attributions are also proffered at 366 (*Av.* 629-635, to Tereus rather than the Chorus) and 474 (*Lys.* 1216-1241, introducing three new characters), which probably will not convince many.

Roche also claims (554) that "even the splendid Loeb translation gets wrong" the interpretation of *Ranae* 308. Xanthias is referring here to someone or something of the masculine gender being afraid and turning the colour πυρρός on Dionysus' behalf. Roche follows one of the many ancient interpretations in assuming that Xanthias is pointing to a priest in the audience known for his red complexion, and translates: "And him there, flaming red. In empathy of course." Roche does not translate δείσας ("becoming frightened") and his rendering does not make much sense in context. In the end, Henderson surely is right, as are Sommerstein and Dover among others, who all interpret Xanthias as pointing to Dionysus' robe, onto which he has shat out of fear.

It hardly seems worth noting typographical errors, but here are a few: women for woman (33, n.), Pramian for Pramnian wine (71), Calistratus for Callistratus (335), fine for fire (336), Peloponnesan for Peloponnesian (396), and diety for deity (404). Notice also the confusion of Proteus and Proteas (518-519) and Philemedes and Philonides (537).

In sum, although Roche's book is affordable and highly accessible, a cheap and accurate one-volume collection of Aristophanes in English still remains a desideratum.⁵

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DEREK COLLINS. *Magic in the Ancient Greek World*. Maldon, MA/Oxford/Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2008. Pp. xiv + 207. US \$99.95. ISBN 978-1-4051-3238-1 (hb).

It is difficult to get a handle on magic, a problem that Derek Collins openly acknowledges in his lively new book. And if one's brief is to write a book that could serve as a general introduction to the topic, which is the premise behind the Blackwell Ancient Religions series to which this volume belongs, that difficulty becomes all the more acute. Collins has met it in part by not attempting a comprehensive and systematic survey. What he offers instead is a set of five chapters that each explores a particular issue. Although the individual chapters to some extent constitute stand-alone studies, and could for example be effectively assigned as separate course readings, they also all work together to support the author's central argument that magical practices "were operative within the same understandings of causality and agency that informed daily ancient life" (169). (For the sake of full disclosure, I should point out that the author thanks me in his preface, but that my chief contribution lay in providing him with a copy of an article in advance of publication.)

Chapter 1 provides a survey of the major modern anthropological theories of magic, from Tylor and Frazer to Tambiah. Such surveys are common enough, but Collins constructs this one to call particular attention to what he later calls the "key notions of sympathy, analogy, agency, and participation" (166) that we must employ in trying to understand magical practices as the actual practitioners might have understood them. Turning from the general to the specific, in Chapter 2 he explores the conceptual framework of ancient Greek magic in particular. He begins by demonstrating that early Greek depictions of the gods credit them with practices that are indistinguishable from magic, moves on to the critiques of magic found in the Hippocratic treatise *On the Sacred Disease* and in Plato's

⁵ The only alternative in print remains *The Complete Plays of Aristophanes* (New York: Bantam, 1962), edited by Moses Hadas.