

ARISTOPHANES, *WEALTH*

A. H. SOMMERSTEIN (ed., trans.): *Aristophanes, Wealth*. (The Comedies of Aristophanes, 11.) Pp. xiv + 321. Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 2001. Paper, £17.50. ISBN: 0-85668-739-1 (0-85668-738-3 hbk).

First, a word of congratulation. Alan Sommerstein is the first person for nearly a century to have completed commentaries on all the eleven extant plays of Aristophanes. (The last were Rogers and van Leeuwen.) This is a splendid achievement. It has taken him over twenty years, and as the series has progressed, so the quality and scholarly level of the volumes have steadily risen. The first volume had an introductory note of a mere two pages on *Acharnians*, and fifty-eight pages of notes. The eleventh volume has an introduction of thirty-three pages on *Wealth*, and a commentary which, in smaller type, occupies eighty-three pages. For this play there is not, as yet, any competing edition from Oxford or from the Fondazione Lorenzo Valla, and Holzinger's commentary (published in 1940), though good as far as it goes, is confined largely to textual problems. S.'s commentary is now by far the best ever published.

The introduction is very thorough. Its eight sections deal with the occasion and background, the god Wealth, Asclepius, Chremylus' plan and its fulfilment, *Wealth* and *Ecclesiazusae*, structure and style, staging, and the first and the second *Wealth*. In this last section he firmly rejects my suggestion (in *Aristophanes and Athens*, pp. 324–7) that the play which we have may be a revised version of the one performed twenty years earlier, in 408 B.C. Some of his arguments here (on pp. 31–3) seem to me to be weak, but one of them is strong: I now think that I may indeed have misinterpreted the scholium on l. 173. But the conclusion which S. draws from it is surprising. He agrees with me that the scholiast had access to two fairly similar versions of the play, but instead of concluding that one was the play of 408 and the other was the play of 388, he thinks that one was the play of 388 and the other was a *later* version, made for a further production at the Country Dionysia. Thus, if I have understood him rightly, he thinks that three different texts by Aristophanes entitled *Wealth* existed. (A rather similar view was held by Rogers, but he thought that the third text was produced by Aristophanes' son Araros.) This seems to me no more plausible than my suggestion. The problem remains unsolved.

I therefore doubt whether S. was wise to put the scholiast's alternative version into the text at l. 115, but otherwise I find his text good, apart from some misprints and other small errors which need to be corrected.

321 For ἦδη read οὐτω. **335** For τίς read τί. **456** For κακῶς read κάκιστ'. **478** For τίς read τίς. **543** For κεφλή read κεφαλῆ. **641** For ἐστὶν read ἐστίν. **947** For ποιήσω read ποιήσω. **1014** For τὴν ἄμαξαν read τῆς ἀμάξης. **1149** For ὑμῶν read ὑμῖν.

The apparatus criticus is very selective, as in other volumes in the series; readers wanting fuller reports of the manuscripts will still need to turn to Coulon's edition. The translation, in prose, is generally exact; in a few places where it is less than literal the deviation is explained in the commentary.

The commentary is excellent, providing a great amount of factual information and sensible interpretation in a concise form. There are very few places where I am unconvinced, but the following may be worth mentioning.

84 Patrocles of Athens and Patrocles of Thurii were not necessarily different persons, because the connection between the cities was close and many men migrated from one to the other. **165–8**

If it is right to attribute to Carion the mentions of criminal activities, l. 166b probably alludes not just to washing fleeces (a respectable, though menial, task) but to selling them wet in order to cheat the customer; cf. *Frogs* 1386–7. Then the whole of 167 should be attributed to Chremylus (for onion-selling is not criminal, and γε does not necessarily mark a change of speaker) and 168 to Carion. 550 S. provides a long note full of information about Dionysius and Thrasybulus, and yet fails to make clear the point of the line. I take it that someone (a politician in a recent speech) has said ‘Thrasybulus is no better than Dionysius!’, which Aristophanes regards as an absurd thing to say. 578 δίκαιον, obelized by S., can be retained, for βελτίους (576) shows that morality is in question. It is just for naughty children to be punished by their fathers, and likewise it is just for lazy men to be punished by Poverty. 689 The manuscripts’ reading ὑφῆρει is not ‘unintelligible in context’; it means ‘she took out her hand from under <the blanket>’. 802–18 ‘Well-informed spectators’, even if they remembered Sophocles’ *Inachus*, will not have been expecting a comedy to end with misfortune for the principal character. 917 S.’s attempt to drive a wedge between ἀρχή and ἄρχειν, as applied to jurors, seems unconvincing. If one is informally possible, surely so is the other. 1037 S. sets out very clearly the various meanings of τηλία, but the one which he then chooses is less satisfactory than the traditional ‘hoop of a sieve’. A sieve can be of any size, and there is no reason to say that here it would be ‘far too small’.

The volume ends with 103 pages of addenda to the previous ten volumes. An additional index volume is promised.

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COMIC GASTRONOMY

J. WILKINS: *The Boastful Chef: The Discourse of Food in Ancient Greek Comedy*. Pp. xxviii + 465. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. Cased, £55. ISBN: 0-19-924068-X.

After gender and sex, the discourse of food and drink is becoming as fashionable a topic for ancient historians as it is for television, and in this area Wilkins has already been highly prominent; see, for example, his and Shaun Hill’s translation and discussion of Arcestratus of Gela (who can now also boast a full Oxford edition from Douglas Olsen and Alexander Sens), and his editing (with David Braund) of the proceedings of the excellent 1998 Exeter conference on Athenaeus’ work and world. The social settings and moral debates concerned with consumption, pleasure, and sociability among philosophers, orators, comic dramatists, inscriptions, and the material record have been the subject of a number of major discussions, notably by Oswyn Murray, Pauline Schmidt-Pantel, and James Davidson (whose *Courtesans and Fishcakes* was reviewed by me in *CR* 50 [2000], 507–9). This book is focused on Greek Comedy’s treatment of all aspects of food and commensality; thus, despite its title, it covers much more than the emblematic figure of the comic *mageiros*, already the subject of monographs by Dohm and Bertiaume.

This large-scale exploration of many of the riches in this material, often held to be indigestible or surfeiting, will be found to be extremely valuable. Wilkins has relentlessly scoured the plays and the fragments, and organized and analysed the material sensibly under broad (if often overlapping) categories, such as agricultural processes, the social order, marketing and the agora, drink and the symposium, luxury foods, the Sicilian contribution to food literature, and (last but not least) the butcher/cook/chef. Throughout, persistent moral concerns and changing patterns of comic targets and characters are identified and discussed. Wilkins claims on the whole to be concerned with illuminating comic discourse and its debates rather than social realities; hence perhaps one should not regret too much the lack of more extensive analysis of how the