K. rather overinterprets the placement of Pelops' spear in Iphigenia's bedroom; so too with the adverse wind that blows the escaping ship back ashore (1391ff.), which is there to necessitate and underline the saving intervention of Athena rather than to make the audience worry about angry gods ('the unexpected complication provides an intriguing foil to the entire play', p. 439). Least convincingly, K. fails to distinguish (esp. pp. 29, 311, 457, 459–61) between the invention of aetiologies and the invention of cult facts: see R. Parker, *Polytheism and Society at Athens* (Oxford, 2005) 142, 232, 241–2, which presumably appeared too late for K. to incorporate it in her discussion.

K. tends on occasion to labour her points, producing overlong notes (esp. 106–9, 336–9, 468b–71, 1089–152, 1284–326, 1327–419). The Commentary's main shortcoming, however, is its large number of typos (e.g. p. viii 'fable' for 'able', p. 101 'yard' for 'yarn', p. 326 n. 17 'synecphoresis' for 'synecphonesis', p. 425 'Camerbeek' for 'Kamerbeek' – the list is long) and solecisms (e.g. p. 179 'reasons of' instead of 'reasons for'). These problems suggest that the final draft of the book, which is otherwise well produced, was not carefully checked by a native English speaker, nor pruned sufficiently by the Series Editors. But these quibbles aside, K. has produced a lavish and enjoyable commentary that is sure to become an invaluable tool for all who study the *IT*.

University College, Oxford WILLIAM ALLAN
william.allan@univ.ox.ac.uk

THE END OF SOMMERSTEIN

KOZAK (L.), RICH (J.) (edd.) *Playing around Aristophanes. Essays in Celebration of the Completion of the Edition of the Comedies of Aristophanes by Alan Sommerstein.* Pp. vi + 146. Oxford: Aris and Phillips, 2006. Cased, £35. ISBN: 978-0-85668-771-6.
doi:10.1017/S0009840X07001655

In May 2003, John Rich and the Classics Department at the University of Nottingham hosted a colloquium to celebrate the completion of Alan Sommerstein's series of commentaries on Aristophanes' extant plays. *Playing around Aristophanes* collects the edited proceedings of this event in a provocative and laudable tribute to Professor Sommerstein's monumental achievement.

The first two contributors take as their theme the political and critical function of Aristophanic comedy. Zimmermann assesses the poet's 'didactical intention', arguing that Aristophanes assumes a social purpose for his comedies, particularly in his use of personal mockery (*onomasti kômôidein*). Although he adds little that is new to the debate, he offers a useful collection of passages that indicate such a programme. Employing readings from the Old Oligarch and Freud, Z. concludes that 'the function of mockery can be described as primarily one of "social hygiene" '. Ercolani finds a similarly political purpose for Aristophanic comedy in his investigation of 'speaking names' (i.e. 'proper names whose linguistic features evoke … the peculiarities of the character who bears the name'). He distinguishes between three degrees of such designations and extrapolates a broader significance from this well-worn topic. Although Aristophanes no doubt chose to satirise characters for the comic potential of their names (e.g. the bellicose general Lamachos, whose name sounds like the verb

machomai, 'fight'), E. suggests that such satire could also serve as a serious criticism of that person and his political stance.

Rosen examines the role that Aristophanes played in the 'classicising' of Greek tragedy. He builds his argument on a compelling idea, that in fifth-century Athens a play was classicised prior to its distribution as a text. Since tragedians of this period typically composed their productions for a single, non-repeatable performance, they secured their initial literary legacy not through text, but through a fan base. R.'s analysis clearly demonstrates the importance of Aristophanes' own fandom for the monumentalisation of tragedy. When comedy parodically or satirically engaged with a tragedy, it served as a 'powerful mnemonic' that helped launch it toward classic status.

Lowe adopts two separate, but related, theses in his study of 'Aristophanic Spacecraft': (1) that Aristophanes' use of space and time is not 'anarchic or incoherent'; and (2) that 'space is as important a shaper of narrative and theme in Aristophanes as it is in tragedy'. L. examines each of Aristophanes' plays and challenges traditional assumptions about their scene changes. He acutely observes that travel between worlds is staged only in prologues and that the second half of an Aristophanic performance is essentially static. Even when Aristophanes' spatial patterning is particularly 'fluid', L. demonstrates, it drives each play's action in a focussed, logical direction.

In the volume's longest contribution, Ruffell reconsiders the issue of utopian criticism in Aristophanes' last two extant productions, *Ecclesiazusae* and *Wealth*. While proponents of utopianism encourage a literal reading of these plays and anti-utopians an ironic reading, R. argues that 'neither the ironist nor the serious positions are entirely tenable'. Instead, he suggests that comic discourse permits Aristophanes' later plays to be internally inconsistent and ironic while espousing a utopian ideal. R.'s admirably nuanced interpretation neatly validates both sides of the issue. Aristophanes does not prescribe a positive utopian model, but his ironic and illogical utopias do encourage the audience to shape its own individual ideologies for a better Athens.

Storey sets out 'to provide some first thoughts in re-assessing' Cratinus' *Dionysalexandros*. After a detailed philological analysis of the play's famous hypothesis (*P. Oxy*. 663) and its variant readings, he expertly addresses in five sections the major scholarly issues surrounding the play. S.'s summary and evaluation of previous scholarship are meticulous, but he also moves it forward. He proposes a new, more solid performance date for the play (437/6 B.C.E.); he convincingly argues that the chorus addressed the spectators in its parodos; and he detects a possible 'intertextual homage' to the play in *Frogs*. S.'s work will undoubtedly be the starting point for all future scholarship on *Dionysalexandros*.

In the final essay, Alan Sommerstein presents an engrossing autobiographical account of 'How Aristophanes got his A[ris] & P[hillips]'. He attributes his monumental twelve-volume edition to 'a series of accidents'. There is not space here to catalogue these events or to do justice to this essay, but it is a highlight of the book. S.'s life proves to be as inspiring as his scholarship is inspired. And this collection is a worthy tribute to his impressive contribution to Aristophanic studies.

New College of Florida CARL SHAW
cshaw@ncf.edu

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009840X07001655 Published online by Cambridge University Press