Athenian manner (Alexis fr. 265; cf. Poenulus 522–25) and accusations of effeminacy (Poenulus 1318 echoes Alexis fr. 105). The only extant fragment of Alexis' Himilkon, fr. 98, possibly identical with Karchedonios, discusses food. Poenulus' title character Hanno, although as a Carthaginian a recent enemy of Rome, is not unsympathetic. His dress and language are notably Punic and his prayer (Poenulus 930ff.) contains some genuine Punic. Hanno is pious and gentle but also has some more stereotypically negative traits: he can be lascivious (even with his own daughters), effeminate, and deceitful. Hanno's nephew and daughters, kidnapped as children and brought up as Greeks, are more Hellenized but still show Carthaginian stereotypes: Agorastocles, rich but tight-fisted, refuses to buy and free the enslaved Adelphasium, with whom he is in love, before her recognition; Adelphasium, although a virgin, is proud, shrewd, and unusually speaks flirtatiously after her recognition, possibly indicating that “barbarians” might enjoy more freedom than Greek girls.

Further Reading

Censorship, modern This entry deals with censorship of Greek comedy from the Renaissance onwards. For attempts at restricting comic free speech in classical Athens, see parrhesia, proscriptions of comic poets, and restrictions, legal, on comedy.

When classical comedy was rediscovered in the Renaissance, the favorite authors for performances, translations, and adaptations became Plautus and Terence; Aristophanes, though translated, read, and appreciated, did not enjoy a “new” revival in the conservative society of the Italian signorie and European kingdoms. In fact, a case of self-censorship is attested in Renaissance Italy: in ca. 1504 Machiavelli wrote a comedy entitled Le maschere ( Masks) based on Aristophanes’ comedies (mainly Clouds), set in contemporary Florence and containing a harsh satire of important Florentine families (perhaps even of Lorenzo de’ Medici). Because of possibly dangerous repercussions, Machiavelli did not finish the play, and his grandson Giuliano de’ Ricci destroyed the original unfinished manuscript. However, this is an exception, as between the Renaissance and the twentieth century only a few cases of censorship of Aristophanic comedy are attested. Even considering the gaps in our documentation, the lack of censorship seems to be due to the peculiar characteristics of Aristophanes’ reception: until the French Revolution, Aristophanes was considered a moral teacher against innovation in culture and politics and was mostly known through Clouds and Wealth, two of his most restrained plays. Censorship is attested only when Aristophanes was rediscovered as a political and even revolutionary author. Interestingly, one case of censorship occurred in post-revolutionary France. In 1802 the Consulate’s censors closed, after its fourth performance, François-Benoit Hoffman’s Lisistrata ou Les Athéniennes, an adaptation of Aristophanes’ Lysistrata purged of obscenity and sexual content. It is difficult to assess this case with no archival records except Hoffman’s self-defense in his play’s first edition; perhaps censorship was due to the irreverent depiction of the wars that followed the French Revolution (Orfano 2007).

Aristophanes was often censored in the twentieth century. Famously, Karolos Koun’s Birds at Athens in 1959 was banned by the right-leaning government of Konstantinos Karamanlis, officially because of its satire of the Orthodox Church but most likely for its attacks on the United States and the establishment (Van Steen 2007). Later, in 1967, Koun was recalled from London, where he was to stage his Birds, by the new colonels’ junta (1967–74), which also censored other Aristophanic plays later on (Van Steen 2001; Van Steen 2015, 98, 111–12, 114). In 1971, André Brink’s Birds caused a scandal in South Africa and was denounced by a Dutch Reformed Church minister because of its immoral and sacrilegious content; its performance in schools was forbidden (Van Zyl Smit 2007, 236–39). Religious and moralistic censorship against Aristophanes also occurred in Italy: Catholic activists protested against Luigi Squarzina’s Ecclesiazusae in Benevento in 1957 because of its display of powerful women, sex, and communist ideas, yet many people attended the performance despite the threat of excommunication. Similarly,
Giancarlo Cobelli’s avant-garde *Birds* (1968) was accused of obscenities and of turning minors’ minds against state institutions (Amoroso 1997, 551–52, 559; Treu 2014, 951–52). In the United States an all-black *Lysistrata* by the Seattle Negro Repertory Company was canceled after the premiere (1936), officially for “indecent and bawdy” content but most likely because of racial tension around a play depicting empowered black women (West 1996; Wetmore 2014, 788–91). If the real political reasons for censoring the Seattle *Lysistrata* and Koun’s *Birds* were disguised as reasons of decorum, the “preventive” censorship of Ronconi’s *Frogs* at Syracuse (2002) was instead clearly political: the stage panels showing caricatures of Silvio Berlusconi and other members of his government were eliminated after local politicians close to Berlusconi complained about them (Schironi 2007).

Artists staging Aristophanes have adopted various strategies to avoid censorship. Many eliminate topical allusions, such as Peter Hacks, who staged a rather “classical” *Peace* in East Berlin (1962), bypassing German Democratic Republic censorship (Goldsmith 1985; Seidensticker 2007). Similarly, Peter Kleinschmidt successfully staged *Birds* (1965), *Frogs* (1977), and *Peace* (1983) in South Africa during a period rich in racial tensions by avoiding contemporary and political references, hoping that audiences would understand the deeper messages of those plays without a modern setting (Van Zyl Smit 2007). Other directors have made Aristophanes safer by staging his pieces as harmless farces or utopian fantasies; this has often occurred in Italy, where Aristophanes has frequently been seen as a utopian and purely fantastic (i.e. “light”) playwright (Schironi 2007; Treu 2014, 946–48). Similarly, the Greek film *Lysistrata* (1972) survived the junta censorship because it was turned into a comic film (Van Steen 2001, 176–80). Yet Aristophanes remains a potentially dangerous author: even in countries enjoying political freedom and freedom of speech, the licentiousness of several plays has often created problems, leading directors to cut the most risky passages and causing uneasiness in reviewers and spectators; examples include Norman Bel Geddes’ *Lysistrata* in the United States (1929; Kotzamani 2014) and Minos Volanakis’ *Lysistrata* in Israel (1958; Yaari 2014, 965–68).

See also expurgation; productions, modern…

References


Seidensticker, Bernd. 2007. “Aristophanes is Back! Peter Hacks’s Adaptation of *Peace*.” In Hall & Wrigley 194–208.


FRANCESCA SCHIRONI

**Centuripe** Centuripe, located northwest of Catania and near the western slopes of Mount Aetna, was a Sicel town that gradually opened itself to Greek culture in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE and later achieved for a time considerable importance and wealth under Roman rule.