Marshall (C. W.), & Hawkins (T.) (edd.) *Athenian Comedy in the Roman Empire.* Pp. vi + 295. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016. Paper, £22.99 (Cased, £70). ISBN: 978-1-4725-8883-8 (978-1-4725-8884-5 hbk).

In what ways did authors of the Roman imperial era read, view, interpret and refashion the literary and dramatic heritage of Greek comedy? How did these authors differentiate the fifth-century comedy of Aristophanes and Eupolis from the later New Comedy of Philemon and Menander? What links were there between their views of Greek comedy, Roman comedy and other forms of performance? Did imperial Roman authors think of Greek comedy in performance or more as text on a page? These are the very kinds of questions that the volume under review seeks to approach in a fresh and engaging manner, building on the fundamental work in this area by E. Bowie, 'The ups and downs of Aristophanic travel', in E. Hall & A. Wrigley (edd.), *Aristophanes in Performance, 421 BC-AD 2007* (2007), 32-51 and S. Nervegna, *Menander in Antiquity: The Contexts of Reception* (2013).

The aim of this edited volume of thirteen chapters and eleven contributors is: 'exploration of the reception of classical Athenian comedy in the Roman imperial era' (p. 1), and certainly the volume investigates the relationship between imperial Rome and Athenian comedy by covering a range of ancient authors. The chapters explore

extracts from the works of: Juvenal, Horace, Petronius, Martial, Dio Chrysostom, Favorinus, epigraphic evidence of dramatic competitions, Plutarch, Lucian, Aristides, Aelian, Alciphron and Aristainetos. The editors (henceforth M. & H.) state their hope that the volume 'provides some answers to important questions about the influence and vitality (or decrepitude) of Athenian comic drama in the imperial era across an array of genres and media', and which will inspire further study (pp. 1-2). In this respect the volume is highly successful. The reader will come away wanting to know more about how these and other authors of the Roman imperial period engaged with Greek comedy and other performance genres. Some chapters provide analysis of only a small amount of text, which will encourage the reader to seek out the wider context for these ancient authors' engagement with Greek comedy and other forms of performance. M. & H. offer a volume that very much focuses on the literary engagement of imperial Roman authors with Greek comedy. Notably a few chapters draw on epigraphic evidence, but less use is made of mosaics and other material culture. The large number of errors in the bibliography, endnotes and Greek quotations is a shame, but overall this is a volume that offers an impressive range of approaches to this topic while raising important questions for how we treat this material, all of which will stimulate further discussion in this area.

Chapter 1, by M. & H., falls into three sections that outline: 'Classical Athenian comedy (486-323 BCE)', 'Comedy in the Hellenistic era (323-31 BCE)' and finally

'Athenian comedy in the Roman empire (31 BCE –)'. The first two sections focus on our current understanding of fifth and fourth-century Athenian comedy before the third section wrestles with the central issues of the volume, namely how these earlier periods are received in the Roman imperial period. It is here that the contents of the volume come into full focus, raising important and awkward questions such as: 'how can we track the influence of a classical genre in the imperial era when the genre in question did not remain static?' (p. 6). Despite an earlier mention of ancient reception, the chapter does little to engage with the ideas of reception theory aside from an endnote nod (p. 13, n. 42) to L. Hardwick, *Reception Studies* (2003). Further discussion of the theoretical issues concerned with ancient reception would have been welcomed. The chapter could also have benefited the reader further by providing a summary of each chapter, in order to offer a clearer overview of the scope of the volume and the richness of its material.

In Chapter 2 Matthias Hanses explores extracts from Juvenal for their relation to New Comedy, although the focus is mainly on Menander. The chapter is at its most interesting when it explores mime and the influence of Terence and Plautus, which draws attention to the difficulty in trying to pinpoint the impact of Menander specifically in Juvenal. The following chapter by Julia Nelson Hawkins notes the recurrence of speaking genitals from Aristophanes through Horace, Petronius and Martial and their relation to free speech. Hawkins suggests that Roman satirists took

up the imagery of speaking genitals from Aristophanes (p. 44). This relies on drawing an intriguing but tenuous link between the loquacious penis of Horace's *Satires* and the sketch at Aristophanes' *Acharnians* 777-82 where the daughters of the Megarian utter the cry κοΐ κοΐ (involving a pun on χοῖρος, the Greek word for piglets and female genitals). Tom Hawkins in Chapter 4 provides an enlightening demonstration of how Dio Chrysostom *Orations* 32 and 33 (*Alexandrian* and *First Tarsian*) each employ the didactic form and persona of the comic parabasis while stripping away the other elements of Old comedy. Hawkins explores the ancient evidence for how the parabasis was perceived, creating a rich context for his discussion of Dio 23 & 24. Ryan B. Samuels (Chapter 5) offers an insight into the afterlife of the image of the eunuch adulterer, a character which can be traced from Menander down to Juvenal, and which Favorinus uses in order to turn criticism about his indeterminate gender back on his rhetorical rivals. Samuels convincingly demonstrates the depth of knowledge expected in Favorinus and his rivals concerning the eunuch adulterer character. In Chapter 6 Fritz Graf provides a fascinating consideration of the epigraphic record to 'piece together the way comedy was living and thriving in the cities of Asia Minor in the imperial age' (p. 117), although the question as to what the form and content of this comedy was remains open. In Chapter 7 C. W. Marshall discusses briefly Plutarch's *Comparison of Menander and Aristophanes* (*Moralia* 853a-845d), suggesting that this epitome was originally a work solely on Menander rather than a direct comparison of the two comic poets. Marshall also uses this brief example to make the point that reception is reliant on chance survival evidence, and one can only wish that

more of the chapters had developed these ideas further. Chapters 8 and 9 by Ralph Rosen and Ian C. Storey respectively provide two engaging accounts of Lucian's relationship with Athenian comedy. The latter is more of a comprehensive survey, the former a thought-provoking consideration of how Lucian and his readership understood Old Comedy. There is repetition of key passages in both chapters, and more linking between the chapters could have produced an even more stimulating discussion, but each chapter draws out Lucian's knowledgeable and creative response to Athenian comedy. Anna Peterson in Chapter 10 examines the question of whether Aristophanes and Menander were performed in the imperial era by looking at Aristides *Or.* 29, which calls for a ban of comedy at the Dionysia in Smyrna (AD 157-165). It is a pity that there is not cross-referencing to Graf's chapter which would have given a sense of the debate around the evidence. C. W. Marshall in Chapter 11 explores Aelian's engagement with Athenian comedy, from Aristophanes *Clouds* to Menander's *Dyscolus*, with the surprising conclusion that it seems Aelian 'makes no distinction between that of the fifth and fourth centuries' (p. 212). In Chapter 12 Melissa Funke then discusses how Alciphron's *Letters* promote secondary characters in Menander to the limelight, emphasising the creativity of Alciphron: 'Menander originally created this version of Athens, and Alciphron re-made it in the image of Menander's plays' (pp. 233-4). Finally Emilia A. Barbiero discusses Aristainetos' *Letters* 2.3 and 2.12 on unhappy marriages and their relationship with Ar. *Clouds*, arguing that they should be seen as a thematic diptych. Barbiero ends by using her

reading of Aristainetos to suggest that *Clouds* 51-2 contains bawdy humour, showing that ancient reception can help us re-read other ancient texts.

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