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Initiating Dionysus: Ritual and Theatre in Aristophanes' *Frogs* by I. Lada-Richards

Review by: André Lardinois

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three actors plus speaking child extras (though this does not prove that it *was* so performed, and the fundamental discussion of MacDowell, *CQ* 44 (1994) 326–35, should anyway have been referred to). On the vexed question of the staging of Peace's rescue, O. concludes that she was hauled out on the *ekkyklema* (clarifying some important details of the process for the first time); from Trygaios' movements before and after the parabasis, he tentatively deduces that the hero's house and Zeus's palace were represented by the same door (not the central one) in the *skene* façade (in his commentary O. more than once acutely establishes at which side a character enters from the time that elapses between his being seen and his making contact with other persons, e.g. 262, 1207–9). Like Platnauer, O. prints and discusses the fragments customarily ascribed to *Peace II*; he rightly considers it virtually certain that such a play once existed, suspects that it was produced after 413, and thinks it more likely to have been a reworking of *Peace I* than a wholly new play (though he is wrong to cite Eur. *Hipp.* as a parallel, and makes no attempt to answer Platnauer's point that 'our play was essentially a *pièce d'occasion*, suitable for March 421 and for no other time').

O.'s analysis of the later textual tradition (including a brilliant reconstruction of the form and fate of its hyparchetype, b), previously published in *CQ* 48 (1998) 62–74, is now extended to include the surviving earlier mss. RV, but not very satisfactorily; we are told that 'R and V agree repeatedly against the other witnesses' (liii), but are then referred to a catalogue which shows only, and unhelpfully, that RV are often right together where b is wrong. In fact they also often agree in error (e.g. 16, 41, 76, 120, 161, 218, 219); interestingly, the distribution of these shared errors is patchy (more than half of them occur in the last quarter of the play). Thus O.'s siglum **n** for RV is justified—but the evidence to justify it has to be gleaned from his apparatus.

Textual innovations include: 186–7 transposed (B. Millis *per litt.*), restoring the conventional sequence name–patronymic–ethnic; 223a (τὶ φῆς;) and 261a (ὁ ἦ ἰ ἦ) restored to text from scholia (for the former, *Clouds* 235 furnishes a parallel); 872 ἀνύσαντέ <τι> τῆι βουλῆι (unnecessary); 953 τοῦδ' (partitive, 'some of this beast'; excellent). Surprisingly, having given good reason for attaching much more importance to **p** (PCH) than previous editors have done, O. neither marks in his text nor mentions in his commentary the lacuna of 7–9 lines which **p** indicates at 440/1; to judge by p. lv a note has here fallen out of the commentary, and one hopes it will be restored in a reprint. In the concluding lyrics, guided again by **p**, O. marks a lost stanza before οἰκῆσете γοῦν καλῶς and, in the absence hereabouts of any agreed line-numbering, introduces a new one (the last line becomes 1367; O. does not follow Heliodoros ap. S' in repeating the hymeneal refrain again after it). In the many corrupt or dubious passages O.'s arguments are never negligible; on the whole he is more respectful of the *paradosis* than Platnauer or the reviewer (Warminster 1985) had been.

O.'s commentary, while it shows fine all-round scholarship, is particularly strong, as one might expect given some of his past work, on economic and social matters; such notes as those on illicit eating by slaves (13–14) or on sites for outdoor defaecation (99–100) are exemplary.

At 890 O. convinces me that my interpretation of ἀνάρρσις was wrong, but his own (taking it as = ἀναρσις) gives a tame repetition of 889; I would now take the word as meaning 'drawing back [not, as in sacrifice, the neck, but] the thighs', i.e. as equivalent to τὸ διαμηρίζειν (cf. *Birds* 1254 ἀνατείννας τὸ σκέλει διαμηριῶ). At 1191–6 O. suggests (i) that the 'crowd of wedding-guests' (1192) is the audience, and (ii) that tables, food, cooking gear, etc., are brought out on stage; if so, we may have here a variant of the comic *topos* whereby food or other gifts are ostensibly offered to the audience and then denied them (cf. *Lys.* 1043–71 + 1188–1215, *Eccl.* 1144–8). The mysterious ταυτηί of 1193 is identified as Trygaios' old ἑξωμίς, on the assumption that he is already dressed for the wedding (but he is still a farmer, and will need working clothes; whatever the object is, it *must* be something for which in peacetime a country-dweller would have no use). At 1318 ff. there is surely no 'perhaps' about Trygaios having an erect phallus.

After this performance, O.'s forthcoming *Acharnians*, in the same series, will be awaited with the greatest eagerness.

ALAN H. SOMMERSTEIN

*Centre for Ancient Drama and its Reception,  
University of Nottingham*

LADA-RICHARDS (I.) **Initiating Dionysus: Ritual and Theatre in Aristophanes' *Frogs***. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999. Pp. xxiv + 387, ill. \$145.00. 0198149816.

Old Comedy often has caught the eye of interpreters who wish to see a ritual pattern in its plot lines, most famously in F.M. Cornford's *The Origins of Attic Comedy* (London 1914). Lada-Richard's new book differs from Cornford's by focusing on only one play and on specific Dionysiac cults and institutions (mysteries, wine, theatre), as well as coming-of-age rituals. While this approach looks more promising, the result is equally disappointing; in fact, there is more to be said for Cornford's (untenable) thesis that Dionysus in *Frogs* represents a dying and rising god than for L.-R.'s claim that he is an initiate going through 'a ritual initiation sequence grafted upon a comic dramatic plot' (119).

L.-R. in the Introduction presents her main thesis as well as her methodology. She argues that in interpreting the play one should take the fullest possible cultural context into account, especially in the case of a stage figure like Dionysus, who already had a 'divine personality' outside the play (2). In ch.1, she observes that Dionysus and Heracles have more in common than their confrontation in the Prologue suggests. Ch.2, the largest in the book, lays out her main thesis, namely that Dionysus, starting as a wild and ambiguous god in the Prologue and ending as a civilizing presence at the end of the play, undergoes an initiation, reminiscent both of that of a young adult (51–78) and of an initiand in the Bacchic or Eleusinian Mysteries (78–120).

Chs.3–9 are intended to fill out this picture. Ch.3 studies the allusions to wine in the play and sees a progression from Dionysus' self-description as 'Dionysus,

son of the Wine-Jar' (*fr.* 22), through ritual references to the Anthesteria (*fr.* 211–19b) and a Theoxenia that doubles as a lewd party with flute girls (*fr.* 503 ff.), to the Agon, which, L.-R. argues, represents 'a refined sympotic gathering' and 'the most civilized' of Dionysiac activities (154). Ch.4 contends that Dionysus starts out as a failed actor, but by gradually discarding Heracles' persona (and with it the uncivilized aspects of this figure and of himself), emerges as a god who can judge theatre. With this transformation his understanding of tragedy changes from a selfish desire for Euripides in the Prologue to an appreciation of Aeschylus' civic value in the Agon (ch.5). Ch.6 makes the case that Aeschylus can be judged a 'Dionysiac poet', although L.-R. has to admit that Euripides is very 'Dionysiac' as well (ch.7). She maintains, however, that Aeschylus represents the more positive Dionysiac (and Heracleian) values (277–8). In chs. 8 and 9, L.-R. considers some of the social issues raised by the Euripides–Aeschylus debate, and Dionysus' role as the ideal spectator and god of both tragedy and comedy. An epilogue discusses Aeschylus' immortalization in the play's exodos, and an appendix lists more examples of ritual disguise in the Greek world.

This short summary does not do justice to the book, whose value lies more in the detailed discussions of Dionysiac rituals than in its main thesis. L.-R. demonstrates convincingly that Dionysus' actions in the play (his disguise, descent to the underworld, judging of the contest) are in keeping with his 'divine personality'. The problem with the main thesis is that signals of initiation (role-playing, deception, seeing of monsters, flagellation, nudity, etc.) are not specific to this ritual complex, but can point to many different situations (including Cornford's 'dying and rising' god), as H.S. Versnel has so elegantly demonstrated ('What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander', in L. Edmunds, *Approaches to Greek Myth* (Baltimore 1990), reprinted in Versnel, *Inconsistencies in Greek and Roman Religion*, Vol. 2 (Leiden 1993)). For example, Dionysus dons Heracles' clothes not because he pretends to be an initiate, but rather to deceive the monsters that typically block the entrance to the underworld (on which see now S. Iles Johnston, *Restless Dead* (Berkeley 1999)), and he is stripped and beaten because Aeacus believes he stole Cerberus, and so on. In order to argue that these scenes nevertheless, somehow, secondarily, refer to initiation rituals as well, one needs strong evidence that Dionysus is presented as an initiate, but L.-R. admits that 'this Aristophanic comedy has no ephebic figure in its cast of characters' (50), and Dionysus' status as a Bacchic or Eleusinian initiate is never made explicit in the text (elsewhere L.-R. identifies Aeschylus as the initiate, being rescued by the god).

The progression L.-R. sees in the play is often questionable as well. For example, it is surprising that someone so familiar with ancient Greek religion would judge a sympotic gathering to be more civilized than the Anthesteria or a Theoxenia (and at any rate, I do not believe that the Agon is pictured as a symposium). Some of Aeschylus' 'Dionysiac' qualities, such as his power to deceive (237 ff.), also belong to Dionysus' darker side (and to Euripides: 285), and perhaps the most problematic claim of the book is that a more gentle, civic Dionysus can be distilled from the wild and dangerous

god: such a separation is at odds with the 'divine personality' we know from the larger cultural context, and with L.-R.'s own assessment of the god as fundamentally ambiguous (8–9). This book has some interesting things to say about Dionysus, but as an interpretation of *Frogs* it fails to convince.

Finally, I have to say something about the price of the book. Oxford UP ought to be 'stripped and beaten' for pricing the book out of reach of anyone but Bill Gates; may I suggest that, after the author has received her well-deserved royalties, someone, anonymously, post the whole book on the Internet?

ANDRÉ LARDINOIS  
University of Minnesota, Twin Cities

FELDMAN (L.H.) and LEVISON (J.R.) *Eds.*  
**Josephus' *Contra Apionem*. Studies in its Character and Context with a Latin Concordance to the Portion Missing in Greek.** Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996. Pp. x + 516.

This collection of articles on Josephus' final composition, the *Contra Apionem*, is to be welcomed, as the *CA* has always suffered in comparison with the grander scale and theme of *AJ* and *BJ*, and yet is a work of great interest and no little importance. The contributions represent a variety of different approaches to, and interpretations of, the *CA*, and they paint a useful picture of scholarly directions, present and future; unusually for a volume of essays, it also comes armed with excellent indexes. There is appended a concordance to the Latin portion of the text, but although in their introductory chapter Levison and Wagner claim that this concordance forms 'the anchor' of the volume, to which is tethered the collection of articles, the truth is that the concordance stands quite on its own: the articles have nothing to do with it, and its presence does not substantially enhance the work. It could just as well have been published on its own.

L. and W.'s introduction is a model of its kind (1–48): they present a summary of the contents of the *CA*, an analysis of the articles in the volume, and finally a briefly annotated bibliography of work on the *CA*. Their discussion of the articles is particularly helpful. They manage to place the contributions in the following categories: textual history and relation to later Christian literature; literary style; sources; rhetorical strategies and purpose; the *CA* and Josephus. In this way we find out exactly what we are getting and are given a rationale for the contents. The odd thing is that after L. and W. have made nice sense of it all for us, the work then follows an entirely different, and apparently quite jumbled, order, and offers the appearance of precisely the sort of miscellaneous mélange that L. and W. have denied. Nonetheless, there is a good mix of safe, informative articles and more speculative ventures.

Schreckenberg ('Text, Überlieferung und Textkritik', 49–82) forms a useful introduction to many important aspects of the *CA* itself: the nature and title of the work; sources, language and style; the manuscript tradition and sixth-century Latin translation; afterlife. The *CA* had an unusually influential afterlife and Schreckenberg's list of later citations and echoes (65–72) is helpful, although