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*Aristophanes and the Cloak of Comedy: Affect, Aesthetics,
and the Canon* by Mario Telò (review)

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civil and foreign (*interno simul externoque bello*, *Hist.* 2.69.1), provincial and Roman. While other scholars have noted this hybridity, Master adds that the lack of clear distinctions in ethnic identity has noteworthy implications for the management of the Empire. According to Master, the Gauls became “Romanized” (145) after moving on a “continuum toward being Roman” (145), particularly in their modes of thinking. Once integrated, there was no return to a “non-Roman identity” (142) or “pre-Roman condition” (145), as is shown by the fate of Cologne.

In addition to the Batavians, Master addresses the armies of Vitellius from the Rhineland and the Flavians from Syria. However, an earlier and more comprehensive outline of the composition of the legions in 69 C.E. would be helpful, as would further discussion of the status of the auxiliaries versus that of the legionaries, who had citizenship (2n3). Master is not always clear on the differences between these ethnic groups, including the histories of conquest of their provinces of origin, or their current legal status with Rome, each of which pertains to his overarching claims.

Master’s conclusion both restates his argument and introduces a wrinkle: although ethnic groups in *Histories* 1–4 seem to conform, the Jewish excursus of book 5 contradicts his central claim. Master thus opens avenues for further investigation. Ethnic identity is demonstrably central to our evaluation of the legions in the *Histories*, and Master’s analysis provides a welcome study for both Roman historians and historiographers.

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Mario Telò. *Aristophanes and the Cloak of Comedy: Affect, Aesthetics, and the Canon*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2016. Pp. xiii, 237. \$55.00. ISBN 978-0-226-30969-9.

A paradox in the career of Aristophanes has simultaneously spurred and defied explanation ever since antiquity: how did his remarkable comedy *Clouds* go from a disastrous reception at its debut in 423 B.C.E. to being a canonical classic? Providing a satisfactory explanation of this paradox is, in turn, simultaneously hampered and unfettered by the very little raw information that has been preserved about the initial failure in performance and why the script seems to have enjoyed a conversely robust reputation in later times. Mario Telò argues that Aristophanes’ narrative in his scripts largely dictated this process by providing the narratives and metaphors that later readers, especially scholars, used to assess both the play’s failure and its redemption. While Telò’s own narrative is not impossible, his presentation fails to take into account all of what little is known about the phenomenon, or to anchor it in a sufficiently rigorous framework to make his case compelling.

Telò claims that the narratives Aristophanes embedded in the revised version of the script of *Clouds* and in the scripts of later plays, primarily *Wasps*, provided a historical narrative by which scholars in antiquity built up a canon in which *Clouds* was vital—ironically so, given the play’s initial failure, but vital

precisely because Aristophanes argued for its relevance and excellence. Telò further claims that textiles, especially the “cloak” of the book’s title, formed a crucial metaphor from Aristophanes’ writings that suffused the scholarly conception of *Clouds* as canonical. Unfortunately, Telò offers hardly a shred (pun intended) of evidence that any scholars in antiquity deployed this metaphor in the way that Telò insists happened. Furthermore, while there is much that is unknown about how much Aristophanes revised the original *Clouds* into the version that is now available, Telò explicitly dodges the problem generally (126–27), and in particular the short bits of text that do survive of the original *Clouds* that are distinct from the extant revised version. When so little evidence is available, it is fair, even mandatory, to expect a modern scholar to account for all the evidence that we do possess.

Instead, Telò makes a number of claims about the “affect” of Aristophanes’ textile metaphors in the parabases of *Clouds* and *Wasps* (a “proto-canonical maneuver” in Telò’s terminology). A bewildering range of metaphorical extensions are linked from diverse parts of the plays. For Telò, the scripts are something to navigate without explanation of method, principle, or direction. In an age of dynamic scholarly analysis of plays as performed in real time, such a method at minimum demands rigorous justification. Telò would have been better off capitalizing on such scholarship rather than marginalizing it; for example, Compton-Engle’s superb work on costume is relegated to a minor note [125n8]). Instead, Telò draws dramatic conclusions from the skimpiest of linguistic parallels; for example, he seems to find it a marked phenomenon (36) that Aristophanes uses the common verb γινώσκω more than once. Telò’s repetitive claims earn less sympathy when laced with notes complaining about the tendentiousness of other scholars (126–27, 135). It is unintentionally revealing when Samuel Beckett turns up as a reference point (120, 157), for Telò actually reads Aristophanes as a meditation on literature, authority, and decency as they become manifest in a densely comic world. Indeed, the book may well have been more successful as such a reading rather than as an argument for unsupported historical claims. Consequently, Aristophanes’ paradox remains and awaits a more compelling explanation.

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R. J. A. Wilson. *Caddeddi on the Tellaro: A Late Roman Villa in Sicily and its Mosaics*. Babesch Annual Papers on Mediterranean Archaeology, Supplement 28. Louvain, Paris, and Bristol, CT: Peeters, 2016. Pp. viii, 200. €80.00. ISBN 978-90-429-3388-0.

Caddeddi on the Tellaro fits into a long-standing body of scholarship (though often lacking for some sites) on Sicilian archaeology, with a special focus on Roman housing and *villae*. Among these, the most celebrated is certainly the complex of Piazza Armerina in the province of Enna. Wilson reports (vii) that he started to write this work in 2012, when he was “Guest Fellow” at the Getty Research Institute. The Roman villa was discovered in the early 1970s in an