



Costume in the Comedies of Aristophanes

Gwendolyn Compton-Engle

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This book offers an interpretation of the handling of costume in the plays of the fifth-century comic poet Aristophanes. Drawing on both textual and material evidence from the fourth- and fifth-century Greek world, it examines three layers of costume: the bodysuit worn by the actors, the characters' clothes, and the additional layering of disguise. A chapter is also devoted to the inventive costumes of the comic chorus. Going beyond describing what costumes looked like, the book focuses instead on the dynamics of costume as it is manipulated by characters in the performance of plays. The book argues that costume is used competitively, as characters handle each other's costumes and poets vie for status using costume. This argument is informed by performance studies and by analyses of gender and the body.

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