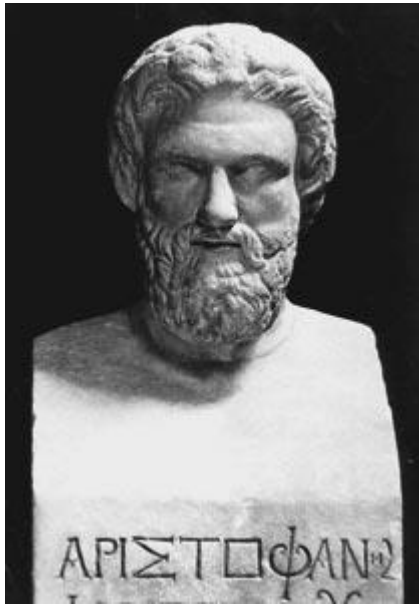


425 BCE- Aristophanes: Acharnians

Figure 1:
Aristophanes Bust.
(Image from:
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Aristofanes.jpg>)



In 425 BCE at the Lenaea, Aristophanes won his first comedy which was attested with the 'Acharnians' (Nesselrath, 2006). This play was produced by Callistratus (Dover and Pelling, 2012), who is known to have produced a number of Aristophanes' other plays such as 'Babylonians' (Rosen, 2010, p.236). Aristophanes was a contributor to 'old comedy' (Dover and Pelling, 2012). This genre represents the Athenian comedies of the 5th century (Dover, 2012)- of which, Aristophanes works have an admirable longevity, with some scholars arguing that his prowess with words were what ensured his legacy (English, 2007, p.199).

The 'Acharnians' has themes based on the public perception of the Peloponnesian War (Collins, 2019, p.4; Aristoph, 263). It more specifically details how Dicaeopolis, a man from the rural area, wanted a return to peace (Nesselrath, 2006). As such, it is one of

the main examples of how the Peloponnesian War was receiving some backlash from the Athenians for its longevity and disruption to lives (Thuc. 2.16). The play is one which was highly satirical and full of absurd humour, such as Dicaeopolis suddenly managing to gain a private peace treaty (Nesselrath, 2006), both of which were responsible for the success the play held (Dover and Pelling, 2012).

One of the main thoughts of the people at that time was to how long the war was going to last, a thought which founded three of Aristophanes' plays, including the Acharnians (Collins, 2019, p.42). Demonstrating that the idea of peace was a great muse for Aristophanes, and the success of the plays further evidences the idea that the war was not an appreciated one. That did not mean, however, that Aristophanes was a pacifist as whilst some scholars had thought so (Dover and Pelling, 2012), it is also true that Aristophanes did not write the Acharnians with the theme of moral peace, he did so with Dicaeopolis' main complaint being the disruption to his own life (Aristoph, 10).

Furthermore, peace was not the only recurring theme within his work, satire was as well- of which no one was safe from his contempt (Dover and Pelling, 2012; Aristoph, 572). In the Acharnians, Aristophanes presented Cleon, who was a politician accusing him of belittling Athens within in his work, in a negative light (Nesselrath, 2006; Aristoph, 496). Thus, giving the notion that Aristophanes was a writer who let his own opinions bleed into his work. Such an idea is further likely when considering that one of the main aspects of Old Comedy, and as such Aristophanes' plays, is the moments within the performances in which the audience will be able to see or hear the poet's own 'voice' (Rosen, 2010, p.229).

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