

Nubes 1493ff: Was Socrates Murdered?

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“I HAVE TAKEN THE VIEW that an editor must see every movement of the actors in his mind’s eye and hear every inflexion of their voices in his mind’s ear; he must, in short, produce the play in his imagination. A producer cannot take refuge in indecision when an actor asks him how a line is to be spoken or how far, and in what direction, a movement is taken. Unless the author is alive, or the text is furnished to excess with stage-directions which the author himself composed, the producer must make up his own mind. Ancient commentators on Aristophanes accepted a responsibility of this kind, and there is no good reason why a modern commentator should shirk it.”¹

So Sir Kenneth Dover restated for us the goal of Wilamowitz’s commentary on the *Lysistrata*: “Schritt für Schritt die Handlung zu verfolgen, die sich aus den Worten ergibt.”² Aristophanes has in fact been rather fortunate in provoking detailed reconstructions of the stage action of his plays from a number of distinguished scholars.³ I wish here to reconsider the evidence for the staging of the final scene of Aristophanes, *Nubes*.

The exodus of *Nubes* has been studied to detect revision, attested in

¹ K. J. Dover, *Aristophanes, Clouds* (Oxford 1968) vii–viii [hereafter, DOVER], echoing the beginning of his article, “The Skene in Aristophanes,” *PCPS* 192 (n.s. 12) (1966) 2–17 [hereafter, DOVER, “Skene”]=Hans-Joachim Newiger, ed., *Aristophanes und die alte Komödie* (Darmstadt 1975) 99–123 [hereafter, NEWIGER].

² U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Aristophanes Lysistrata* (Berlin 1927) 7. See now his letter of 9 July 1927 to Eduard Fraenkel (W. M. Calder III, *HSCP* 81 [1977] 283): Aristophanes “verlangte, dass man mal zeigte, wie sie auf der Bühne sich ausnahm.”

³ e.g., Wilamowitz, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 1–8, “Die Aufgabe der Aristophaneserklärung”; Eduard Fraenkel, “Dramaturgical Problems in the *Ecclesiazusae*,” *Greek Poetry and Life* (Oxford 1936) 257–76=Kleine Beiträge I (Rome 1964) 469–86; A. M. Dale, “Seen and Unseen on the Greek Stage,” *WS* 79 (1956) 96–106; “An interpretation of Aristophanes, *Vesp.* 136–210 and its consequences for the stage of Aristophanes,” *JHS* 77 (1957) 205–11 [hereafter, DALE]; “Interior Scenes and Illusion in Greek Drama,”=Collected Papers (Cambridge 1969) 119–29, 103–18, 259–71; Dover, “Skene.” For *Nubes* the best, i.e. most explicit, commentaries for the present purpose are Dover and J. van Leeuwen, *Aristophanes Nubes* (Leiden 1898). Editions that pay attention to staging but without detailed argumentation include V. Coulon-H. van Daele, *Aristophane I* (Paris 1923); R. Cantarella, *Aristophane, Le Comedie III* (Milan 1958). See also n.15 *infra*.

the ancient scholia,⁴ or the presence of one or more doors in the comic *skene*.⁵ The editions with the most detailed descriptions of staging, van Leeuwen and Dover, are in basic agreement. The great *agon* between Strepsiades and his son ends with the revelation of the moral vacuity of Sophistic training as Pheidippides offers to console his father for the beating he has just administered by proving the justice of mother-beating as well as father-beating (1441–43). Strepsiades sees at last the true nature of Sophistry and the Phrontisterion. His complaint to the Cloud-chorus is met by the statement that the delusive Clouds, who seem to represent no stable reality but change to reflect the nature of each person they meet (346–55), the symbols of the new technology of Rhetoric that can make the world over conform to our desires (423–24),⁶ are really the agents of Zeus, commissioned to lure the evil to condign punishment (1453–61). Strepsiades acknowledges their harsh justice (1462) and asks his son to help him in punishing Chaerephon and Socrates, but Pheidippides refuses, whether with misplaced piety or pointed irony (1464–71).⁷ Strepsiades repudiates the *dinos* (bowl) which stands by the door of the Phrontisterion,⁸ and appeals to the Herm standing by his own door (1472–83).⁹ The Herm, like the statue of Peace communicating with Hermes in *Pax* 661–63,¹⁰ silently advises against bringing a *graphe*¹¹ against Socrates and his

⁴ Ar. *Nubes*, *hyp.* vi *ad fin.* Views on the extent of revision vary. Recently, in favor of extensive revision, Dover lxxx–xcviii; for relatively little revision, H.-J. Newiger, "Metapher und Allegorie," *Zetemata* 16 (1957) 143–52 [hereafter, NEWIGER, "Metapher"]; H. Erbse, "Über die ersten 'Wolken' des Aristophanes," *Opus Nobile* (Wiesbaden 1969) 35–41 = Newiger 198–211.

⁵ Recent full discussion in Dale; Dover; Dover, "Skene"; S. Srebrny, "Studia scaenica," *Archiwum Filol.* 5 (Wrocław 1960) 62f; H.-J. Newiger, *RhM* 108 (1965) 235–41 Newiger 231–38; C. W. Dearden, *The Stage of Aristophanes* (London 1976) [hereafter, DEARDEN].

⁶ Newiger, "Metapher" 50–74; K. J. Reckford, "Aristophanes' Everflowing Clouds," *Emory University Quarterly* 22 (1967) 223–35; C. Segal, "Aristophanes' Cloud-Chorus," *Arethusa* 2 (1969) 143–61 = Newiger 174–97.

⁷ Most, e.g. Dover *ad* 1467, favor piety. Van Leeuwen *ad loc.* sees an ironic reminiscence of 871.

⁸ I follow, e.g., Dover *ad* 1473 rather than van Leeuwen *ad loc.*, who has Strepsiades rushing inside to fetch the *dinos*.

⁹ If only one door existed for the comic *skene* (Dale), the *dinos* and the Herm stand on either side of the door; cf. Aphrodite and Artemis in Eur. *Hipp.*

¹⁰ See schol. R *ad* 1483 and Dover *ad* 1478. Dearden 24 argues against the presence of the Herm unconvincingly.

¹¹ W. J. M. Starkie, *The Clouds of Aristophanes* (London 1911) *ad* 1481, suggests a *graphe asebeias*. R. Maschke, *Die Willenslehre im griech. Recht* (Berlin 1926) 101ff, wants a *dike* or *graphe bouleuseos*. Schmid-Stählin IV 260 Anm.3 add a *dike blabes* or *hybreos* as possibilities.

followers, which their superiority in the art of persuasion would allow them to escape. Strepsiades should burn down the Phrontisterion (1483–85). Strepsiades calls forth a slave from within with ladder and mattock, who is to climb on the second-storey platform that represents the roof of the Phrontisterion (1486–89). Once there the slave digs up the tiles with the mattock (1487–88, 1496). Strepsiades summons a torch, follows the slave up the ladder, and sets fire to the Phrontisterion, presumably the exposed timbers of the rafters under the roof (1490–93, 1503).

The text now has a series of cries of fear and anger from the inhabitants of the Phrontisterion. Coulon-van Daele and Cantarella have the cries come from within. They do not indicate at any point the exit of Socrates and his disciples.¹² Van Leeuwen has Chaerephon, several nameless disciples and Socrates rush out.¹³ Dover's note *ad* 1493 implies a similar view, supplemented by some interesting suggestions. He had earlier argued *contra* Dale, "even if the philosophers appear at the windows to utter their cries of distress, they must emerge from the door in time to be chased out of the theatre"¹⁴ by Strepsiades and his slave, who have descended from the roof (Dover *ad* 1508).

I shall examine anew the evidence supporting a view which has often been implied and even explicitly stated, but never argued in detail, that the Phrontisterion is burned to the ground and all within perish.¹⁵

I. NON-DRAMATIC PARALLELS. "This is not an unprecedented revenge; Strepsiades is treating the Socratics as if they were accused of or condemned for an offence against the state. A fifth-century Lokrian decree (Buck, no.59) provides (11ff) that when a man incurs exile for

¹² Cantarella's direction *ad* 1510 is "Coro: (Uscendo mentre il Pensatoio crolla fra le fiamme)."

¹³ Stage directions *ad* 1493–1510: "foras ruunt Discipuli complures"; *provolans* is appended to the lines of Chaerephon and Socrates *ad* 1497 and 1502.

¹⁴ Dover, "Skene" 114.

¹⁵ C. Fensterbusch, *Die Bühne des Aristophanes* (Diss. Leipzig 1912), is mute. Incineration is implied by Dale, Coulon-van Daele and Cantarella; asserted incidentally but not argued by T. Long, *TAPA* 103 (1972) 296: "Force is the answer, and the son watches as his teacher and *alma mater* are incinerated." Among the majority who believe in escape, W. S. Teuffel/O. Kaehler, *Die Wolken des Aristophanes* (Leipzig 1887) *ad* 1493; T. Kock, *Ausgewählte Komödien des Aristophanes I*⁴ (Berlin 1894) 25; Starkie 309–11; A. Willems, *Aristophane I* (Paris/Brussels 1919) 374; G. Norwood, *Greek Comedy* (London 1931) 212; G. Murray, *Aristophanes* (Oxford 1933) 92; C. F. Russo, *Aristofane autore di teatro* (Florence 1962) 184; Dearden 24, 156f.

proposing the partition of certain land 'his house shall be razed in accordance with the law of homicide', and the Spartans, angry with Agis in 418, fined him and demolished his house (Th. v. 63. 2)." So Dover *ad* 1485–92.

The parallel seems a poor one. Socrates is not exiled nor even brought to trial. Surely it is a slip of the pen, though a crucial one, for Dover to suggest that Greeks were punished merely for being *accused* of a crime. I can find no true legal precedent or parallel for the destruction of the house of an accused man.¹⁶ Further, Socrates is not even accused.¹⁷

The true parallel, mentioned by several commentators,¹⁸ is the attack on the Pythagoreans of Croton. Probably after 450 B.C., and thus in the lifetime of many in the audience, the Crotoniates revolted against the political power of the Pythagoreans, trapped the leaders of the sect in a house where they met (said to be the house of the famed Pythagorean athlete and general, Milon), and incinerated both house and leaders. The incident became famous, then legendary.¹⁹

¹⁶ The standard discussion is K. Meuli, *Festschrift Franz Dornseiff* (Leipzig 1953) 233–34, esp. Anm. 6 on 233. The nearest parallel I can find is the destruction of Cicero's Palatine mansion in March 58 B.C. Under the threat of a bill *de capite civis Romani*, sponsored by the *tribunus plebis* P. Clodius Pulcher, Cicero went into voluntary exile. The next day the bill was passed by the Tribal Assembly and Cicero's mansion on the Palatine as well as his villa in Tusculum was sacked and burned (Cic. *Sest.* 53–54). The next day Clodius had another bill passed which declared Cicero interdicted from fire and water for an area of 400 miles from Rome and all his property forfeit (*Har.Resp.* 11; *Dom.* 33, 43–47, 51, 102, 107–08, 116, 143, 146; *Red.Sen.* 22; *Att.* 3.15.6, 20.2–3; *Fam.* 14.2.2, 4.3–4); Cicero insisted that he had never been properly tried (*Dom.* 26, 72, 77, 83, 86, 88; *Mil.* 36). R. G. Nisbett, *Cicero, De Domo Sua* (Oxford 1939) 204–05, shows from Livy 25.4.9 and 26.3.12 that voluntary exile, confirmed by the vote of the Tribes, was legal exile from the day of the voluntary exile. Cicero had certainly treated the bill as though it were a *de facto* accusation (Cass.Dio 38.14.7; Plut. *Cic.* 30.6; Cic. *Att.* 3.8.4, 9.2, 10.2, 13.2, 14.1, 15.5.4.1.1; *QFr.* 1.36; *Fam.* 14.3.1). The violence of Clodius' ways may make all legal quibbling irrelevant. See Matthias Gelzer, *Cicero* (Wiesbaden 1969) 135–40.

¹⁷ A minor correction in Dover's note, perhaps of interest to pedants. Agis did not lose his house but was threatened with a hasty trial which might have led to that. Usually Spartans were slow to condemn (Thuc. 1.132.4). The Spartans did exile and destroy the house of Leotychides, Hdt. 6.72.2.

¹⁸ Perhaps first by T. Mitchell, *The Clouds of Aristophanes* (London 1838) 259–60 *ad* 1550–51 (misprint for "1450–51")=our 1504–05. Also noticed by G. Grote, *History of Greece IV* (New York 1853) 410 n.1; (*London 1888) 93 n.2; E. W. Götting, "Über der Redaction der Wolken des Aristophanes," *Berichte ü. d. Verhdl. Leipzig* 8 (1856) 31, and most commentators since.

¹⁹ The ancient sources for Pythagoreanism are chaotic, but the standard modern works are excellent and agree on matters that concern us here: K. von Fritz, *Pythagorean Politics in Southern Italy* (New York 1940); Edwin L. Minar Jr, *Early Pythagorean Politics* (Baltimore

In some versions, *αὐτός* is present.²⁰ The parallel with *Nubes* is close. In both cases, a sect of intellectuals combining unusual religious customs and philosophical speculation with oligarchical politics is destroyed by an outraged populace, whose freedom and *mores* they are endangering, by being trapped and burned in a house which is a common meeting place of the sect.²¹ The inhabitants of the Phrontisterion are invulnerable in court. Only violent revolt remains. Aristophanes' model is not a lynching but tyrannicide.

II. DRAMATIC EVIDENCE. The recovery of the staging for an ancient script, which contained neither stage directions nor even attributions of speakers,²² is not easy. It involves weighing evidence which different people may assess differently. I believe that there are difficulties with the dramaturgy of van Leeuwen and Dover and that points which seem at first to count in favor of the Sophists' escape are on second thought not so important.

1499. ἀπολεῖς, ἀπολεῖς. "You will kill, you will kill (us/me)."

1504f. —οἴμοι τάλας δείλαιος, ἀποπνιγήσομαι.

—ἐγὼ δὲ κακοδαίμων γε κατακαυφήσομαι.

—"Alas, poor wretched me, I shall be choked to death."

—"And I, unhappy *me*, shall be burned alive."

1942); F. W. Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius I* (Oxford 1957) ad 2.39; W. K. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy I* (Cambridge 1962) 146–340; Walter Burkert, *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism* (Cambridge [Mass.] 1972) 97–217; K. von Fritz, *RE* 24 (1963) 210–15.

²⁰ See *RE* 15 (1932) 1673.44–47, citing Diog. Laert. 8.1.21(39); Porph. *vit. Pyth.* 55; Iambl. *vit. Pyth.* 35, 249.

²¹ For the Phrontisterion as the center of religious mysteries which require initiation see *Nubes* 254–62; Dover ad 254; A. W. H. Adkins, "Clouds, Mysteries, Socrates and Plato," *Antichthon* 4 (1970) 13–24. The combination of philosophy and religious sect in Pythagoreanism is well-known (see n.19 *supra*). Socrates is not called an Oligarch in *Nubes*. (Not much weight should be placed on the mention of Hyperbolus at 876; he is a stock figure of fun for Old Comedy: *Ach.* 846f; *Eq.* 1302f, 1362f; *Pax* 681; *Nub.* 551–60, 876, 1065.) His work is subversive of the legal system of the city; see e.g., 874–76, 1038–42, 1400. He was well known as a pro-Spartan 'Oligarch': see *Aves* 1281f and, e.g., *Pl. Cri.* 52E. The oligarchic character of the Pythagoreans has been denied from Aristoxenus to e.g. John Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*⁴ (London 1939) 90 n.1. Von Fritz records the cautious consensus of modern scholarship at *RE* 24 (1963) 210.37–42, "dass die P. anfänglich auf der Seite der aristokratischen und oligarchischen Faktionen standen." He asserts (215.23–42) that the revolt of ca 450 was a democratic revolt against an oligarchic Pythagoreanism, despite aristocratic opposition to Pythagoras in the late sixth century. See von Fritz, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.19) 97–98; Walbank, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.19) 223.

²² J. C. B. Lowe, "Manuscript Evidence for Change of Speakers in Aristophanes," *BICS* 9 (1962) 27–42; K. Weissmann, *Die scenischen Anweisungen in der Scholien zu Aischylos*,

These lines clearly imply the imminent death of the inhabitants of the Phrontisterion, not that they have just escaped death, choking and burning by flight. Dover does not comment on 1504–05; van Leeuwen compares the very general and unspecific words of lamentation spoken by the Sycophant, *Plutus* 850ff, who laments the new justice of the world in words that so far from being *similia* lack precisely the concrete references to death by choking and burning that are essential here.

Dover mentions 1508 *δίωκε, παῖε, βάλλε* as evidence that Strepsiades and slave descend and drive the emerging Socratics off through the wings,²³ but *ad Nubes* 1508 he cites parallels to prove that “*δίωκε* and other words of the same type are as much war-cries as commands.” They are the sort of things an angry crowd shouts, as at *Ach.* 281–283; *Eq.* 246–252; *Vesp.* 456; *Av.* 365; *Eur. Rhés.* 675–76; *Xen. An.* 5.7.21. Xenophon, *An.* 5.7.28 describes a mutinous rabble-rouser as *ὅστις δὲ ἂν ἑαυτὸν ἔληται στρατηγὸν καὶ ἐθέλη λέγειν Βάλλε βάλλε*, “whoever wants to get himself chosen general and is willing to say ‘throw, throw’.”²⁴

Dover also objects *ad loc.* that “we do not want two actors stranded up a ladder at the end of the play.” At the end of Euripides, *Orestes* several actors have mounted the roof to set fire to the palace=*skene*. Apollo puts out the fire and restores order, but Orestes, Hermione and perhaps Pylades and Electra (the last three mutes) are all stranded on the roof at the end of the play. Presumably they exit down the ladder at the back of the *skene* by means of which they entered.

Rogers believes “No doubt the Comedy always ended with the burning of the Phrontisterion, but the present description—the climbing up to the roof, the chopping logic with the rafters, and the actual flames—is a description of proceedings which could hardly have been presented, or described with a view to their presentation, on the Athenian stage.”²⁵ The exodus of Euripides, *Orestes* and perhaps the flaming pyre in Euripides, *Supplices* suggests that some kind of special effect for burning was possible. Decisive here is the end of

Sophokles, Euripides, und Aristophanes (Bamberg 1896); W. G. Rutherford, *A Chapter in the History of Annotation* (London 1905) 103–05, who notes rare examples of ancient stage directions at, e.g., *Ran.* 312, 1263; *Thesm.* 277; Aesch. *Eum.* 129.

²³ Dover, “Skene” 114.

²⁴ John Vaio *per litt.*: “*balle, paie* might function as literal commands as well as war-cries in view of line 1489: ‘until you throw down [embaleis] the house upon them’. *Dioke* might be paraphrased ‘keep on with the attack’, ‘hurry it up’ (cf. LSJ s.v. iii.2–5).”

²⁵ B. B. Rogers, *The Comedies of Aristophanes II* (London 1916) xvi.

Troades, where Troy is clearly described as incinerated as the exodus goes on and the play ends. Wilamowitz long thought that the *skene* actually burned to the ground; Hourmouziades leaves the entire burning to the imagination of the spectators; Lesky suggests a compromise with some burning effect visible from behind the *skene*.²⁶ At any rate, the audience either saw or were to imagine Troy utterly destroyed at the end of *Troades*. There is no need to make Aristophanes indifferent to staging here, no matter how different from *Nubes I* the exodus of *Nubes II* may be.

In favor of incineration are the following considerations. We need not have Strepsiades and slave racing up and down the ladder twice in a short period of time. Their movement onto the roof, as analysed above, is clearly marked in the text as are their subsequent actions. There is no indication that anyone exits from the *skene* at 1493ff, and 1504–05 argue against it. There is no sign in the text that anyone descends. If we follow Beer and attribute 1508ff to the chorus, we have the angry crowd that usually utters such words encouraging Strepsiades in his work (“a cry of no quarter, ‘kill, kill, kill, kill,’” says Starkie *ad* 1508) and we obviate the need for a clumsy descent, of which there is no real hint in the text.²⁷

The cries of distress from within the Phrontisterion continue the

²⁶ The detailed description of the burning *scaena* at *Griechische Verskunst* (Berlin 1921) 165 = *Commentariola metrica* 2 (Göttingen 1895) is reflected in his earliest work, *In wie weit be-friedigen die Schlüsse der erhaltene griechischen Trauerspiele?* (Leiden 1974) 130, and *Griechische Tragödien III*² (Berlin 1906) 287; N. C. Hourmouziades, *Production and Imagination in Euripides* (Athens 1965) 122; A. Lesky, *Die tragische Dichtung der Hellenen* (Göttingen 1972) 391–92. Starkie *ad* 1496 suggests “‘the scene’ was not set on fire; the conflagration was probably carefully confined to some shavings on the roof.” Schmid-Stählin I.3 599 Anm.1 add Eur. *Bacch.* 623ff and *Phaethon* fr.781.43ff N² (=252ff Diggle; cf. 215 Diggle); see also I.3 620 Anm.7: “Das Brandstiftungsmotiv . . . gilt aber in der Komödie a. 411 für abgnützt (Ar. Lys. 1218ff mit Schol.).”

²⁷ The mss indicate a change of speaker at 1508. They are divided between Hermes and Socrates, both impossible. Most follow the Aldine in continuing Strepsiades’ part. Lines 1508f were attributed to the chorus by C. Beer, *Über die Zahl der Schauspieler bei Aristophanes* (Leipzig 1844) 117f; Th. Bergk, *Aristophanis Comoediae I* (Leipzig 1852) xv, 170; Th. Zielinski, *Die Gliederung der altattischen Komödie* (Leipzig 1885) 46 Anm.2; Starkie *ad* 1508 Dover *ad loc.* says Strepsiades “of course,” but his parallels are all uttered by a crowd (for exceptions see Ar. *Vesp.* 456 and Xen. *An.* 5.7.28, quoted above). The alternatives are to have Strepsiades expounding moral philosophy to a slave or the chorus to continue the attitude expressed (1303–20, 1458–61). Lowe, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.22), has shown that the attributions of speakers are guesses; the fact of change, tradition. The earliest papyrus mark the change of speaker with a *paragraphos*, not a name. See J. Andrieu, *Le dialogue antique* (Paris 1954) 209–303. (Beer defends the attribution to Hermes, 118f.)

tragic note that enters the play with the Clouds' Niobe response to Strepsiades' rebuke at 1458–61.²⁸ Cries of distress, “you are killing me,” etc., are found several times in Greek tragedy, regularly before a death or deaths.²⁹ The audience might be able to deduce from familiarity with those parallels the imminent death of the Socratics. Of course, there are many cries of distress in any comedy that are meant to be funny. *Nubes* 543 and *Ranae* 1–20 show us Aristophanes making fun of them. The context here is different. No one has ever confused the cries of distress or the tone of the exodus of *Nubes* with scenes where the amusingly obnoxious are chased off by e.g. Pisthetærus or the women's chorus in *Lysistrata*.

Note that if Dale's arguments³⁰ for only one door in the comic as in the tragic *skene* are accepted, the present interpretation becomes not just the more likely but inevitable. The central door has clearly been the door of Strepsiades' house since Pheidippides' return home. The roof is that of the Phrontisterion.³¹ There would be no exit for the Socratic circle.

With the dramaturgy of the best commentaries, ambiguities remain on Aristophanes' true attitude towards Socrates. Did the comedian intend *Nubes* to have the effect attributed to it by Plato, *Apologia* 18B and 19C (cf. *Leg.* 936A), of turning the Athenians so against

²⁸ See Peter Rau, “Paratragoedia,” *Zetemata* 45 (Munich 1967) 173–75, who cites earlier bibliography.

²⁹ W. S. Barrett *apud* Richard Carden, *The Papyrus Fragments of Sophocles* (Berlin 1974) 212, discusses relevant passages, i.e. Aesch. *Ag.* 1343–45, *Cho.* 869; Soph. *El.* 1404–06; Eur. *El.* 1165–67, *HF* 749, 754, *Or.* 1296–1301, *Med.* 1271–88, *Antiope* 48–56 Page; *Hec.* 1035–40, where Polymestor survives his children long enough to enter and prophesy the fate of Hecuba; *Her.* 887–908, where the cries uttered within presage death but the speakers do not die; *Med.* 96–167, where Medea's lyric lamentation, although different in length and effect from the other examples, does reinforce the Nurse's fears expressed at 36ff and provides a strong contrast with the self-possessed Medea we are about to see, perhaps Euripides' reason for this special effect.

³⁰ Dale 116, followed by Dearden 19ff. Dover's arguments in “Skene” are very damaging. Neither author refers to Eupolis, fr.42 Kock: οἰκοῦσι δ' ἐνθάδ' ἐν τρισὶν καλιδίσις, οἴκημ' ἔχων ἕκαστος. This fragment seems to put the set needed for, e.g., Menander, *Dyscolus* back into the fifth century. Dearden 20 dismisses it since “torn from its context the quotation is of uncertain value as evidence.” W. Beare, *The Roman Stage*¹ (Cambridge [Mass.] 1951) 287= (³New York 1963) 286, translates the fragment but gives the number as 24 Kock. Dale, *Collected Papers* (*supra* n.3) 104ff, 122, twice refers to Beare's “Appendix G” where this reference occurs.

³¹ Cf. Dale 116: “the top part of the house is now doing duty for the Phrontisterion,” with Wilamowitz, *Griech. Verskunst* (*supra* n.26) 165, of *Troades*: “ut Troiae urbem, quae in summa scaena est, incenderent.” Dearden 24 finds the sudden shift of the single door from Strepsiades to Socrates “difficult but not impossible.”

Socrates that they condemned him to death in 399? Most scholars believe not. Gilbert Murray, for instance, felt that "In 423 these charges were jokes. In 399 they were not jokes at all." Either Aristophanes was a character witness for Socrates at his trial or else he was away from Athens at the time "on garrison duty somewhere."³² W. B. Stanford thinks that "In private life Ar(istophanes) and Socrates may well have been good friends, as Plato in his *Symposium* seems to imply. Ar. could hardly have foreseen that his comic attacks on Socrates would help to bring on his indictment and execution in 399 B.C."³³ Victor Ehrenberg opines: "In accordance with popular misconceptions, in accordance also with the comedian's natural desire to make as much fun as possible of the 'philosophers', though at the same time in order to denounce the spirit rather than the man, Aristophanes attacked Sokrates as the true sophist, as the incarnation of all sophists," even though "he will have known better."³⁴ The list could go on.³⁵

The staging of the exodus of *Nubes* argued here suggests a different conclusion. The brief references in *Aves* 1281f, 1554ff and *Ranae* 1491ff show continued hostility. The last two occur in choral passages not dictated by dramatic action or the character of a speaker but stemming directly from the poet. Some believe that Plato's presentation of Aristophanes and Socrates dining together in *Symposium* shows the supposed hostility of Aristophanes to be only an exaggeration of a comedian's pranks. Aristophanes and Socrates in *Symposium* do not seem friendly to me. They rarely converse. When Socrates' speech is over, Aristophanes does not applaud but tries to bring some objection or complaint (212c). Their final confrontation, which while not hostile is not especially friendly, has Socrates proving to Agathon and Aristophanes, the representatives of Athenian art, that if they were truly knowledgeable in their arts they could compose in either *genre*. Surely the point of *Symposium* is that the best of Athens, and great indeed it is, is nothing compared with Socrates and his way. "Von Gegnern des Sokrates bleibt Aristophanes der wichtigste."³⁶

³² Gilbert Murray, *Aristophanes* (Oxford 1933) 99. On p.104 Murray says the play was rewritten to be harsher to Socrates.

³³ *Aristophanes, The Frogs*² (London 1963) ad 1491.

³⁴ *The People of Aristophanes*² (Oxford 1951) 277, 276.

³⁵ See, e.g., the discussions in T. Gelzer, "Aristophanes der Komiker," *RE Supp.* 12 (1970) 1441-45; Guthrie, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.19) III 359-77.

³⁶ U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Platon I*² (Berlin 1920) 94. On Aristophanes' speech in *Pl. Symp.*, see K. J. Dover, *JHS* 86 (1966) 41-50.

There are reasons to believe that the exodus of *Nubes* had Strepsiades, on the advice of his household Herm, mount the roof of the Phrontisterion with a slave and set fire to it, respond to the questions and cries of terror from within, and descend with his slave down the back of the *skene* as the chorus marches out, leaving audience or reader to accept the death of all within. This reconstruction means that at least from *Nubes II*, ca 418 B.C., if not from 423, Aristophanes could foresee—and advise—only one ending for the tumultuous relationship of Socrates, son of Sophroniscus, and the people of Athens, a final solution.³⁷

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April, 1977

³⁷ This paper owes much to the advice, criticism, encouragement and libraries of Professors William M. Calder III and John Vaio.