

**ARISTOPHANOUS BATRACHOI; THE  
FROGS OF ARISTOPHANES, ADAPTED  
FOR PERFORMANCE BY THE OXFORD  
UNIVERSITY DRAMATIC SOCIETY,  
1892, WITH AN ENGLISH VERSION**

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Aristophanous Batrachoi; The Frogs of Aristophanes, Adapted for Performance by the Oxford University Dramatic Society, 1892, with an English Version by J. Hookham Frere & D. G. Hogarth & A. D. Godley

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**J. HOOKHAM FRERE & D. G. HOGARTH & A. D. GODLEY**

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ΑΡΙΣΤΟΦΑΝΟΥΣ ΒΑΤΡΑΧΟΙ

THE

FROGS OF ARISTOPHANES

ADAPTED FOR PERFORMANCE BY THE

Oxford University Dramatic Society

1892

WITH

*AN ENGLISH VERSION*

PARTLY ADAPTED FROM THAT OF J. HOOKHAM FRERE  
AND PARTLY WRITTEN FOR THE OCCASION

BY

D. G. HOGARTH

AND

A. D. GODLEY



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## P R E F A C E

THE Greek text of this edition is in the main that adopted by the Rev. W. W. Merry, D.D., in the Clarendon Press Series. In the preparation of a Greek play for acting purposes considerable cuts must always be made; in the present adaptation, the excisions are more serious perhaps than usual. The witty scenes in which the Maidservant and the Tavern-keeper appear, I cut out with much reluctance in order to relieve the O.U.D.S. from the necessity of filling those parts. Act III. has been shortened by the excision of the first part of the Poets' contest, dealing with purely literary criticism, and occupying over 200 lines. The other parts of the contest have been curtailed considerably, on the ground that almost all their point lies in sustained parody of plays either lost or not sufficiently known to a modern audience; or in personal allusions not intelligible now-a-days.

For the English version I have laid John Hookham Frere under contribution wherever possible<sup>1</sup>. All the choric parts, however, have been translated *de novo*,

<sup>1</sup> With the kind permission, promptly accorded, of Messrs. Pickering and Chatto, the most recent publishers of Frere's *Frogs*.

and adapted to Dr. Parry's music; the *Parodos* ("ἰαχὴ δ' ἰαχῆ) and the final ode of Act II. (*ἡ που θεῶν ἐπιβρεμέτας, κ.τ.λ.*) by Mr. A. D. Godley, of Magdalen College; the Frogs' chorus, the *Parabasis* (*Μοῦσα χορῶν ἱερῶν, κ.τ.λ.*), and the short odes in Act III., by myself. Frere's choric odes, though admirable as paraphrases of the originals, cannot be set to the same music as the Greek, nor are they fitted for a parallel edition. Whoever criticizes our translations of the choruses will I trust not forget that we had to set English words to music already in type.

Some parts of the dialogue I have been forced to adapt, rather than take simply from Frere, owing to the length to which he often expands the Greek original. Other parts he paraphrases, or leaves untranslated, and of these I have had to write versions: for example, the Examination of Prologues in Act III., with its hair-splitting criticism and its untranslatable refrain, *ληκίθιον ἀπόλεσον*. I must claim indulgence for all work of this kind on the ground of the great haste in which I had to do it, in order to get the edition early through the press. My very best thanks are due to Dr. C. H. Lloyd for much assistance in fitting the translation to the music: this acknowledgement covers but a small part of the debt under which the O.U.D.S. must remain to him and to Dr. Hubert Parry.

D. G. HOGARTH.

MAGDALEN COLLEGE,  
Dec. 21, 1891.





## INTRODUCTORY

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THE Alexandrine 'argument,' prefixed to the *Frogs*, tells us, on the authority of Dicaearchus, that so greatly admired was the play for its *Parabasis*, or political chorus (Act II. Scene ii.), that it gained the rare honour of a second representation at Athens, after winning the first prize on its appearance.

Much that delighted the Athenians in this *Parabasis*, and indeed throughout the play, is lost for men of another age and country; but so much point, brilliancy and beauty is still patent to all who read the *Frogs*, that we can realise faintly the sensation of the Athenian audience, to whom every allusion struck home, every play of words was obvious in dialogue and chorus, which still, after nearly two thousand three hundred years, sparkles as if written yesterday. The throne of Tragedy in the nether world may have been disputed again since Aeschylus and Euripides contended before Dionysus; but surely no poet of any age or clime dares claim that of Comedy from Aristophanes!

The Idea of the play is a search made by the god Dionysus among the dead for a tragic poet more worthy of his own Festivals and of Athens, than any living in the last years of the fifth century before our era. It was suggested, no doubt, by the recent deaths of the last of the *dii majores*, Sophocles and Euripides, whom Dionysus finds newly come to the under-world. Aristophanes had shown

little love for the latter poet in bygone years; but now, whether because he felt less bitterly towards the dead than the living, or he knew that, bad as Euripides had been, his successors were worse, he treats him with an appreciation, limited indeed and grudgingly expressed, which he had denied to him before.

Literary criticism, therefore, plays a large part in the *Frogs*, and probably never have the views of a critic of the first order been presented so effectively. Little disposed as modern judges are to accept Aristophanes' estimate of Euripides, whose subtle delineation, exquisite diction and faultless rhythm, appeal so strongly to later taste, yet so powerful is the ruthless invective of the contemporary comedian, that it is hard to see for the moment anything more in Euripides' tragedies than that lack of virility, fine-drawn sophistry, and cloying sweetness which undoubtedly can be laid to his charge.

No one can help feeling, however, that literary criticism is not the real object of the *Frogs*. Euripides and his school, like Socrates in the *Clouds*, are attacked not so much for their literary or philosophic faults, as for the political tendency which the author conceived them to represent. Aristophanes is still the same Aristophanes who for more than twenty years had been kicking against the pricks of the Democracy, hating its war-policy, protesting against its new readings of the old creeds, and defending and lauding the aristocratic Opposition. The Athenian audience who demanded the play a second time because of its 'political chorus,' grasped the real motive of the poet: in the vague, covert remonstrance against the preference of the low-born, the new men, over the old families, which runs through *epirrhema* and *antepirrhema*, a note is struck repeatedly whose echo an attentive ear can catch in all parts of the play. Vague and covert is this remonstrance compared

with the directness and boldness of similar allusions in the poet's earlier plays—the *Acharnians*, the *Knights*, and the *Wasps*; and it may be said that through the *Frogs* sounds a pathetic tone of indecision: the poet's faith had been shaken rudely, and the convictions of a life-time sorely tried; and though he holds them still, he hints and whispers, where in his stormy youth he would have cried aloud.

The *Frogs* appeared late in the poet's career, in the year 405 B.C. Aristophanes was indeed only thirty-nine, but he had lived through a great deal. He could hardly remember a time when Athens had not been struggling in the hopeless Peloponnesian war, spending vast sums and many lives, losing her dependencies one by one, and earning the jealousy and hatred of half the Grecian world. Like all his party, the poet had never been in sympathy with the war, and he had welcomed at last, in 421, that truce whose expediency he had so often preached in the Theatre. Then came the Sicilian expedition, the offspring of a new ambition for foreign dominion, which was more universal than the old antagonism to Sparta had been, and appealed to most elements in the Athenian State: therefore when the terrible crash came, all parties, and among them that of Aristophanes, felt equally the national character of the calamity which reduced Athens at one stroke from imperial power to a struggle against overwhelming odds for dear existence.

Close upon that disaster followed the unhappy event of the Revolution of the Four Hundred in Athens itself—a terrible disappointment, perhaps disillusion, for one who had believed all his life in the aristocratic Opposition, and, like many of his countrymen, was a little more of a partizan than a patriot. For the first time in Aristophanes' lifetime fortune had offered power to the party of United Greece, the party who set up the Athens of the Persian War for