



# Three Plays by Aristophanes: Staging Women (The New Classical Canon)

*Jeffrey Henderson*

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These three plays by the great comic playwright Aristophanes (c. 446-386 BCE), the well-known *Lysistrata*, and the less familiar *Women at the Thesmophoria* and *Assemblywomen*, are the earliest surviving portrayals of contemporary women in the European literary tradition. These plays provide a unique glimpse of women not only in their familiar domestic roles but also in relation to household and city, religion and government, war and peace, theater and festival, and, of course, to men.

This freshly revised edition presents, for the first time in a single volume, all three plays in faithful modern translations that preserve intact Aristophanes' blunt and often obscene language, sparkling satire, political provocation, and beguiling fantasy. Alongside the translations are ample introductions and notes covering the politically engaged genre of Aristophanic comedy in general and issues of sex and gender in particular, which have been fully updated since the first edition in light of recent scholarship. An appendix contains fragments of lost plays of Aristophanes that also featured women, and an up-to-date bibliography provides guidance for further exploration.

In addition to their timeless humor and biting satire, the plays are unique and invaluable documents in the history of western sexuality and gender, and they offer strikingly prescient speculations about the social and political future of the female sex.

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