



The Stagecraft and Performance of Roman Comedy

C. W. Marshall

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A comprehensive survey of Roman theatrical production, this book examines all aspects of Roman performance practice, and provides fresh insights on the comedies of Plautus and Terence. Following an introductory chapter on the experience of Roman comedy from the perspective of Roman actors and the Roman audience, addressing among other things the economic concerns of putting on a play in the Roman republic, subsequent chapters provide detailed studies of troupe size and the implications for role assignment, masks, stage action, music, and improvisation in the plays of Plautus and Terence. Marshall argues that Roman comedy was raw comedy, much more rough-and-ready than its Hellenistic precursors, but still fully conscious of its literary past. The consequences of this lead to fresh conclusions concerning the dramatic structure of Roman comedy, and a clearer understanding of the relationship between the plays-as-text and the role of improvisation during performance.

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