



# Comic Angels: And Other Approaches to Greek Drama through Vase-Paintings (Clarendon Paperbacks)

*Oliver Taplin*

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## **Comic Angels: And Other Approaches to Greek Drama through Vase-Paintings (Clarendon Paperbacks)** Oliver Taplin

This book opens a neglected chapter in the reception of Athenian drama, especially comedy, and gives center stage to a particularly attractive and entertaining series of vase-paintings which have generally been regarded as marginal curiosities. These are the so-called "phylax vases," nearly all painted in Greek cities of South Italy in the period 400 to 360 B.C. Until now, they have been taken to reflect a sort of local folk-theater, but Taplin argues that most, if not all, reflect Athenian comedy of the sort represented by Aristophanes. His bold thesis brings up questions about the relation of tragedy as well as comedy to vase painting, the cultural climate of the Greek cities in Italy, and the extent to which Athenians were aware of drama as a potential "export." It also enriches appreciation of many key aspects of Aristophanic comedy. The book has assembled 46 photographs of vase-paintings, many printed here for the first time outside specialist publications not readily accessible.

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