

Chapter 4, 'Matricide and Madness', proceeds through the last scenes of *LB* with a swiftness that parallels the disorienting pace of the dramatic action and, in content, exposes the terrifying tragedy of Orestes' matricide. In commenting on the nurse Cilissa, M. underscores how her unexpected appearance refocuses and yet destabilises the spectators' perceptions of Clytemnestra as the soon-to-be murdered mother. Aeschylus also sparks surprise and horror, M. argues, through the ring composition with which he structures the actions leading to the accomplishment of Orestes' revenge; M. points out that, although vexed, the central stasimon (*LB* 783–837) 'highlights the theological frame within which the *Libation Bearers* operates' (p. 111). Within this structural framework, M. completes his theatrical examination of the ensuing events: the exceptionally short Aegisthus scene, the tension and violence between mother and son, and the startling interjection of the silent Pylades at the crucial moment of the murder. Finally, to re-emphasise the horror of these moments, M. concludes by noting the dramatic effects created by Orestes' hesitation, by twelve chillingly comedic components of the play and by the (potentially visual) appearance of the Furies for a terrifying finish. By exposing these aspects of the tragic climax and conclusion, M. again validates the genius of Aeschylus' *LB*.

M. effectively reintroduces *LB* as a remarkably innovative theatrical performance deserving greater attention by the scholarly community. M. gives a thorough overview of the play, illustrated with brilliant structural diagrams and tables useful for study. At the same time, like Aeschylus, M. leaves several unresolved questions and provocative suggestions for further consideration. These issues include: connections between *LB* and the Athesteria festival that featured libations with *choe* pitchers (pp. 25–6); the potential reperformance of *LB* and *Eumenides* together as an Oresteian 'dilogy' at the Lenaia festival (p. 51); the theatrical effects of Orestes' and Electra's attempted (and failed?) conjuring of their father's ghost (p. 77); further implications of the ring composition structure (p. 109) and comedic elements (pp. 127–9) in the play as a whole; and the question of the Furies' visual appearance at the end (pp. 137–8). These and other insightful propositions contribute to the overall excellence of M.'s companion, a must-read for anyone interested in Aeschylean tragedy.

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STUDIES ON THE RECEPTION OF AESCHYLUS

KENNEDY (R.F.) (ed.) *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Aeschylus*. (Brill's Companions to Classical Reception 11.) Pp. xx + 634, b/w & colour ills. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2018. Cased, €193, US\$222. ISBN: 978-90-04-24932-5.

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It has become commonplace for reviewers to begin reviews on companions by stating that we live in the age of the companion and that companions on any imaginable topics have been mushrooming for the past decade. I do not wish to comment on the pros and cons of the inundation of this genre here. However, with regard to the recent publication of *Brill's Companions* on the reception of the two other Attic tragedians (R. Lauriola and K.N.

Demetriou [edd.] first on Euripides [2015], shortly thereafter also on Sophocles [2017]), it is clear that another one on Aeschylus was a *desideratum*. This gap has now been closed by K.'s volume in the same series. It contains 25 chapters that cover a wide thematic and chronological range, from practically the first ancient testimonies of Aeschylean reception up until contemporary receptions, not only in modern theatre but also in film, television and political theory.

The main bulk of the volume, which is divided into two (quantitatively uneven) main sections ('Pre-Modern Receptions', Chapters 1–6, and 'Modern Receptions', Chapters 7–25), is preceded by a (disappointingly short and not very informative) introduction by the editor (pp. 1–5) and followed by an equally short (yet still useful) general index (pp. 625–34). An index of passages cited is missing, as is a general bibliography. The lack of the latter is understandable in consideration of the immense scope of the volume (each contribution contains its own bibliography instead); the absence of the former, however, unfortunately lessens the usability of this book to some degree.

It goes without saying that a summary, let alone a full appraisal, of all 25 chapters is out of the question within the limited frame of this review. I therefore pick a few chapters that I found particularly useful, illuminating, surprising or mind-broadening (or, occasionally, all of these). It goes equally without saying that this selection is highly subjective and that by no means do I wish to depreciate those contributions that will, sadly, remain unmentioned. In the first chapter the reception of Aeschylus in Sicily is covered by D.G. Smith; he takes into account both Aeschylus' connections to Sicily (the most important of which was, of course, that with the tyrant and patron Hieron of Syracuse) as well as dramas that display a link to Sicily (by having been performed and/or located there). On the basis of a meticulous philological discussion, Smith tentatively suggests that '[t]here is no direct, explicit evidence for Aeschylus in Sicily before the end of the Classical period' and that therefore the dramatist's 'Sicilianicity' may well have been 'a product of the Hellenistic Age' (p. 42). Thus, the relation between Aeschylus and Sicily seems indeed to be an ideal starting point for a *tour de force* through Aeschylus' reception history, as Smith concludes (p. 43): 'While western Europeans in the 17th to 19th centuries embraced a Sicilian Aeschylus, perhaps as part of their interest in the Sicily and Magna Graeca of the Grand Tour, western Europeans in the 20th and 21st centuries have largely dismissed the Sicilian Aeschylus, perhaps because he detracts from Athenian literature's role in the ideological make-up of liberal western democracies'.

The following chapters deal with Aeschylus in Attic comedy as well as his reception by Aristotle, in the Hellenistic period and under the Roman Empire (the last-mentioned chapter, written by G.W.M. Harrison, should be singled out for its exemplary comprehensiveness and clarity). The section on pre-modern receptions is terminated by a brief yet insightful chapter on Aeschylus in Byzantium. C. Simelidis here demonstrates that, although '[f]or a thousand years the fate of his text was in the hands of the Byzantines' (p. 179), the popularity of Aeschylus during the Byzantine period was relatively low. On the one hand, important scholarship on the text of Aeschylus was produced in the fourteenth century, especially by Thomas Magistros and Dimitrius Triclinius; on the other, allusions to and reminiscences of Aeschylus' plays are rare as compared to Sophocles and Euripides (with the exception of the twelfth century [the so-called 'Byzantine Renaissance'], which showed a high interest in the revival of Classical antiquity). This chapter is particularly relevant with regard to how reception works. In short, the popularity of an author in a specific period is not automatically commensurate with the importance of this period for the author's reception, nor does the quantity of quotes and allusions necessarily indicate an author's general standing in the same period.

The second section covers an impressively broad thematic spectrum on the modern reception of Aeschylus from the Renaissance to the present day. It opens with two overview chapters on Aeschylus and opera (by M. Ewans) and on Aeschylus in Germany (by T. Ziolkowski) and ends with Aeschylus' (non-?)influence on contemporary political theory ("Save Our City": the Curious Absence of Aeschylus in Modern Political Thought' [A.W. Saxonhouse] and 'Political Theory in Aeschylean Drama: Ancient Themes and their Contemporary Reception' [L. Atkinson and R.K. Balot]). In between, a plethora of topics and disciplines is dealt with; I select four chapters in order to demonstrate the breadth of themes and approaches. A. González-Rivas Fernández unravels the Aeschylean intertexts in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein: or, The Modern Prometheus*. It is not simply the novel's alternative title (not widely known to the general public) that triggers an association with Aeschylus, but a complex net of intertextual links, merging connections to the *Prometheus Bound* (a play whose authenticity was not questioned before 1911) with other intertexts, amongst which John Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Samuel T. Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* stand out. Consequently, the author convincingly maintains that the character of Victor Frankenstein essentially becomes 'a tragic hero, modelled on Prometheus' (p. 296), whereby different types of heroes (e.g. the rebel hero, the hero of progress and the Romantic hero) are combined into one. Thus, on a metatextual level, 'Aeschylus is transformed and updated, infused with a new mentality' (p. 315).

A short but inspiring chapter by R. Seaford explores a new aspect of the well-researched influence of Aeschylus on Richard Wagner's *Ring der Nibelungen* ('Form and Money in Wagner's *Ring* and the Aeschylean Tragedy'). Seaford gives his interpretation a Marxist twist and argues that '[i]n a society becoming ever more pervaded by money, be it Athens or Dresden, the power of pre-monetary myth provides an effective way of relativizing the power of money', and that both Aeschylus and Wagner, despite their 'enormous and unbridgeable differences' in time and historical background, both equally dramatised 'the transcendence, by pre-monetary myth, of the universal power of monetised wealth that unifies both the content and the form of the myth' (p. 359). Seaford's chapter is, not least, a model example of a companion chapter since it offers a handy summary of existing research on a topic, along with a new interpretative aspect (with which a reader may or may not agree).

Aeschylus' trilogy is also at the centre of A. Wrigley's contribution in which three British TV productions of the *Oresteia* (produced in 1961, 1979 and 1983 respectively) are analysed and discussed. Wrigley demonstrates that in spite of their differences, these three productions 'are representative of the broader ways that television has contributed to the forging of a new, public identity for ancient Greece in twentieth-century Britain' (p. 451). Aeschylus does not take pride of place within this wider context, but his reception is typical in the sense that it illustrates the 'rich diversity of ways that the medium engaged with, and engaged its viewers with, Greek tragedy in performance' (p. 453). Wrigley's chapter is original and in some way also bold, as it deals with a medium of reception that some scholars may still consider second rate (unjustifiably so, in my opinion).

Another contribution on my list of personal favourites is that by S.E. Constantinidis, 'The Broadhead Hypothesis: Did Aeschylus Perform Word Repetition in *Persians*?' Although this chapter stretches the notion of 'reception' relatively far, it is, at the same time, exemplary as it successfully combines different fields and methods such as translation studies, corpus linguistics and performance studies. Constantinidis shows that word repetitions in Aeschylus' *Persians* 'are not random instances of a sloppy writing style' but 'deliberate choices intended to enhance the meaning of a dramatic situation' (p. 402), and that verbal repetition is part of a 'soundscape' in Aeschylus' drama together with parameters such as 'the choral songs, the music, and the stage sound effects' (p. 381).

Furthermore, tests on contemporary audiences have demonstrated that word repetitions in a stage performance of the *Persians* were considered less disturbing than might have been anticipated, as a result of which Constantinidis argues that modern translations of Aeschylus' dramas should not erase but, rather, imitate this feature.

It is virtually impossible to rate the overall quality of a collected volume that is constituted by as many as 25 chapters on a range of topics that covers a period of almost 2500 years. As stated above, a more comprehensive introduction and an index of passages cited would have been beneficial – as would a bit more copy-editing of some contributions. However, these quibbles do not dampen the many merits of the volume, and the majority of the contributions are of solid quality both in form and content. Therefore, the volume clearly has the potential to become a standard reference work. It will – and should – be read and consulted not only by those interested in the reception of the oldest of the three major Attic tragedians, but by anyone who wants to know more about the aftermath of Greek drama in post-ancient cultures and media more generally.

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VERSIONS OF EURIPIDES' *BACCHAE*

PERRIS (S.) *The Gentle, Jealous God. Reading Euripides' Bacchae in English*. Pp. xii + 237. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016. Cased, £85. ISBN: 978-1-4725-1353-3.

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Halfway through Donna Tartt's novel *The Secret History*, a new Classics professor arrives at Hampden College. He tells his students, 'Agathon. Do you know how I remember that word? "Agatha Christie writes good mysteries."' The students are appalled. Not only are they prodigious Classicists, but they have performed a secretive bacchanal ritual, which has resulted in death. Yet despite their prowess as scholars, and their experience of Dionysian frenzy, one imagines that the students' contemplation of *to agathon* will evermore be haunted by 'Agatha Christie writes good mysteries'. The legacy of reception interferes with the exploration of ancient culture. Tartt's bacchantes have turned back time by their revival of the *thiasos*, but it is clear that they have watched *Dead Poets Society* too.

Inevitably, Classical culture acquires such baggage. P. situates his fine monograph on versions of Euripides' *Bacchae* amidst 'stronger' and 'weaker' theses on reception. P. finds that this tragedy is fertile material, 'predisposed to creative translation' (p. 170). Hence *Bacchae* provokes responses so diverse as Gilbert Murray's 'mystery play' (p. 63), H.D.'s 'incantatory, secular mysticism' (p. 93), Derek Mahon's 'anti-political' irreverence (p. 96), and Colin Teevan's deadpan 'translationese' (p. 120). While P. offers no substantial commentary on Brian de Palma and Wole Soyinka, whose versions of *Bacchae* have received much critical attention elsewhere, his book covers an impressive expanse. Each translation is considered amidst the efforts of its author's contemporaries, and we are given an exhaustive list of adaptations of the play. P. takes a strong line on the versions we should avoid: 'the less said about *Dionysus in New York* (2008), by retired