

Ajax's burial at Troy in a coffin in the *Little Iliad* (*Il. parv.* 3 Bernabé; mis-cited as *fr.* 4 at 99 n. 267) brings Scafoglio's study full circle. The negative valence Scafoglio reads in this un-Homeric funerary method is in keeping with the tenor of the *Little Iliad* as best we can reconstruct it. Ajax's corpse is not entirely without honour, but the denial of a cremation and funerary urn is a final sign of 'the unhappy destiny of the hero in the archaic epic' (100). Scafoglio draws a connection, moreover, between the burial method and the Mycenaean attributes ascribed to Ajax in the *Iliad*. Like the tower shield, Ajax's coffin is a Bronze-Age relic preserved in the oral tradition, harking back to the earlier practice of inhumation and distinguishing him from other Homeric heroes. Scafoglio's Ajax is, in sum, a warrior whose antique origin renders him forever 'out of context' in Archaic epic, doomed to remain a 'héros "inachevé"' (26): left behind at Troy without *aristeia*, pyre or urn.

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BROWN (A.) (ed. and tr.) **Aeschylus: *Libation Bearers*** (Aris and Phillips Classical Texts). Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2018. Pp. 486. £24.95. 9781786940995.
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Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers* is a captivating and interesting play which has recently drawn the attention of serious scholarship in the field (for example C.W. Marshall, *Aeschylus: Libation Bearers* (Companions to Greek and Roman Tragedy), London and Oxford 2017; see following review). In the same vein, Brown's commentary in the renowned Aris and Phillips series brings to the fore the very complex and engaging character of this ancient dramatic piece, notably the second play of the only wholly surviving ancient trilogy of Greek drama, the Aeschylean *Oresteia*.

A learned and informative introduction on the main issues dealt with by the vast bibliography on the play starts with a short exposition of the plot. Brown, rather unexpectedly and surprisingly, outlines for the intended reader (mainly students) a similar account to that found in A. Sommerstein's *Aeschylean Tragedy* (2nd edition, Bristol 2010). It would have been more helpful and profitable, however, if in this section the author had examined in more detail the various

interesting trends and aspects of the *Libation Bearers'* plot that draw his attention in subsequent parts of the introduction and in the commentary. There follows a subsection on the play's mythical background, with particular emphasis on Stesichorus' handling of the theme in his *Oresteia*, which Brown, in terms of a *Quellenforschung* analysis of the mythical data, considers to have been Aeschylus' most important source. A section on the play's main themes as represented in the visual arts follows, and evidences the way Aeschylean drama may have interacted with and been stirred by visual depictions of tragic subject matter. Nonetheless, one should be cautious in accepting direct interaction in all instances, as many handlings of the myth (both in drama and elsewhere in ancient literature) are missing, and thus the influence of specific examples of the visual arts (for example *Oresteia* kraters) on Aeschylus seems mostly rather undetermined.

Staging and performance are also examined, with Brown offering a temperate account of the various views expressed on vexed staging problems, such as, for example, the number of actors involved in the actual performance. The introduction continues with an examination of the way the *Libation Bearers* functions as the middle drama of the *Oresteian* trilogy whilst also functioning as a self-contained dramatic piece in its own right. Issues of imagery and the reception of the play in ancient times follow, with some interesting insights; unfortunately, analysis of the play's reception in later and contemporary literature and art is very limited.

The text and brief yet informative *apparatus criticus* follow. The text presented by Brown is chiefly constructed on the basis of M.L. West's 1998 Teubner edition; differences are defended by Brown in the notes with admirable learning. This is a rather welcome addition to the scholarly character of the Aris and Phillips commentaries, which are not usually concerned with problems of textual transmission and criticism. The English translation facing the Greek text, in accordance with the Aris and Phillips house style, is flowing and renders the Greek text into idiomatic English that is absolutely suited to its (primarily) student audience. The commentary itself, in addition to discussions of a textual nature, contains helpful notes on matters of language and offers various thematic interpretations (myth and dramatic technique, performance issues, the mythological, literary and artistic backgrounds, neo-historicizing

interests, aesthetics, analysis of the structure and the ways of producing meaning in terms of a trilogy); metre and scansion are dealt with mainly in the appendix. Of particular importance, also evidencing Brown's sound grasp of ancient and modern documentation, is, for example, his discussion of the extended *kommos* (vv. 306–478) and its import, including a concise review of the relevant puzzling *status quaestionis*, with Brown cautiously acknowledging the *kommos*' rather expository character, which foreshadows and dramatically anticipates the murder to follow. The bibliography is ample, but, in line with the general trend of the series, not exhaustive.

A few quibbles apart, as noted above, this is quite a helpful volume for both students and scholars, complementing as it does A.F. Garvie's more extended commentary on the play (*Aeschylus: Choephoroi*, Oxford 1986). The presentation of the volume is excellent, as expected in this series, with no puzzling typographical errors. All this, combined with a very reasonable price, leads me to recommend the purchase of this edition, alongside the author's earlier (1987), equally commendable edition of Sophocles' *Antigone* in the same series.

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MARSHALL (C.W.) **Aeschylus: *Libation Bearers*** (Companions to Greek and Roman Tragedy). London and Oxford: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017. Pp. xii + 181. \$22.95. 9781474255080.

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Marshall's *Libation Bearers* forms part of the renowned series of Bloomsbury Companions to Greek and Roman Drama and offers a thorough and systematic (largely scene-by-scene) examination of Aeschylus' play with focus both on scholarly criticism of the play and the relevant *status quaestionis*, as well as on an innovative reappraisal of the theatrical dimension of the drama (chiefly the three-actor rule and the use of the same actor to play different dramatic characters) as a means of producing dramatic meaning.

In the first chapter, entitled 'Theatre and theodicy', the author offers a systematic reading of the main issues concerning the *Oresteia* and the specific play under consideration, with particular

emphasis on matters such as the playwright's dramatic identity, performance criticism of trilogies, myth, basic tragic notions such as the relation of gods to humans, theatrical space (especially the central space of the orchestra), political and historical contextualization of the plot, ritual (notions of divine *dikē* included), structural analysis and reception of the play by the visual arts.

In chapter 2, 'Reperformance and recognition', Marshall focuses on the literary (for example Aristophanes' *Frogs*) and the iconographic reception of the *Libation Bearers* through an examination focused on issues of reperformance, in line with current interests of modern scholarship on ancient drama; he also compellingly argues for a dilogy of the *Libation Bearers* with the *Eumenides* at the Lenaia. Marshall continues with an assessment of the theatrical import of various props (the grave, libation vessels, etc.) and a consideration of notions of intratextuality within the trilogy, highlighting an intratextual association ('mirror scenes' in Oliver Taplin's phraseology: *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus*, Oxford 1977, 100) between the choral entrances of the play and those of *Agamemnon*. Last but not least, the author scrutinizes modern receptions, translations and productions of the drama, through Latin adaptations or otherwise, in literature, cinema, music and dance, from the 12th up to the 20th century.

Chapter 3, 'Chorus and characters', offers a ground-breaking reading of the use of music and the structure of the lyrical parts of the play, laying particular emphasis on the theatrical dimension of such notions for producing meaning on the spectator's part (especially in the case of the great *kommos* and the structural correspondences between various parts). Marshall also identifies instances of musical intertextuality, with the musical structure of the scene featuring Orestes at the tomb invoking, as it does, Agamemnon's coming (anapaestic metres). Staging issues also become apparent in this section; for example, the author argues that both Orestes and Pylades are present on stage at 585–652.

'Matricide and madness', the next and final chapter, distinguishes between the Erinyes' torturing of Orestes and Clytemnestra, and considers thematic and dramatic correspondences between various dramatic characters (for example, Orestes and Agamemnon); this section demonstrates again Marshall's interest in the performance semantics of the three-actor rule, especially