

STIEBER (M.) **Euripides and the Language of Craft** (Mnemosyne Supplements 327). Leiden: Brill, 2011. Pp. 494. €162. 9789004-189065.

doi:10.1017/S0075426914001554

Building on Shirley Barlow's influential *Imagery of Euripides* (London 1971), among others, Stieber considers Euripides' use of metaphors and analogies ostensibly related to visual arts and crafts. Stieber aims to show that Euripides was more interested in these activities than most of his contemporaries, and that he had personal acquaintance with specific technical practices of artists and artisans of his day. Chapters are devoted to architecture, sculpture and painting; Euripides' *Ion* – with its 'ecphrases' of the temple sculptures and the tapestries – gets its own chapter. Further discussion of Euripidean imagery possibly drawn from craftsmen's workshops follows, and is succeeded by a select compendium of terms analysed in the manner of J.J. Pollitt's *The Ancient View of Greek Art* (New Haven 1974). Much of the book is taken up with attempts to find allusions to specific artworks that supposedly underlie Euripides' words. In places, Stieber offers insightful readings and demonstrates the broader thematic significance of, for instance, architecture to the overall dramaturgy of the *Trojan Women* (especially 1–35, 104–10); and while her selection and discussion of terms is useful, it contains much outside Euripides' corpus. Although the work could have been edited more tightly, its overall structure is clear and it is generally written in an engaging manner; the author has also brought to light much Euripidean material worthy of consideration for those interested in ancient aesthetics. However, the book sometimes reads like a catalogue of passages whose analysis I often found methodologically problematic and not always convincing. Considerations of space permit discussion of only a few examples.

Stieber notes, for instance, that in the *Iphigenia in Tauris* (273–74) when Orestes and Pylades emerge from the sea and are likened to ἀγάλματα (statues) of Nereus, the two young men are being compared to Nereids depicted with clinging drapery in art (Nereid Monument, etc.). Yet she acknowledges (155) that this reading is rather tenuous; Euripides makes no reference to any drapery worn by Orestes and Pylades, and immediately before this the two young men are compared to the Dioskouroi. Again, Stieber

argues (157–61) that in the *Bacchae* Pentheus is to be imagined as an Archaic κόρη (maiden) statue when Dionysus persuades him to dress in women's clothing so he can spy on the female followers of the god (*Bacchae* 821–46); not only is there no mention of any statue in this scene, but Pentheus is to carry a thyrsus and wear a dappled fawn-skin which are the accoutrements of a maenad, not a κόρη (*Bacchae* 835). We may also ask: how would the idea of Orestes and Pylades as Nereids or Pentheus as a κόρη statue be dramatically significant anyway? The allusion-hunting is inevitably speculative, as is evident to the author herself at times (139–41, 248, etc.). Much space (286–301) is taken up with the question of which particular version of the temple is being alluded to in the choral description of Apollo's temple at Delphi in the parodos of the *Ion* (184–218). After discussing at great length archaeological findings and information from Pindar, Herodotus and Pausanias about the temple(s), Stieber rather blandly concludes that the ecphrasis '... is a mostly imaginary recreation of the decoration of a generic temple' (300). This could also be applied to many of her other arguments, *mutatis mutandis*.

Another problem is the overriding assumption that Euripides' language accurately reflects the practices of artisans. Where it does not, Stieber sometimes distorts the material. She attempts to see Odysseus as using a 'bow-drill' in the simile at *Cyclops* 460–63 when the hero likens his imminent blinding of Polyphemos with a burning stake to using a strap-drill to bore through planks of wood. Euripides says nothing about a bow-drill and explicitly mentions a man driving the 'borer' (τρύπανον) with 'two leather thongs' (*Cyclops* 461: διπλοῖν χαλινοῖν). But Stieber claims that use of a strap-drill requires two or more men as in the Homeric simile (*Odyssey* 9.383–86); if she is right, then Euripides is clearly not interested in the precise activity of ship-building, since he presents a two-man instrument being used by just one man. The poet's more central concern is to align his Odysseus with his epic counterpart by evoking Homer's famous simile, even if he does so 'inaccurately'.

Despite these misgivings, Stieber's work has value for highlighting overlooked passages where Euripides' interest in manual craft might be dramatically significant. The first chapter seems to me the most successful on this level; some of her readings give us good cause to reconsider aspects of Euripides' imagery. But there also are problems

in method and analysis. Attempts to see Euripides as influenced by specific artworks are too speculative to be compelling. Often Euripides uses imprecise language, or dead metaphors, just as we do when speaking of the ‘mouth of a river’ or ‘eye of a needle’. Not every instance of an ‘artisanal’ term used by others will have the same significance when Euripides uses it. Again, the poet can be subject to many influences, notably Aeschylus, whose brilliant handling of imagery from the plastic arts likely shaped Euripides’ work much more than Stieber allows. It is true that Euripides’ focus on visual arts and manual crafts is a conspicuous feature of his poetry, but this won’t always be evident in the passages selected and analysed in this long and at times over-written book.

PATRICK O’SULLIVAN

University of Canterbury, New Zealand
patrick.osullivan@canterbury.ac.nz

ZUMBRUNNEN (J.) Aristophanic Comedy and the Challenge of Democratic Citizenship.

Rochester NY: University of Rochester Press, 2012. Pp. 165. £40. 9781580464178.

doi:10.1017/S0075426914001566

The political context of Aristophanic comedy has inspired important scholarship: for reasons of space it may suffice to mention D.M. MacDowell, *Aristophanes and Athens* (Oxford 1995), M. Heath, *Political Comedy in Aristophanes* (Göttingen 1987), G.W. Dobrov (ed.), *The City as Comedy* (North Carolina 1997), J.F. McGlew, *Citizens on Stage: Comedy and Political Culture in the Athenian Democracy* (Ann Arbor 2002). The present study innovates by applying the insights of political theory to offer an interdisciplinary interpretation of Aristophanic comedy.

In the introduction (1–20) Zumbrunnen sets the critical framework of his study which aims at investigating whether ancient Athenian democracy as reflected in Aristophanic comedy could be a meaningful resource for democratic theory. To this end Zumbrunnen revisits briefly the liberal (J. Rawls), deliberative (A. Gutmann and D. Thompson) and agonal (C. Mouffe) theories of democracy, pointing out the connections among them. At the same time, the author is reasonably cautious of turning to Athenian democracy, and to the work of a comic poet in particular, in order to draw conclusions about contemporary democracy. Accordingly, he aptly takes into consideration the

institutional differences between ancient and contemporary forms of democracy, the absence of anything comparable to contemporary pluralism in Classical Athens, as well as the Aristotelian notion of disposition (ἕξις) applied to democratic citizenship (4–12). Zumbrunnen then explores S. Wolin’s conception of ‘fugitive democracy’ focusing on the rebellious nature of Athenian democracy and J. Ober’s approach of democratic institutions as designed to foster citizens’ collective action. The author’s main argument permeating his survey is that the polarity of these two impulses may define democratic citizenship as a tension-filled practice posing a challenge to the ‘ordinary’ citizen (as opposed to the elite), which shapes the citizen’s disposition towards democratic participation.

In his interpretation of the *Lysistrata* and *Peace* in the first chapter (21–40) Zumbrunnen adopts Jacques Rancière’s understanding of art as an ‘emancipatory voyage’ (*The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation*, Palo Alto 1991), by introducing the stimulating idea of ‘comic voyaging’, in which the spectators are invited to engage and explore matters of their own civic identity. The conflicting impulses of democracy are represented in both plays through rebellious characters, on the one hand, and the necessity for collective action, on the other.

The second chapter (41–59) similarly tackles issues of identity by delving into the relation of ordinary citizens to cultural elites, as treated in the *Clouds*, *Thesmophoriazusae* and *Frogs*. I suggest that it may have been worth exploring the implications of the portrayal of women at the Thesmophoria as a metaphorical political entity comparable to the Athenian assembly (see *Thesmophoriazusae* 84, 335, 353, 1145) and, in turn, to the ordinary citizen. This female *dēmos* asserts its democratic identity by disparaging those Athenians wishing to make alliances with Persia in 411 BC and overthrow the democratic constitution (*Thesmophoriazusae* 335–39, 356–67).

In the third chapter (60–80) Zumbrunnen associates the anger of the ordinary citizen in the *Wasps* and *Birds* with the tension arising from the two democratic impulses. In his exploration of the relationship between rule and democracy, Zumbrunnen plausibly shares P. Markell’s understanding of *archē* as openness to the possibility of new beginnings reflected in the *Birds* (P. Markell, ‘The rule of the people: Arendt, archē