

George W.M. Harrison and Vayos Liapis, eds., *Performance in Greek and Roman Theatre*. Leiden: Brill, 2013. Pp. vii + 590. ISBN 978-90-04-24457-3 (hardback); ISBN 978-90-24545-7 (e-book). \$252.00

This collection of twenty-four articles about performance by leading scholars of the anglophone world offers much for scholars, practitioners and students to sink their teeth into. An interest in *opsis* broadly defined (as all non-verbal elements of performance) is a common thread of most of the contributions. Their heterogeneity makes it hard to make broad statements about the book as a whole; so instead I offer a brief summation of the main arguments of each piece *seriatim*, hoping that this will direct readers to articles of particular interest to them.

A lengthy introduction by Vayos Liapis, Costas Panayotakis, and George Harrison offers a valuable and judicious overview of scholarship on performative aspects of Greek and Roman theatre, as well as a précis of the twenty-four contributions to the volume, though the absence of non-English scholarship from their literature review is lamentable.

G.M. Sifakis defends Aristotle against charges that he failed to appreciate the importance of *opsis* and that his pronouncements about it are inconsistent. While recognizing that tragedy is intended for performance (and hence including *opsis* in his list of its constitutive parts), Aristotle's focus in this work remains on the art of poetry, not on the art of stage production (*didaskalia*); a similarly narrow focus on composition rather than performance can be seen in his *Rhetoric*. Sifakis' most penetrating contribution is his analysis of what is meant by the adjective *atechnos* in the two works.

David Konstan shows a similar interest in rescuing Aristotle from misinterpretation. Far from showing contempt towards *opsis*, here defined as visual effects, Aristotle sees these effects as properly employed in support of a *muthos* that itself produces emotions suitable to tragedy. Thus Aristotle is railing against tragic poets who rely on shock visual effects (esp. masks) to produce horror (*to teratōdes*) rather than pity and fear, which should be elicited by the tragic plot in its full course. Horror in response to gory visual effects is an instinctive reaction rather than a fully-fledged emotion with moral valence. The paper concludes with four case studies that demonstrate that the tragedians did in fact harness visual effects to communicate meaning in the way Aristotle approved.

Martin Revermann looks at stage properties as carriers of meaning. Props are immensely communicable, though their dense nexus of meanings does not always make them easy to analyze; furthermore, their meanings are culturally dependent and can produce discrepant decoding. Their cultural associations mean that they often bring a history to the play. Their continued presence on stage often gives them longevity beyond that of words and gestures, and their meaning evolves over the course of the play. Props in Greek tragedy do not seem as abstract and polyfunctional as those in Noh theatre, but they are not naturalistic either. They inhabit the visual, performative and textual spaces of drama, which intersect in interesting ways. Some props exist only in the narrative; these enlist the spectator's power of imagination and may be all the more real for not being physically present.

Rob Tordoff offers a quantitative analysis of props in Greek tragedy and comedy. This is preceded by a thought-provoking discussion of what constitutes a prop. Noting that scholarly attention has fallen on those props with strong connotative functions (symbolic props) rather than on more mundane objects, he questions whether any prop is exclusively denotative. If Tordoff's criteria for inclusion in his count may seem somewhat idiosyncratic, his discussion of the larger issue is salutary. His case analysis of actors' props in Euripides' *Alc.* demonstrates that props do not always feature in the text of the play. Tordoff then identifies which are the most common types of props in the plays of Euripides, Aristophanes, and Menander. He notes that the number of props in Aristophanes' plays declines significantly over his career (as Mary English demonstrated), and the range of objects narrows. The number of props found in Menander's plays suggests an incidence closer to the early plays of Aristophanes.

Jocelyn Penny Small provides a survey of theatrical scene painting, which begins with references to *skēnographia* in ancient sources. She cautiously considers the evidence for scene-painting on Greek and Roman theatres and the positioning of *pinakes* and *periakti*. She then examines the term *skēnographia* at Vitruvius 1.2.2 in the light of discussions attributed to Proclus and Geminus, concluding that it refers to a technique to render buildings in oblique views, and does *not* mean linear perspective, which Small argues was not known in the ancient world. Ancient art (wall paintings, vase paintings) focuses on individual objects rather than on a unitary composition, and typically renders an object with its "canonical view"—that is, the view from which its features are best appreciated.

A.J. Podlecki examines Aeschylus' reputation for striking visual effects in the light of his plays. The use of supernumeraries, masks and costumes, silences, and possibly monsters and ghosts is considered. Each of the extant plays is examined for its visual effects. This lays the groundwork for exploration of *opsis* in his lost plays: Hera's appearance as a mendicant priestess (in *Semele* or *Water-carriers*) is as arresting as that of Darius in rags in *Persians*; the presentation of horrors (Podlecki favors the restoration of *teratōdes* at Arist. *Poet.* 1456a2) seems to have been a staple of Aeschylean dramaturgy.

Geoffrey Bakewell's highly readable article highlights the importance of Athena's ballot (*psēphos*) in Aeschylus' *Eumenides* as a stage prop as significant as Clytemnestra's textiles in *Agamemnon*. The deictic *tēnd'* (735) indicates its function as a paradigmatic example of a new form of justice. Justice now comes not from within the house, but from a new, democratic direction. The urn (*teuchos*), in *Ag.* and *Choe.* a symbol of death, now preserves life.

In a wide-ranging discussion, Peter Meineck considers how its physical performance environment may have contributed to a play's meaning. He explores collective movement in a variety of contexts, especially *theoriai* ("spectacle festivals"), then highlights theoric elements within plays and the centrality of procession in the City Dionysia. Peripheral viewing was as much a part of the experience of the audience member as watching the stage action. Topographical landmarks, other spectators, and actors' masks all contributed to the "scopic regime" of the plays.

Meineck considers how the *Perserschutt* may have functioned as a visual memorial to the destruction of Athens, and how the newly constructed colossal Phidian statue of Athena may have served to connect *Eumenides* to an Athenian context in which the city was beginning a new chapter of rebuilding. Athena's description in the play, he argues, evokes the new Phidian *agalma* of Athena Promachos rather than the old wooden *bretas* of Athena Polias.

Rosie Wyles argues that the prominence given to Heracles' costume in the original performance of Euripides' *Heracles* marks a key moment in theatre history. The costume is now iconic not only of the play itself but also of a new dimension of theatrical self-reflection. Heracles divests himself of his costume and veils himself when he discovers that he has killed his wife and children, then later comes back to life and into his identity by unveiling himself and taking up his weapons. The play's close connection between costume and stage-characterization is adopted by Aristophanes in his *Frogs*. Interest in the symbolic function of Heracles' costume is also evident in South Italian vase-paintings as well as Roman contexts. Wyles notes that the symbolism extends beyond theatre *per se*, and into self-representation by figures such as Alexander the Great, Gaius and Commodus who are represented as appropriating Heracles' ambiguous ontological status between man and god.

Judith Fletcher examines in detail two stage props, Philoctetes' bow in Sophocles' *Philoctetes* and Ajax's sword in his *Ajax*, that serve as symbolic generators of meaning connecting the weapons' present owners to Heracles and Hector respectively, who gifted these objects and whose connection to these dangerous gifts haunts the play. Thus these weapons bring with them a history that breaks into the dramatic present; the weapons' latent potential to destroy is activated in the play; they function as "lively props" whose meaning is contested rather than as stable signifiers.

Robert Ketterer's article investigates the main physical properties in Euripides' *Iphigenia among the Taurians*: Artemis' sanctuary, the altar in front of it (a pendant for the unseen interior altar), and Artemis' statue. He explores how their meanings are modified over the course of the play. The gruesome altar serves as the focalizer of Iphigenia's misinterpretation of her dream and the potentially deadly consequences for Orestes; it also connects the present barbarism of the Taurians with the past violence of the Tantalids. A key interpretive element of the imaginative setting is the Black Sea. Ketterer notes how it functions both as a dangerous and disorienting element of the play and as a symbol of the emergence of creative order from chaos. Poseidon's opposing wave and Athena's intervention both make sense within the play, and Iphigenia's invented ritual draws on historical Athenian rituals, further underscoring the play's connections with Aeschylus' *Oresteia*.

Vayos Liapis adduces a string of staging and plot elements in *Rhesus* that exemplify, he argues, a playwright with a penchant for deliberate archaisms and visual extravagance. The play makes no use of the *skene*, with all entrances and exits occurring via the *eisodoi*. The night-time setting, the fast-paced movement, and the empty stage, the large number of characters, Athena's appearance in the guise of Aphrodite, and the presence of a fourth actor in the Alexander scene, are all striking elements that Liapis characterizes as indicative of a sensationalist 4th century

aesthetic. Liapis also asserts a couple of other positions on the play's staging: Athena appears on ground level, not *ex machina*; Dolon is present from the start of the play.

C.W. Marshall argues for the implementation of the rule of three actors in Old Comedy (he excludes from consideration *Clouds*, *Frogs*, and *Lysistrata* as plays whose received texts were re-written after first performance). Using *Birds* as a case study, he posits that dividing the roles between three speaking actors makes for cleaner and simpler movement backstage, and offers "interpretative benefits" that help elucidate the organizational principles of the play.

Jeffrey Rusten revisits a fragment of Cratinus (*PCG* Cratinus Fr. 73) preserved in Plutarch's *Life of Pericles* (13.9–10), which has usually been taken to imply that Pericles appears on stage. Drawing on evidence from vase painting in which the comic Zeus is usually shown wearing a *polos*, he interprets the lines instead as a parody of Zeus that facetiously references Periclean traits, an approach typical of Cratinus' politically charged mythological subject matter.

Graham Ley asks questions about the rehearsal process for Greek drama, and considers whether scripts were used by actors, and whether slave workshops could have produced multiple copies. Ley suggests that the scope for the use of actors' parts (their lines and cues) and for actors to have rehearsed separately from the chorus was rather limited, especially in comparison to Renaissance theatre in England.

Robert Cowan's article attempts the tricky task of exploring Republican tragedy's relation to antecedents (both Greek and Roman) in terms of visual intertextuality. Cowan begins by drawing on the more explicit visual references in Aristophanic comedy to tragic tableaux and then considers mirror scenes within Greek tragedy and visual allusion between Greek tragedies. He then argues that Republican tragedy's tendency to create "sequels" to predecessors might have made powerful use of visual images to encode them as both different and more of the same.

George Fredric Franko offers a reassessment of the victory games put on by L. Anicius Gallus; the general's orders to the *auletai* to lead a mock battle should be judged by the standards of Roman rather than Greek aesthetics, and understood as an attempt to distance his games from those of Aemilius Paullus by offering a farcical, even apotropaic, 'barbarized' mixing of performance genres and conventions, with jocular elements that may point to a performance coinciding with the Feast of Fools (*stultorum feriae*). In a fascinating and wide-ranging discussion, Franko points out similar tendencies in other Roman spectacles of the period, including the plays of Plautus, and argues that the Roman audience appreciated incongruity and enjoyed a sense of superiority over Greece.

In a highly readable article accompanied by 30 illustrations, Richard Beacham discusses the houses of the Pompeian elite as a locus for theatricalism. Their architecture, décor, and furnishings provided a *mise-en-scène* for constructed identities that signaled social status, and created a fictionalizing space. Beacham explores in detail the parallels in how guests and audiences may have experienced constitutive parts of house and theatre respectively, read their peculiar combination of external and internal, public and private, and real and fictional elements, and interacted with the patron in a performance stage-managed by the latter.

Dorota Dutsch examines the comments of Quintilian and Cicero to articulate a Roman theory of theatrical gesture. She demonstrates that theatrical gestures, like their oratorical counterparts, fall within the categories of deictic, nominal, and performative. Unlike rhetorical gestures, however, they are characterized as mimetic, illustrating the words of the script, in contrast to rhetorical gestures that are seen as naturally embodying the speaker's thoughts. Such distinctions reflect conceptions of the orator as a true man of action in contrast to the mere actor and his studied representation of action. Evidence from illustrated manuscripts of Terence and Donatus' commentary offers confirmation that theatrical gesture did indeed depend heavily on the script.

A.K. Petrides assesses comments about the pantomime mask made by the character Lycinus in Lucian's *On Dance*. He argues that Lycinus' arguments in favor of the pantomime mask over the tragic mask articulate the former's superiority in the terms of Augustan classicism, in which organic unity, proportionality, decorum, and moral qualities are valorized. These terms also apply to the tragic mask of the fifth century, introducing an implied third comparandum beside which the postclassical tragic mask, with its perceived excess and lack of proportion, falls short. Lycinus' description of the masks is borne out by archaeological evidence, though similarities between the masks of classical tragedy and pantomime should be explained by the similar semiotic needs of the two genres rather than as direct influence.

Edith Hall provides a synoptic overview of the characteristics of pantomime and of the surviving evidence (literary, iconographic, epigraphic and papyrological). She describes the nature of the dance performance, and its instrumental and sung accompaniment, as well as its flexibility. The prominence of certain pantomime dancers is highlighted, as well as the genre's wide geographic diffusion, its appeal in a multilingual environment because of dance's ability to transcend language barriers, and its popularity across social classes. Its relation to other performance genres is investigated, as is its influence on modern theatrical dance traditions.

George Kovacs seeks to reconstruct the part played by stringed instruments (*lyrai*) in fifth century Greek theatre. Although not as ubiquitous in theatrical performances as the *aulos*, tortoise shell *lyrai* (esp. the *chelys lyra*, but in comedy also the *barbitos*, associated with revelry) appear as stage props. Kovacs posits that an actor was unlikely to have actually played the *lyra* he held given the challenges of playing in a mask, but that the musical accompaniment would have been provided by a professional musician, probably playing a *kithara* (or box *lyra*), a louder concert instrument. He interprets Ar. *Frogs* 1283–95 as including onomatopoeic representations of the picking or strumming of the *lyra*, proposes that the papyrus fragments of Soph. *Ichneutai* preserve notation indicating the volume at which the *lyra* is to be strummed, and interprets the representation of a bearded kitharist on a red-figure amphora in the Hermitage Museum as the conflation of the tragic character Thamyras from Sophocles' lost play and the musician (Sophocles himself?) who accompanied the performance.

Gonda Van Steen examines the bold visual choices of director Matthias' Langhoff's version of Euripides' *Bacchae*, performed at Epidauros in 1997. His

production conjured the dreariness of small town life in Thiva, modern Thebes. The chorus was presented as humdrum housewives, and Mount Cithaeron commodified as a huge billboard. These directorial choices were seen as trivializing Greece's cultural heritage, and even as an imperialist attempt by a foreign director to appropriate it. So too the production's nudity and arresting *opsis*, with the motif of *sparagmos* represented by carcasses of meat hanging as in a butcher's shop, were rejected by audience members and critics alike as offending the sensibilities of an art-form seen as a Greek patrimony. Van Steen provides fascinating context that helps explain why Langhoff's production touched raw nerves.

Fiona Macintosh investigates the ways in which classical art forms influenced acting, focusing mainly on the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Sculpture was seen as the highest ancient art form, and tragic actors studied ancient sculpture to seek inspiration for theatrical poses. Virtuoso actors such as Jean Mounet-Sully and Sarah Bernhardt were artists and sculptors in their own right, and were praised for their "statuesque" performances. Macintosh explores earlier manifestations of this aesthetic, especially Emma Hamilton's "Attitudes." At the same time as vase paintings and friezes started to gain attention, the static sculptural paradigm of theatre was replaced by an interest in movement, as evidenced in the work of Isadora Duncan and of the Ballets Russes.

In conclusion, I hope the summary given above gives an indication of the range and substance of this volume, which contains many new insights and, in my estimation, deserves a place in every academic library despite its high price. Its primary readership will be scholars and graduate students, but there are a number of articles that could also usefully belong on undergraduate reading lists. In most cases, English translations are given for Greek and Latin quotations, and the high quality of editing is especially impressive for a volume of this size.

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