Col. 1.63: not 'propose that the man . . . declare war', for in Athens one man could not declare war, but 'urge the man . . . to propose war'. Col. 5.69: ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ δεινοτάτῳ is not 'in this most marvelous way', but 'at the very moment of greatest peril'. Col. 9.9–10: συντρίβεται is passive; not 'where does this thing rub?', but 'where is it destroyed?', 'where does our practice break down?' (J. H. Vince's translation of Dem. 10.44).

G.'s commentary concentrates mainly on expounding the general purpose of each of the notes by Didymus and the other ancient commentators, and less on explaining minor details. There is some uncertainty about the level of G.'s readership; for example, a reference to the scholia on Aeschines is followed by the elementary explanation in parenthesis 'Aeschines was an Athenian orator and contemporary of Demosthenes' (p. 102), and yet, when 'the boats at Hieron' are mentioned (pp. 124–5), the reader is assumed to know where Hieron was and why boats might be assembled there. His bibliographical references are not entirely up-to-date: he seems to be unaware that Edmonds is not the latest or best authority on the fragments of comedy (pp. 123–4), nor Haigh on the Athenian theatre (p. 149). Generally, however, he gives full references for different views of each problem; in some places I should have liked him to tell us more confidently which view he considers correct. Despite these cavils, I think G. has made a most important contribution to our understanding of Didymus and other ancient commentators.

University of Glasgow DOUGLAS M. MACDOWELL

THE *POETICS*

S. Benardete, M. Davis (trans.): *Aristotle on Poetics*. Pp. xxx + 105. South Bend, IN: St Augustine's Press, 2002. Paper, $10. ISBN: 1-58731-026-0.

The twentieth century produced a new English translation of the *Poetics* on average about every four years. The present volume is already the second (at least) of the new century. Benardete and Davis collaborated on the translation before B.'s death in late 2001; D. supplies the introduction; an appendix collects some germane passages from other Aristotelian writings.

The translation is inflexibly literalist, in order, we are told, to preserve 'interesting ambiguities' (p. viii) and despite D.'s odd claim that the work is 'a rather beautiful piece of literature in its own right' (p. vii). We thus get such things as 'putting together', sometimes hyphenated, for *sunthesis*/*sustasis* (producing clumsy wording at 53a30–l), or 'talk' for *lexis* (making the poet bizarrely work out his plots 'together with the talk' at 55a22, or generating 'figures of talk' at 56b9); 'poetics' is maladroitly stuck with for *poiêtikê*, yielding absurdity at e.g. 55a33 ('poetics belongs either to one with a good nature or to a madman'). What is the point of a literalism that renders ordinary Aristotelian phrasing as gauchely as 'Now, among the arts I say [*legô*] the differences in what they make the imitation are these' (47b28–9, with a characteristically pointless Greek insertion)? The answer is not just a fallacious conception of translation, though that rears its head; it is also an attempt to cloak the work in an enigmatic shroud that comports with the hermeticist interpretation of it espoused by D. (and B.).

Alarm bells ring with the very first footnote (p. vii): 'in dealing with what cannot be otherwise, tragedy reflects the necessity of the impossible . . .'. The warning seems stark: abandon all hope of consistent sense, you who enter! After the flickerings of a

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coherent thought or two, but also some historical errors (D. thinks Greek tragedy and Athenian democracy lasted less than a century, p. xii), the introduction wilfully manipulates the *Poetics* beyond recognition. All human action supposedly 'imitates' other action, an idea for which no shred of Aristotelian evidence is adduced. Tragedy thematizes human action in its reflective aspect—fair enough, perhaps, though not an emphasis easily pinned down in the *Poetics.* But then we learn that because true reflection is essentially 'invisible' and unshowable, while *lusis* in *Poetics* 18 means, 'in its deepest sense', interpretation/analysis (pp. xxvii–viii), Aristotle is telling us that tragedy dramatizes the meaningfulness of life while making it clear that what matters most cannot be said. To conclude, D. preposterously claims that the *Poetics* itself 'imitates' tragedy: thus the position of Chapter 12 in the work is modelled on a tragic stasimon (pp. xxix–xxx)!

D.'s arguments are conducted mystagogically: arbitrary premises are confidently conjured out of nowhere, then treated as unquestionable ('recognition will always in some sense be false recognition', p. xxv, later 'the recognition of tragedy is always spurious recognition', p. xxix); Delphic pronouncements are gravely issued ('the action which poetizes the world cannot be shown in poetry', p. xxvii). The impression is created that the author knows something the rest of us do not, which we must take on trust from his unutterable insight.

In addition to its befogging literalism, the translation contains numerous errors, among them: 48a22, two clauses run into one, garbling the sense; 48b18, the logic of a contrastive statement jumbled; 49a2, *paraphaneisês* misconstrued as '[appear] side by side' (and the syntax of the same sentence of the translation is very misleading); 49a20,49b2, *opse* misunderstood as 'just lately' (referring to events at least a century and a half before the *Poetics*!); 49a26, Aristotle does not claim 'we speak mostly iambs'; 49a38, a masculine relative pronoun mistaken as neuter; 51b9–10, 'what poetry aims at in attaching names' spoils Aristotle's logic (and the whole important sentence is badly rendered); 51b24, the relative pronoun refers to plots not characters; 52a4, Aristotle's paradox missed; 52a9–10, 53a4–5, 54b28–9, syntax mangled; 59b36, epic does not exceed other genres 'in oddness' (=*perittê*!); 60b10–11, three neuter plural subjects translated as singular (presumably because of their verbs). D.'s defective knowledge of Greek is betrayed by his assertion (p. xx) that at 52a25–6 there is possible ambiguity about the subject of the verb *epoiêsen*.

This book is not safe to be put in the hands of unguarded readers. It places faulty scholarship at the service of a cryptic ideology.

University of St Andrews STEPHEN HALLIWELL

ARISTOTLE ON BODIES AND MOTION

A. FALCON: *Corpi e movimenti. Il* De caelo *di Aristotele e la sua fortuna nel mondo antico*. Pp. 275. Naples: Bibliopolis, 2001. Paper, €30.99. ISBN: 88-7088-383-3.

The purpose of this book is to provide us with a study of different kinds of bodies and, in particular, simple bodies and Aristotle's theory of their movement. The book is divided into four chapters. The first chapter is devoted to bodies in general, both in Aristotle and in the Hellenistic tradition. The second chapter covers the Aristotelian doctrine of simple bodies and his arguments in favour of the existence of a simple celestial body. The topic of the third chapter is the ancient polemic against Aristotle,

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