ἀνεψιός from Slater and LSJ, but not the similarly oblique ἀνεψιὸς | Αἰόλου Ἰπ[π]οτάδα at Stes. *PMGF* i App. fr. 62.4f. (compared by Lloyd-Jones, *ZPE* 87 [1991], 299); he appears not to know Christ's explanation of the reference to Helenus (favoured by Lloyd-Jones), and proposes instead an absurd one of his own (p. 230).

Large-scale repetition is common. The 'interpretations' consist in large part of passages lifted verbatim from the commentaries. Often a passage will be used three times (e.g. the references at p. 62 n. 3 = 111 n. 32 = 112 n. 36). Statements about other odes of Pindar and Bacchylides are unreliable (e.g. *O*. 8.56–9 [p. 216 n. 39: Melesias' victories, not his pupils'], *P*. 10.66 [p. 491], *N*. 4.23 [p. 111], *I*. 7.31 [p. 168], B. 5.69f. [p. 363]).

The book has not been read through before publication. Spelling mistakes and other errors in the English are legion (e.g. 'the these' [p. 215]; 'in line opening lines' [p. 223 = 419]; 'devided into two cathegories' [p. 193]), and Greek quotations are regularly corrupt, often unintelligible (e.g. sch. *N*. 5.78c [p. 605], sch. *P*. 8.53a [p. 522], *O*. 10.80–3 [p. 173], Hdt. 1.14.4–15 [p. 122]); even lemmata are not exempt (e.g. *N*. 3.84, *P*. 8.6f., 29). It is astonishing that such a shoddy piece of work should have been accepted for publication.

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FIFTH-CENTURY *PERSIANS*

T. HARRISON: *The Emptiness of Asia. Aeschylus'* Persians *and the History of the Fifth Century.* Pp. 191. London: Duckworth, 2000. Cased, £40. ISBN: 0-7156-2968-9.

Aeschylus' *Persae* has been ill-served by modern critics. Many scholars have found it easy to dismiss it as static and undramatic. Its evident patriotism causes embarrassment (which is not diminished by over-exaggerated modern productions like that of Peter Sellars). Although the *Persae* has repeatedly been seen as a test-case for the political impact of fifth-century tragedy, critical judgements of Aeschylus' political writing have all too often lacked sophistication. Yet its representation of war, of the 'otherness' of the Persian East, of the significance of an epoch-making victory, should make the *Persae* central to our understanding of the development of Athenian democratic language.

Harrison's first and very short book—barely 100 pages of text, swelled by another eight-five pages of notes and bibliography—approaches Aeschylus' work very much through this critical tradition. There are three sections. The first, 'Framing the Play', looks extensively at how twentieth-century critics have treated the play's historical importance, its political implications, and its contribution to Athenian ideological formation. The third section, 'Conclusion', moves from specific conclusions about the *Persae* towards a more general contention about how the texts of tragedy can be understood as politicized documents. Both sections line up critic after critic for genial, swift, knowing put-downs (which never transgress the games of politeness, however). In contrast, the middle section, 'Finding Athens', sets out to analyse the stichomythia of Queen and Chorus (230–45) to demonstrate how Aeschylus' patriotism can be subtle, ideologically fascinating, and even exploratory. This reading draws closely on the work of Edith Hall and others, but makes its own nuanced restatements within the context of his general approach to the problem of 'tragic sympathy' and to the normative force of tragic theatre. H. (regrettably, to my mind) does not offer extensive

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commentary on the battle-narratives, choral odes, or mourning scenes: this is not a reading of the play so much as a more essayistic account of the work as a cultural document, focused on its critical readings and on one exemplary scene.

The interface between 'tragedy as politics' and 'tragedy as theatre of the other' is as hot a topic as there is in contemporary debate, and in general H.'s sense of the field is accurate, informed, and well-placed. He makes shrewd and intelligent points on each of the issues he broaches, and his conjunction of Herodotus and Aeschylus is especially illuminating. He uses the playwright and the historian together not to hunt down nuggets of military historical fact, but to reveal shared assumptions and commonplaces about Persia, to show how the drama informs and is informed by fifth-century ideological formations. This is certainly a necessary element of any adequate discussion of the drama's political import, and H. indicates well how critics have downplayed this ideological structuring, and consequently distorted the working of the play. His book will make an excellent volume for undergraduate libraries, and with Hall's edition, may help the *Persae* to a more regular place in the curriculum.

H. writes very well and the book is a pleasure to read—but its elegance conceals at least three interrelated problems which would have benefited from more expansive discussion. First, although this is a book in part at least about the history of interpretation, the treatment of older writers is very thin. For example, Gilbert Murray's views on the *Persae* as 'war play' would be illumined by a recognition of Murray's own fierce political commitments to pacifism. Critical judgements have their intellectual and socio-political groundings, and to ignore such history eviscerates the understanding of past views. (Where war, patriotism, and foreignness are at stake, such contextualization is more than usually relevant and fascinating.) Second, while H. is quick to see modern views of tragedy as motivated by liberalism (say), he absents himself from any such political placement. If, as he maintains, critics have read the *Persae* from their own political standpoint, how can he not include himself in such a critique? The implications of his conclusion for any critic, including himself, are left unexplored.

Third, and perhaps most importantly, his account of tragic sympathy, central to his argument, seems to me to be under-developed. H. argues that it would be misplaced to see sympathy for the Persians as a major factor in the play's effect, and is rather too hasty to declare such a reading as stemming from a sentimental modern liberalism. But not only does 'sympathy' form a fundamental concern in both Plato's and Aristotle's conceptualization of tragedy, but also other tragedies—*Medea*, *Philoctetes*, *Trojan Women*—thematize sympathy as a problem. There is also the Homeric background—sympathy for the Eastern Hector, Andromache, Astyanax, Priam—which surpringly plays almost no rôle in H.'s discussion. H. thinks that contemporary critics' willingness to find multiple, conflicting emotional responses to the *Persae* stems from wishy-washy modernism. Yet the question of how to relate critically the power of an audience's collectivity to the conflict of differing responses within an audience is central to dramatic criticism, and needs much more care than H. (along with so many other critics) gives it.

A stimulating book, then, if restricted in scope. Duckworth's should be ashamed at charging £40 for so slim a volume, especially when in my copy at least the pages have already started dropping out.

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