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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).

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For the past fifty years scholars have striven to reintegrate the notion of performance, the physical and visual mediums into our reading of classical plays. While this may seem an overly simplistic effort, it is not to be taken lightly as this publication attests. The collective efforts herein demonstrate great enthusiasm for the field. Each of the twenty-four authors tackles significant subjects under five separate headings. Due to space restrictions, this review will present a brief summary of each section of the publication to provide a general understanding of the variety provided.

The introduction by Vayos Liapis, Costas Panayotakis and George W.M. Harrison provides an invaluable overview of scholarship on the subject of performance in Greek and Roman theatre, as well as a summary of the articles in the volume. It also describes the major topics of both Greek and Roman theatre, including practical, material and cultural considerations when approaching the subject. It is highly accessible to the reader, providing the foundation by which the other articles may be understood in their wider academic context. To the reviewer’s mind this is the most useful section of the whole publication to the more general reader since the individual articles cannot be applied so widely.

The first selection of articles comes under the heading of ‘Opsis, Props, Scene’. It focuses on the wider theme of performance in the ancient Greek context. G.M. Sifakis defends Aristotle’s tackling of *opsis* in the *Poetics* in ‘The Misunderstanding of *Opsis* in Aristotle’s *Poetics’.* He argues that Aristotle fully acknowledged the crucial aspect of performance as ‘the essential actuation of dramatic poetry’. However, Aristotle chose to focus more upon the art of poetry in its dramatic form and the principles surrounding plot construction, rather than the technicalities of theatre production. With in-depth analysis of particular vocabulary employed by Aristotle in his works, Sifakis provides a useful contextual understanding of the principles separating theory from practicality, thus arguing that *opsis* was not a theoretical principle, but a *techne,* or

craft. Next in the section is Konstan's analysis of Aristotle's views on the use of the term *opsis,* which the reviewer finds more precise and conclusive in its debate. He argues that Aristotle's criticism is not of visual effects, but rather the misuse of props. These include masks so melodramatic that they inspire horror instead of fear, which Aristotle deems improper in tragedy. *Opsis* is therefore a successful tool if incorporated into the larger symbolism in the performance. Konstan then goes on to examine the correct use of props, with examples from Sophocles' and Euripides' works.

The next article, by Martin Revermann, examines stage properties and props as a means of providing insight into the way these objects provide a sense continuity and durability to the performance. These moveable objects are able to physically and conceptually indicate the genre of tragedy as well as carrying greater symbolic resonance. However, this leaves them open to many levels of interpretation depending on the audience and the actors, not to mention academics. Furthermore, the props may be decoded in many ways depending on the cultural dependency of the object, thus making analysis increasingly subjective. They do, however, have greater permanence than the words or gestures of the actors, so their meaning also has the chance to grow and change over the course of the play. Therefore, the author's comparison with Japanese Noh and Western naturalist theatrical traditions brings Greek tragic props into a wider theatrical context.

Rob Tordoff's impressively thorough article catalogues the props required for the performance of Greek drama. Through a quantitative analysis of the props' descriptions, Tordoff tackles various issues surrounding props; such as defining 'stage property' and the function of props from a symbolic or philosophical point of view. He also develops models for determining how often props were used - including 'scenery items' and costume in his analysis. Finally Penny Small provides a survey of the various uses of *skenographia*, from Aristotle's description in *Poetics* of a possible painted stage-set, to Vitruvius's technical architectural drawing. Considering the fact that no absolute definition of *skenographia* survives from the ancient world, Small's analysis of various theories provides a very useful contemporary review of material and written evidence that was long overdue.

The next section addresses *opsis* in tragedy. Anthony Podlecki uses Aeschylus' reputation for stunning visual effects as his basis for a comprehensive exploration of the playwright's use of silences, the number of actors, masks, costumes and choreography, as well as the shock factor of monsters and ghosts on stage. This interpretation of certain passages, though the reviewer finds it too literal at times, provides the foundation for a hypothetical look at props in Aeschylus' lost plays.

Peter Meineck investigates visual topography in the Theatre of Dionysus, particularly the effect of the sights beyond the open-air space. Meineck argues that Athenian theatre relied on 'extra-visual references' beyond the immediate theatre space, and anchored the plot-lines within the contextual environment and culture. Scenes of ritual beyond the theatre include the colossal statue of Athena on the acropolis, which may have served as a visual and symbolic aid to Aeschylus' *Eumenides'* theme of socio-political change and the start of a new era. The reviewer particularly liked this article, since it suggests endemic ritual and symbolism throughout the city of Athens during this time.

Geoffrey Bakewell, Rosie Wyles, Judith Fletcher and Robert Ketterer examine specific and thematically central props in different plays. Bakewell's article focusses on the voting scene in Aeschylus' *Eumenides,* a pivotal moment in the *Oresteia* that demonstrates justice coming from a democracy rather than the royal dynasty. The prop that is central to the scene is the ballot, and it becomes the focus of these new themes that extend beyond the narrative of the play and into contextual Athenian culture. This study offers a weighty contribution to the discussion of the Athenian approach to justice.

Wyles' examination of Heracles' costume in Euripides' eponymous play reveals that the visual symbols transcended the theatrical tradition and became distinct and quantifiable in later literature and iconography. The study also reflects contextual attitudes towards theatre as a performance art. Fletcher chooses to use Philoctetes' bow and Ajax's sword in Sophocles' *Philoctetes* and *Ajax* as the focus for her argument that weapons can symbolise not only war, but also friendship and isolation. The weapons in these cases reflect the aristocratic tradition of exchange and consolidation, serving to separate the hero from society. This theme surrounding the specific props also extends to the ghosts of Heracles and Hector whose haunting presence in the

respective plot-lines add an extra dimension of meaning to the weapons. The focus and detail of this article is its main strength, as well as the props' links to wider aspects of Greek culture.

Ketterer's analysis of the *skene,* altar and statue of Artemis in Euripides' *Iphigenia among the Taurians* demonstrates the ways in which the props' meanings change over the course of the play. These were all indicative of human sacrifice, and serve as a focus for the atmosphere of inevitable violence as well as potential absolution for Orestes, as Iphigenia performs an improvised ritual of purification for the Greeks which draws on historical thenian ritualistic practise - thus creating strong thematic ties to Aeschylus' earlier *Oresteia.* This is a useful study, since it suggests a dialogue between playwrights, with Euripides' play being the response to Aeschylus' trilogy.

Finally, Vayos Liapis concludes the section by analysing *Rhesus'* unusual issues with staging, arising from seemingly chaotic choices in plot-construction and dramatic construction. The deliberate anarchism and visual extravagance of the play take precedent over coherence. This is fortunate for scholars in that it provides a wealth of information about fourth-century theatre with many interesting spectacles to be analysed. One example of this is the night-time setting of the plot - something hard to achieve during a daytime open-air performance. The deliberate revival of older theatrical traditions such as the empty *skene* in favour of a packed *orkhestra* is a reference to Aeschylus, as is the position of certain characters, such as Athena's appearance on ground level and Hector's fixed position in relation to several messengers. It is a convincing argument, which has prompted the reviewer to re-examine *Rhesus* with renewed interest.

The next three papers come under the heading of 'Greek Comedy' and concern themselves with Old Comedy, yet still cover a wide range of topics. C.W. Marshall examines the effect of using three actors in a comedic play. Using *Birds* as a case study, he argues that the use of three actors allows for a better understanding of the plot-line by the audience, as well as making backstage transitions easier to perform. Similarly, Graham Ley's examination of rehearsals for Greek drama considers the logistics of script distribution and the possibility of multiple copies of the play. The practicalities of combining actors' cues and dialogue with the chorus leave little time

for separate rehearsals, thus indicating the significance of theatrical properties other than the development of the script.

Jeffrey Rusten's analysis of a fragment of Cratinus' *Thracian Women* (*PCG* fr. 73) argues that Pericles may not have appeared onstage, but rather the familiar parody of Zeus could have doubled as a political satire of Pericles: "Here comes Zeus the onion-headed, / Pericles, with the Odeion on top of his head". This line is supported by evidence found on a vase painting which depicts the comic Zeus wearing a *polos,* thus leading to the assumption by the audience that it is a direct mockery of Pericles. The subject matter is amusing and the author's analysis augments that impression.

The next section, on Roman drama, opens with Robert Cowan's examination of theoretical and methodological problems surrounding visual intertextuality between Republican tragedy and its antecedents, both Greek and Roman. While inescapably theoretical, Cowan makes a useful and realistic argument that the visual allusions conveyed in Republican drama allowed for an intellectually satisfying connection to earlier plays, with verbal descriptions recalling stage action or imagery.

George Fredric Franko reassesses the victory celebrations held in 167 BCE by the general L. Anicius Gallus. The general constructed a large stage in the Circus Maximus and, after dismissing famous Greek musicians, dancers and actors from it, he staged a mock battle that deeply embarrassed Polybius - an eyewitness to the spectacle. The spectators were delighted by the sarcastic manipulation of Greek models of performance. Franko argues that this generated a sense of superiority over Greece and was in keeping with similar spectacles such as Plautus' comedies, thus illustrating the different expectations of Greek and Roman audiences. This in itself could be worth discussing in a separate article.

Richard Beacham's illustrated article examines the theatricality and theatricalism of Roman houses in Pompeii. The strategic architecture, décor and placement of furnishings provide a *mise-en-scène* for the identity of the owners. These homes also demonstrate the crucial relationship between public and private life, which co-exist in these carefully 'staged' buildings. The photographs and virtual reconstructions provided by Beacham are exceptionally helpful in understanding the arguments presented.

Dorota Dutsch investigates physical gestures that are shared by both oratory and theatre. Using the views of Quintilian and Cicero, Dutsch organises the gestures into two categories and then examines the gestures appropriate for an orator or an actor, concluding that an orator's gestures ought to be spontaneous, while an actor's gestures relied upon the script and therefore could not be impulsive, but instead imitated natural human gesture. This distinction brings forth interesting ideas on how body language was perceived and interpreted in ancient Rome, depending on context and cultural expectations.

A.K. Petrides and Edith Hall focus on Roman pantomime, the former undertaking a study of Lycinus in Lucian's dialogue *On Dance*. Petrides argues that Lucian sought to elevate the pantomime mask over the postclassical tragic mask, which was in decline during this period. The large, exaggerated proportions of the tragic mask developed during Augustan classicism are argued to be overwhelming compared to the more flexible and expressionless pantomime mask, which can be used to express a range of emotions. The description of the masks is supported by archaeological findings; moreover the traditions of both tragedy and pantomime would explain the evolution of the masks in question.

Edith Hall provides a brief history and describes the characteristics of pantomime performance. With its origins in Greek tragedy, in as much as it took its narratives from the tragic repertoire, pantomime in turn influenced other types of cultural discourse, including rhetoric and the decorative arts. In the course of the article, Hall combines literary, iconographic and epigraphic source material to reconstruct the cultural environment of pantomime in its wider context. The engaging tone and exceptional use of source material makes this a highly accessible and very useful article.

The final section is titled '*Integrating Opsis'* and contains the most diverse group of papers. George Kovacs analyses the cultural complexities of the stringed instruments *lyra* and *aulos* in classical Athens. The *aulos* was the preferred instrument, with their greater volume of sound and close connection to Dionysus. The *lyrai* also appeared as stage props, although were impractical to display on stage, and were used for thematic emphasis where relevant in the play. Kovacs argues that the actors would not be expected to play either instrument, but rather a professional musician would accompany the performance using a concert *kithara,* or 'box' *lyra*.

Gonda Van Steen and Fiona Macintosh's chapters deal with the visual aspects of modern receptions of Greek drama. Van Steen deals with one specific production, Matthias Langhoff's *Sparagmos* of Euripides' *Bacchae* (1997). The production outraged Greek audiences and critics alike. The nudity, mangled Greek dialogue, *sparagmos* (the act of rending or tearing associated with Dionysian rites) symbolised by gory carcasses of meat, and a dreary, claustrophobic setting were seen as a trivialisation of Greece's cultural heritage. Van Steen sees the production as a case-study for the modernisation and reinterpretation of *opsis.* The tension between Greek self-perception and the values of a foreign theatrical tradition goes some way to explaining why the production hit so many raw nerves. This article raised many questions about artistic vision versus cultural sensitivity.

The final article in this book is Fiona Macintosh's study of a late nineteenth and early twentieth-century approach to acting based on classical art forms, particularly classical sculptures and vase-paintings. The performers and sculptors Jean Mounet-Sully and Sarah Bernhardt would "self-sculpt" during their performances, creating a widely praised aesthetic. It even spread beyond the static and was adopted by both Isadora Duncan and the Ballet Russes. This fascinating creative effort fulfilled two ideals in the traditional European theatre: that of classical references and sculptural poses, as influenced by Winkelmann and by Schlegel's assertion that sculpture was the supreme art form, as well as the predominance of the proscenium arch theatre. This examination of the reception of the classical world reminds us of the more subtle, even subconscious, expectations we may hold towards visual art forms.

In conclusion, this is a well edited and highly useful publication, which could be used by scholars and graduate students as well as enterprising undergraduates seeking specialised articles to support wider topics.