

poet for those who already have some deep knowledge and appreciation of that impressive Theban poet.

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John Herington, *Aeschylus*. Hermes Books. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986. Pp. ix+191. Cloth \$ 25.00. Paper \$ 7.95.

James C. Hogan. *A Commentary on the Complete Greek Tragedies: Aeschylus*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1984. Pp. ix+332. Cloth. \$ 23.00. Paper \$ 6.95.

Both books reviewed here are described as commentaries but they are radically different kinds of commentaries. John Herington's book is a literature introduction to the study of Aeschylus presented in a very literary way; James Hogan's book is a line-by-line commentary on the University of Chicago translations of Aeschylus in the *Complete Greek Tragedies* series. Both books are aimed at the interested general student of Greek drama who is most likely to confront Aeschylus primarily, if not exclusively, in English translation.

John Herington of Yale University is general editor of the Hermes Books series, which is intended to communicate to the non-specialist the beauty and the relevance of Greek and Latin literary masterpieces. Two other volumes have already appeared in this series: *Homer*, by Paolo Vivante, and *Pindar*, by D. S. Carne-Ross, both in 1985. In the words of the editor, who is also the author of *Aeschylus*, «The first, middle, and last goal of the Hermes series is to guide the general reader to a dialogue with classical masters rather than to acquaint him or her with the present state of scholarly research. Thus our volumes contain few or no footnotes; even within the texts, references to secondary literature are kept to a minimum. At the end of each volume, however, is a short bibliography that includes recommended English translations, and selected literary criticism, as well as historical and (when appropriate) biographical studies» (p. viii).

Professor Herington has adhered well to his own guidelines. The two main parts of his book are devoted to the «Background to Aeschylus' Work» and to «The Poetic Dramas» themselves. Herington concentrates on what he calls «the world-vision» of Aeschylus, as that vision comes across in the extant plays. In Aeschylus we see a universe in which everything matters and everything interacts and in which humanity exercises considerable power, and yet the human being cannot be viewed apart from the universe of which he is inextricably a part. Herington stresses that «Aeschylean drama... is occupied with the interaction of all the forces that make up our world, all between the dome of heaven and the recesses of hell. Humanity is but one of these forces; of the non-human, some are introduced into the plot by sheer force

of verbal poetry; others actually materialize, masked and costumed, in the theater» (p. 13). The uniqueness of Aeschylean drama seems to be the way in which it has used the mythopoetic idiom to come to terms with an Athenian world in transition.

Herington does succeed in conveying to the reader something of the majesty of Aeschylus' lyric, dramatic, and imaginative genius while at the same time placing him within his own specific historical context and introducing the neophyte to the conventions of Greek drama and the Greek theater. In his exposition of the plays from 472 B.C. to the death of Aeschylus in 456 (and in a chapter on the lost plays), Herington manages to concentrate on certain features or highlights that he feels are important, never forcing a particular view on the reader. He sees the Aeschylean drama as proceeding from verbal to visual; from ambiguity to clarity; and from human to divine, but at the same time he tries to view the extant plays as wholes that are commentaries on the intellectual, political, and religious upheavals in Athens during Aeschylus' times.

Herington's *Aeschylus* can be used to further understanding and interpretation of the *Persians*, the *Seven Against Thebes*, the *Suppliants*, the *Oresteia* or the *Prometheus Bound* (which Herington considers Aeschylus') individually, but he would certainly argue that we should look at all of Aeschylus from an integrated point of view. His book helps guide us in that direction.

James Hogan's *Commentary on Aeschylus* is meant to provide a helpful resource for those using the University of Chicago *Complete Greek Tragedies* series. It provides a brief introduction to the theater of Aeschylus, six photographs of tragic scenes from Greek vases, a picture of the theater of Dionysus and one of the Theater at Epidaurus, and the maps before the detailed commentary on *Agamemnon*, *The Libation Bearers*, *The Eumenides*, *The Suppliant Maidens*, *The Persians*, *Seven against Thebes*, and *Prometheus Bound* (in that order), followed by a substantial bibliography (pp. 307-318), a subject index, an index of proper names, and an index of Greek words. The *Oresteia* is treated more fully than the other four plays, but there is more than enough information for the intellectually curious student who does not read Greek but needs quick access to the Aeschylean plays he/she is reading. The book will also serve as an excellent resource for the teacher (especially the non-classicist) who will need to check on various questions that will invariably arise from reading Aeschylus in translation. Professor Hogan of Allegheny College is to be commended for his resourcefulness in providing students and teachers alike with such a valuable reference tool that is fully sensitive to the Greek original and deeply conscious of current Aeschylean scholarship.

Certainly, John Herington's *Aeschylus* and James Hogan's *Commentary on the Complete Greek Tragedies: Aeschylus* are clear evidence that the sincere study of Aeschylus in English translation continues to warrant the publication of reliable, helpful, and intelligent commentaries and guides.

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