

about Greek elegy (*qua* elegy, that is: naturally the philosophical aspects of the poetry of Solon and Xenophanes have not received very much attention here). Although the text form adopted by Gentili and Prato contains little that is new, and little fresh light is shed on the poets, this is likely to remain for a long time the standard edition of these texts.

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*Vincenzo Di Benedetto: L'ideologia del potere e la tragedia greca. Ricerche su Eschilo.* Piccola Biblioteca Einaudi 355. Giulio Einaudi editore s.p.a., Torino 1978. XII, 295 p. Lit. 6400.

The main title of this book is somewhat misleading since it deals exclusively with Aeschylean tragedy, as the sub-title indicates; moreover, it does not aim at giving an exhaustive analysis of the ideology of power in the tragedies of Aeschylus, but examines more generally the main lines of Aeschylus' thought in the field of ethics and religion. The plays which are thus interpreted are the Persians, the Prometheus and the Oresteia; the Seven against Thebes and the Suppliants are omitted, which from the viewpoint of the main title of the book is a pity, since the personalities of Eteocles and Pelasgos would surely offer interesting examples of the possibilities and limitations of human power both in relation to the gods and to the subjects of these kings.

The book's principal theme is that Aeschylus has a consistent ethic-religious ideology, which, with a strongly didactic purpose, he wishes to bring home to the spectator. This is, I think, true to a certain extent, but in concentrating upon this theme the author seems to oversimplify the issue, by practically ignoring the dramatic art of the poet, for instance the contrast between the ways of thinking of the different persons of the drama, including the chorus. The author sees an essential conflict between Aeschylus' religious ideology and reality, but he lays far more emphasis on the uniformity of this ideology than on the reality of this conflict, a conflict of which Aeschylus himself, however, was fully aware, as his tragedies bear witness, and which adds infinitely to the richness of his tragic world.

Those chapters of the book concerning Prometheus (II) and the personality of Agamemnon (III) are especially interesting, since they offer fresh interpretations. The author (rightly, in my opinion) rejects the view that in his Prometheus-trilogy Aeschylus meant to show any development in Zeus towards a more "soft" righteousness; as he says, "la continua illimitata alternanza del momento positivo e del momento negativo, e viceversa, era semplicemente il segno di una illimitata sovranità e di un assoluto potere di Zeus" (pp. 85—86). He also lays much emphasis on the weaknesses of Prometheus — that he is a σοφιστής, not σοφός, that he boasts vainly of his prophecies, which are not true prophecies, because Zeus' position is not going to be usurped; that his gifts to the mortals must

seem rather shabby and insignificant to the Athenians (as they do not include e.g. the organization of *polis* or the ceramic art). Thus, his interpretation of the play's ethical and religious implications becomes over-simple and schematic; he does not give enough attention to the tremendous and unnecessary brutality of the sovereign Zeus, which is repeatedly stressed in this play, to the sympathetic features in Prometheus' make-up or the requirements of the dramatic whole, for instance as regards Prometheus' prophecies, which are an essential part of the chain of events of the trilogy.

Similarly, I find the interpretation of the personality of Agamemnon as an example of the doctrine of *πάθει μάθος* (v. 177) too simple in that it does not give full credit to Aeschylus' artistic genius. The author's interpretation is based on Agamemnon's speech at his home-coming (810ff.); this he sees as a token of Agamemnon's deep religiosity and respect for the gods, which is in contrast to his former behaviour at Aulis and a result of his "learning through suffering" (the shipwrecks and other trials of his men on the way home). This is again a simplification of Aeschylus' art; much as Agamemnon speaks of the gods and the righteousness of his acts, Aeschylus does not conceal his vainglory, vindictiveness and brutality, which are brought out very clearly in this same speech (814f., 818ff., 822ff., 828).

However, this is a work well worth reading; it provides a good survey of the main lines of Aeschylus' thought, and also by raising questions in the mind of the reader it helps him to understand the tragic art of the poet.

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*Sophoclis tragoediae*. Tom. II: Trachiniae. Antigone. Philoctetes. Oedipus Coloneus. Edidit R. D. Dawe. *Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana*. BSB B.G. Teubner Verlagsgesellschaft, Leipzig 1979. XI, 267 p. M 54.—

This volume completes the new Teubner edition (Vol. I 1975) of Sophocles by R. D. Dawe. This edition, which with no doubt will be the standard text of Sophocles for many years to come, has long been needed. After the excellent contributions to Sophoclean studies by Dawe's countrymen A. C. Pearson and R. C. Jebb, much new work has been done on the texts of Sophocles, especially during the last ten years; most significant is the great work of the editor of the new text, *Studies in the Text of Sophocles*, Leiden 1973. The manuscripts of one or other of the four plays contained in the Teubner Vol. II have also been collated and investigated by P. Easterling (1969), E. C. Kopff (1974) and G. Speake (1978) (see Introd. p. V). Thus we now have a new text that takes into account the modern work on Sophocles, a critical apparatus which embraces all those readings which can increase our understanding of the text and its possible different interpretations, without the unnecessary inclusion of insignificant details, e.g. apparent