

BOOK REVIEWS

The Greek Theater and Its Drama. By ROY C. FLICKINGER. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1918. Pp. xxviii+358. 80 illustrations.

This is a book for which we have long been waiting; one, that is, that can be unhesitatingly recommended to the general reader as a reasonably satisfactory account of the Greek theater and the technique and conventions of the Greek drama. Like all of the author's numerous articles previously published, it is written in a pleasing and forceful style, and gives evidence of sound scholarship and of a firm grasp upon the problems with which it deals. Its statements are clear, its arguments cogent, and its conclusions sane. Moreover, it abounds in literary citations and is enriched with many illustrations which for the most part are well selected and beautifully reproduced. Thus it constitutes one of the most important contributions of recent years to the interpretation of ancient classical dramatic art. Among the works published in English upon this subject it easily takes rank as the best.

As stated in the Preface the book attempts (1) "to elaborate the theory that the peculiarities and conventions of the Greek drama are largely explicable by its environment; (2) to emphasize the technical aspects of ancient drama; (3) to elucidate and freshen ancient practice by modern and mediaeval parallels." The author has "endeavored to treat the ancient plays as if they were not dead and inert, but as if their authors were men as real as Ibsen and Galsworthy, who had real problems and met them in a real way." In accordance with this program the emphasis throughout is placed upon the conventions and technique of the drama rather than upon the archaeological reconstruction of the theater itself. Thus eight of the nine chapters which constitute the main portion of the work treat of the influences (1) of religious origin, (2) of choral origin, (3) of actors, (4) of festival arrangements, (5 and 6) of physical conditions, (7) of national customs and ideas, and (8) of theatrical machinery and dramatic conventions. The ninth chapter is devoted to a consideration of theatrical records. Preceding these chapters is a long Introduction (pp. 1-117), in which, rather more technically, the author discusses the origin of each of the types of Greek drama and finally the development and characteristics of the Greek theater.

The difficulties which surround the topics treated in this Introduction are clearly recognized by the author, and he, I am sure, would be the first to acknowledge that his conclusions cannot be expected to meet with universal acceptance. As a rule these are not stated dogmatically, but are advanced merely as reasonable hypotheses. Taking his stand squarely on the statements of Herodotus, Aristotle, and other classical and postclassical writers,

Professor Flickinger holds (pp. 3 f.) that "tragedy and satyric drama are independent offshoots of the same literary type, the Peloponnesian dithyramb." Arion called his performances of caprine satyrs dramas and was the first to use the word in this sense (pp. 8 ff.). The terms *τραγικὸς χορὸς*, *τραγωδία*, etc., arose at Sicyon about 590 B.C. and were suggested by the goat-prize, not by the costume of the choreutae (pp. 13 ff.). To ignore Aristotle and "to seek, as many do"—Dieterich, Ridgeway, Harrison, and Murray are specified—"to trace tragedy back to *δρῶμενα* of various kinds by another line of development transgresses good philological practice" (p. 6). The very facility of all such attempts is their own undoing.

Comedy arose from the *comus*. The claim of the Megarians that comedy originated with them is apparently unwarranted, although Megara probably "had something to do with the introduction of the histrionic element into Attic comedy" (pp. 47 f.). It is wrong to assume, as is frequently done, that comedy had actors before tragedy (p. 48). They were probably not introduced into Athenian comedy until shortly before 450 B.C. (p. 56).

The long, yet all too brief, section dealing with the theater (pp. 57-117) opens with an account of the different parts (1) of the Greek theater, (2) of the Graeco-Roman theater, and the names which were applied to these several members. The most perplexing of these terms are the *λογεῖον* and the *θεολογεῖον*. The former the author believes (p. 60 and Fig. 23) was in the Greek theater applied to the top of the proscenium, in the Graeco-Roman theater to the stage. The *theologium* was peculiar to the latter type of theater and was the top of the proscenium which now stood on the stage at the rear (Fig. 24). "There was no stage in the Greek theater until about the beginning of the Christian era" (p. 60). The earliest stage in the Athenian theater was erected in the Neronian period and was probably only about four feet nine inches in height (p. 74). The theater of Vitruvius was of the Graeco-Roman type (pp. 79-87, 92-97), as was also the building presupposed by the passages in Plutarch and Pollux (pp. 78, 98-103). "The only tangible argument for a stage of any height in the fifth century is afforded by the occurrence of the words *ἀναβαίνειν* and *καταβαίνειν*" (p. 91). These "are best explained on the basis of the slight difference in level between the orchestra and the floor of the proscenium colonnade, which was probably elevated a step or two above the orchestra and was often used by the dramatic performers" (p. 91; cf. p. 68). "Since the *Acharnians* was produced in 425 B.C., the appearance of *ἀναβαίνειν* in that play is valuable as affording a *terminus ante quem* for the introduction of a wooden proscenium at Athens" (pp. 91 ff.).

So excellent is the work thus inadequately outlined and so great the service which its publication has rendered that one hesitates to indulge in criticisms. Yet many of the conclusions and many of the statements of fact invite discussion. A few of these may perhaps be mentioned without seeming to be ungracious.¹

¹ For a criticism of certain archaeological details the reader should consult Professor D. M. Robinson's excellent review in *Classical Weekly*, X (1918), 63 ff.

The statement made on the authority of Dörpfeld that the theater at Athens when reconstructed was moved "some fifty feet farther north" (pp. 68, 65) is, I believe, an error. It can be shown, I think, that the theater was moved only thirty feet, but the evidence for this view did not appear until the very month in which Professor Flickinger's book came from the press (see my "Key to the Reconstruction of the Fifth-Century Theater at Athens," *University of California Publications in Classical Philology*, V [1918], 55 ff.). If the argument of this paper be sound, it follows that the further statement (p. 68) that "there are no means of determining whether this slight change in site was made at this period [ca. 425?] or about 465 B.C., when the first scene-building was erected," is also in error. That the change could not have been made in 465 is, I believe, certain. Unfortunately dogmatic is the statement (p. 66), after Dörpfeld, that the early "scene-building was set up behind the orchestra where the declivity had been," or (he adds in a footnote) "in the south half of the old orchestra in case the orchestra was moved fifty feet nearer the Acropolis at this time." The reason for this restriction does not appear. In any case there should have been included some discussion of the alternative view that the scene-building was erected on the orchestra before the theater was moved, as suggested by von Wilamowitz, Robert, and others. The omission is unfortunate, for the general reader, unacquainted as he is apt to be with the special literature of the subject, is at the mercy of the author. A few more notes upon such disputable points would have greatly increased the usefulness of the book without adding materially to its cost.

The invention of scene-painting is ascribed to the decade ending in 458 B.C., and, the author continues, "this would mean that at first scenery must have been attached directly to the scene-building itself and not inserted between the intercolumniations of the proscenium colonnade" (p. 66). Why? The only reason adduced is the unsupported assumption that the early scene-building had neither *parascenia* nor a columned proscenium. Nor is any reason offered for the hypothesis that the floor of the proscenium colonnade was raised a step or two above the level of the orchestra (see above). Doubtless the influence of Dörpfeld and Reisch (*Das griechische Theater*) is responsible for this assumption, but the thesis appears not to be supported by any valid evidence, and the interpretation of ἀναβαίνειν and καταβαίνειν based thereon is, I believe, false. Dicaeopolis did not set up his market in the proscenium, but in the orchestra.

The question regarding the manner in which the chorus entered the orchestra is not satisfactorily treated. The statement that the chorus was enabled "to enter the orchestra in three files of five men each and to retain this formation for their dance movements" (p. 134) does not tell the whole story. One searches in vain too for a systematic discussion of the manner of acting either of chorus or of actors, and this seems to me to be one of the most serious omissions. With the exception of the mask, the costume of the tragic actor also receives scant notice. It surely is deserving of more than seven

lines, and that too in a footnote (p. 162)! No hint is given that the Rieti statuette (Fig. 66) represents an actor of a late period, and the failure to reproduce or even to mention the charming actor-relief from the Peiraeus is regrettable. The discussion of the use of masks (pp. 221 ff.) does not at all points carry conviction. This is particularly true of the thesis that "the dramatists sometimes try to explain the immobility of the actor's mask," as in Sophocles' *Electra*. When Electra unexpectedly holds her brother in her arms, alive and well, "not a spark of joy can scintillate across her wooden features, either then or later. Her subsequent passivity is motivated by Orestes' request that she continue her lamentations and not allow their mother to read her secret in her radiant face (vss. 1296 ff.)," etc. This interpretation is due of course to Hense (*Die Modificirung der Maske in der griechischen Tragödie* [1905], p. 5), but I have always regarded it with suspicion. The very expression *φαιδρῶ προσώπῳ* (vs. 1297) gives one pause. Moreover (vs. 1227), Electra turns to the chorus and exclaims: ὦ φίλταται γυναῖκες, ὦ πολίτιδες, ὄρατ' Ὀρέστην τόνδε, κτλ. Again—and this is overlooked both by Hense and by Professor Flickinger—after Electra has promised that her mother will never see her face lit up with smiles (vs. 1310), she greets the aged attendant with rapturous joy (vss. 1354 ff.). This perhaps proves nothing. But Hense's inept and unimaginative explanation is surely as wooden as the alleged "wooden feature" of Electra's mask. One is reminded of Wecklein's exquisitely poetical interpretation of the marvelous line in the *Agamemnon* (vs. 1267): ἄλλην τιν' ἄτης ἀντ' ἐμοῦ πλουτίζετε, that "der Vers scheint unecht zu sein; denn der vernichtete Kranz kann niemanden mehr dienen!" "*Boeotum in crasso jurares aëre natum.*"

Similarly unconvincing is the statement that in the *Eumenides* "the furies sing their first song behind the scenes . . . ; presently Apollo drives them from his sanctuary into the orchestra" (p. 151; cf. p. 250). Later (p. 287) this scene is somewhat differently interpreted and the suggestion is proposed that possibly the ghost of Clytemnestra also "is merely heard from within the scene-building." To my thinking this is inconceivable. Again the statement (p. 259) that "a whole trilogy was no longer than an average modern play" cannot be right. The time required for the presentation of the average modern play does not exceed two and a half hours. The unabridged *Hamlet* contains 3,924 lines and requires five hours, exclusive of intermissions, for its performance. *Macbeth* consists of but 2,000 lines. But the average length of a Sophoclean or a Euripidean trilogy was evidently about 4,500 verses. Even the *Oresteia* of Aeschylus comprises 3,800 verses. Müller (*Bühnenalterthümer*, p. 323) estimates the time required for a tetralogy as from seven to eight hours.

The bibliographies constitute one of the valuable features of the book, and yet there are several rather serious omissions. Indeed, a close scrutiny of the bibliography reveals the fact that, with the exception of a few reviews by the author himself and two or three works mentioned in the Preface, there

are only five references to articles or treatises which appeared more recently than 1915. The reason for this is puzzling. Doubtless the war should be held responsible for some of the omissions, but it is to be hoped that when the book is revised the bibliography will be made somewhat fuller—why, for example, are only two of Robert's many able articles cited?—and brought down to date. The two indexes are full and executed with gratifying care. Personally, however, I should prefer to have the two combined; it would save the reader a considerable amount of time. One misses the words "entrances," "painting," "theophanies," and "theoric fund." Under the word "curtain" the last citation should be page 311. Other misprints are rare. There are two on page 302, and the date of Felsch's dissertation (p. 246) is given incorrectly. It should be 1906.

Many other matters invite comment, but their consideration would greatly lengthen this review, which is already too long. For the production of so monumental and so trustworthy a volume Professor Flickinger deserves both gratitude and congratulation.

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Notice sur le manuscrit Latin 4788 du vatican. By ANTOINE THOMAS. Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1917.

This is a very interesting document and Professor Thomas has done a service to mediaeval and indirectly to classical scholarship by publishing in sufficient extracts its substance, with Index and glossary. A Pierre de Paris had been known since 1692 as author of a manuscript translation of the Psalms, and the present manuscript by a Pierre de Paris was described in 1889 by M. Ernest Langlois. Professor Thomas establishes the identity of the two Pierres by the style and also by the fact that Simon Le Rat, to whom the translation of the Psalms is dedicated, lived at Cyprus from 1299 to 1310, where the author of the commentary tells us he also lived and where he says he wrote a translation of Aristotle's *Politics* and a work on philosophy dedicated to the Seigneur de Tyr, i.e., Amauri de Lusignan. The naïveté and the spelling of Pierre's fourteenth-century French are intelligible and very amusing to the amateur. Professor Thomas says that it shows the influence of the dialect of Venice, and his glossary records about fifty words not found in the *Dictionnaire de l'ancienne langue française* of Frédéric Godefroy. Leaving this topic to reviewers of special competence I will merely give a few illustrations of the main interest of the document and the light it throws on the culture and classical scholarship of the early fourteenth century.

Pierre is not able to construe Boethius' Latin correctly, still less his Greek quotations, and the few names of classical literature and mythology and the anecdotes of ancient history of which he has heard are jumbled in inextricable confusion in his mind. We could almost match from this single treatise