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A new phase of excavation in the Agora has now begun and has already uncovered, in addition to the identification of the Stoa Basileios, important remains that continue to prove the richness of the site. The present team, under the direction of T. Leslie Shear, Jr, will appreciate having available, as a source of knowledge, the exemplary scholarship of Thompson and Wycherley in *The Agora of Athens*.

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A COMPANION TO GREEK TRAGEDY. By JOHN FERGUSON. Austin and London: University of Texas Press. 1972. Pp. xi, 623. (\$12.50)

FERGUSON'S *Companion* contains detailed analyses of all extant Greek tragedies, including the anonymous *Rhesus*, and satyr-plays ("tragedy on holiday; the vision that is distorted is the tragic vision" [506]). These analyses, designed primarily for Greekless undergraduates, are supplemented with two summary chapters on the origins of Greek drama and the physical aspects of ancient theatre production; a useful glossary of Greek (mainly metrical) vocabulary (which might have been improved by a few pronunciation aids, to anticipate inevitable undergraduate renderings like *strophe* and *arete* to rhyme with *oaf* and *a treat*); an extensive bibliography "for scholars" (ix), generally complete to about 1968 or 1969; and a more than ordinarily detailed index.

The judgment of classical scholars on this book is going to vary considerably, depending largely on one's definition of the profession and, indeed, of the whole field of scholarship, its hierarchy of priorities, its relation to education at all levels, and its responsibilities to the culture that supports it. Ferguson's book falls within that wide, ill-defined but crucial area where most university education occurs, between the fixed poles of arcane, detailed research on the one side, and popular, general information on the other. *A Companion's* acknowledged origins should warn us that it may baffle a too casual attempt to categorize it, coming as it has out of two quite disparate academic exercises: a course of general lectures for nonclassical specialists in literature and drama, and a year-long seminar on Greek tragedy for graduate students in Classics. A book with this kind of title could obviously move in a variety of directions. One approach would be to treat what remains of Greek tragedy as *documents*, that is, as a repository of evidence in the reconstruction of some larger historical, political, or economic context. Another would be to concentrate on the plays as *texts*, in the restricted sense, as mines of paleographical, lexicographical, "textual" problems. Another still would be to read them as *tracts*, that is, as sourcebooks of ideas in reconstructing Greek intellectual history. Without entirely avoiding any of these approaches, Fergu-

son appears to be interested in Greek tragedy predominantly as a set of *scripts—libretti* of once living and still revivable dramatic *performances*. For over and above his scholarly training and expertise (and despite his administrative duties as dean and director of studies in arts at the Open University), Ferguson is himself an actor, producer, and playwright. Reading this book, one is not for a single page permitted to forget that the subject of discussion was staged, acted, sung, danced. Typical of this overriding preoccupation with theatrical technique is his comment (105) on the entrance of Athena in the *Eumenides*:

Aeschylus has still not done startling us with spectacle. At the very top of the stage building the glint of metal catches our eye. Are we seeing double? Before us in the center of the orchestra is the familiar statue of the city goddess—and there, high above the scene, is the same divine being, brilliant in the glory of her armor, but breathing, moving. All the emotions of patriotism thrill out as she swings lightly down on the “crane” that the stage crew used for this effect.

Ferguson’s acute ear for what can or cannot be uttered from the boards leads him for the most part to use his own translations when citing the text. He takes pains frequently to give his Greekless reader a sense for the original rhythms where their contribution to total effect is especially noteworthy, and in the explanation of various metrical units he employs the half- and quarter-notes of musical notation rather than the standard symbols for *longum* and *breve* used by scholars. Likewise, he will at times transliterate portions of the original Greek where he finds sound pattern serving an important dramatic function.

In short, then, when it comes to Greek tragedy as theatre, Ferguson’s instincts are generally unerring. As to that class of problems addressed by what is perhaps too loosely called literary criticism, he relies, by his own honest admission (ix), quite heavily on others—Kitto, for example, on the *Oresteia*, Knox on *King Oedipus*, Goheen on *Antigone*, Segal on Sophocles’ *Electra*, Murray on *The Trojan Women*. On the other hand, inattention to scholarly niceties will expose him to charges of imprecision. Not infrequently in matters of detailed interpretation (“inevitably controversial” as Ferguson says [x]) one may find a point of view adopted, which is not the only one possible, or perhaps not even what some might wish to call the best one, or even a correct one, as, for example, when the author flies in the face of a considerable scholarly consensus to embrace Zenobius’ interpretation of *Ag.* 36 (βοῦς ἐπὶ γλώσση μέγας βέβηκεν) as a reference to bribery (76–77), or when he asserts that Electra’s name means “unwed” (94), and that the *Hecabe* “made a vivid impact on Dante” (294), or when he reports the preposterous anecdote about Aeschylus’ death as if it were history (33). Such matters cry out for footnotes at least, the philologist will insist, but he will find none here—not one in 623 pages. “I have avoided footnotes,” Ferguson warns us in the preface (ix); “the

object of this Companion is to introduce readers to the plays, not to detail who said what about them." Though surely grounded for the most part in sound philological discussion, this book is definitely not in the arena of philological agonistics. It is propaedeutic, and its author will be harshly criticized only by those who miss his statement of purpose, or who superciliously leave to others a task which nothing but a too unfamiliar acquaintance with it could make formidable. But for dedicated undergraduates and, even more, nonclassical scholars, or classicists whose specialized field is not Greek tragedy, called upon as they frequently are, to teach undergraduate classics courses in translation, this book simply has no rival.

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THE AUTHOR OF THE PROMETHEUS BOUND. By C. J. HERINGTON.
Austin and London: University of Texas Press. 1970. Pp. 135.
(\$4.75)

IN THIS BOOK Professor Herington assembles, revises, augments and appraises the evidence bearing on the date and authenticity of the *Prometheus*. His presentation is clear, his appraisal fair, and the cumulative effect of his arguments, especially the linguistic arguments, impressive. He shows that the evidence, such as it is, points unambiguously to one conclusion, namely that if the play is by Aeschylus it is his latest play, while the same evidence does not tend to show that the play is not by Aeschylus. So far, so good, and for this reviewer an orthodoxy in which he was brought up. What Herington fails to make clear is that although his conclusion indeed follows from his evidence (evidence from much of which others have wrongly reached a quite different conclusion), the nature of the evidence is such that the conclusion can only be tentative, and cannot therefore be so strongly asserted as he asserts it. The least scrap of concrete evidence, such as turned up for the *Supplices*, and we should quickly and quietly shed all our present convictions. Meanwhile we must work with such evidence as there is, and Herington has done the task, within self-imposed limits, thoroughly and well. But those who already distrust this kind of evidence will probably not be persuaded by him, while even the converted will hesitate to accept the claim that the play "cannot possibly" be earlier than the *Oresteia*.

Firstly, the evidence is very narrowly based. In chapter 1, Herington makes much of the fact that since the firm dating of *Su* to the 460's we now have a substantial proportion of the plays from Aeschylus' last ten years; a good point, though he sometimes seems to forget that the *Prometheus* and *Danaid* trilogies have not survived entire. But it also