

UHLIG (A.) **Theatrical Reenactment in Pindar and Aeschylus**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019. Pp. x + 307. £75. 9781108481830.
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Anna Uhlig's book is an eloquent, thoughtful contribution to research on ancient Greek song. Its title is bound to be somewhat misleading, however, as the author is not interested in the reconstruction of performance scenarios or staging particulars. Instead, the focus is on patterns of 'reenactment' within the texts. The first chapter explores iteration of language, particularly uses of embedded (direct) speech; the second offers a reading of 'the overlapping of voices' in Pindar's *Pythian* 4 and the parodos of *Agamemnon*. In the third chapter, the author turns her attention to objects that speak or are associated with speech (musical instruments, heroic shields) and, in the fourth, to bodies that seem to replicate themselves. The fifth chapter dwells on 'spectral' appearances of the dead in *Pythian* 8 and the *Persae*.

Much of the territory explored by Uhlig will be familiar to specialists, and the path-breaking work of earlier scholars, particularly Deborah Steiner and Froma Zeitlin, is duly acknowledged. The book's major claim is that insights of contemporary performance studies can help uncover an overlooked 'theatrical sensibility' (219) in Pindar and Aeschylus. The question that readers will find themselves asking is therefore methodological: how much hermeneutic validity do categories originally developed for modern performance and drama have in the study of the two ancient Greek poets?

Admittedly, these categories are rather broadly conceived, and appear to be applicable to almost any text. This risk becomes obvious in the conclusion, where the putative recursive quality of performance is found to be also characteristic of myth (269). Much of what Uhlig includes under the heading of 'theatrical representations and reimaginings' (152) can be approached in terms of mimesis. Indeed, as Plato intimated, and as Roman Jakobson's definition of the poetic function of language underscored, iteration is fundamental to all verbal creativity. The intermingling of voices has also been seen as a constitutive aspect of language-in-use. One misses, in Uhlig's discussion of 'polyphony' (90–91), an engagement with Mikhail Bakhtin's deployment of this term; it could have led to the important question of the extent to which Pindar's voice 'overlays' are indeed akin to drama (or to lyric, or to the 'polyphonic novel'). The study's conclusion, that 'Pindar and Aeschylus approach voice from a distinctively theatrical perspective, an outlook emblemized by the recursive layers of embedded speech' (165), would need to be modulated accordingly.

There are at least two notable moments in the book where a distinct feature of Pindar's or Aeschylus' poetics is identified. The first is Uhlig's sharp analysis of the 'isolation' of the embedded speaker in Pindar (his preference for only using direct speech for one utterance), contrasted with Homer's practice. (On the other hand, the effect of the blurring of the boundaries between speakers may not be especially characteristic of Pindar: the relatively slim corpus of Bacchylides contains an instance of this device, at *Ep.* 3.11, which is more striking than the Pindaric instances that Uhlig singles out.) The second is the argument about the lack of deictic stability in Pindar, contrasted with the preference for 'clearly demarcated' time and space (244) in Aeschylus. This conclusion is based solely on Uhlig's reading of *Pythian* 8 ('the absent *here* yields an insistently and vertiginously adaptable space', 266), inspired by an article by Richard Martin ('Home Is the Hero: Deixis and Semantics in Pindar's *Pythian* 8', *Arethusa* 37 (2004), 343–63); this idea can hardly hold for Pindar's corpus at large, however, which is arguably more committed to local and materially concrete spaces than Attic drama; see Richard Neer and Leslie Kurke, *Pindar, Song, and Space: Towards a Lyric Archaeology* (Baltimore 2019).

In the introduction, Uhlig dismisses the significance of genre, putting forward instead a notion of an imaginary dialogue between two contemporary choral poets. (The discussion

of Aeschylus is not, however, limited to his choral songs.) I believe too much is lost and too little gained by this move. *Epinikia* by Bacchylides and Pindar display many similar properties lacking from either poet's dithyrambs or paeans, but it remains unclear if these include any 'reenactment' patterns. On the other hand, readings of Aeschylus would benefit from a sense of what makes his poetics stand out from other Attic dramatists. The extended discussion of the *Choephoroi*, while attentive to detail, serves to illustrate the general point, which few would dispute, that the appearance of 'bodies, both phenomenal and semiotic', in the theatre 'is an act of iterative duplication' (200).

Uhlig is a penetrating reader of poetry, and her particular analyses are generally well-considered (an exception is the bizarre notion that in *Pythian 2* Ixion devised the torturing wheel as an instrument of seduction, intending it 'for the body of Hera', 212–14). The book will serve as an introduction to the two ancient poets for scholars interested in performance, both within and outside Classics.

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The year 2019 witnessed the publication of two commentaries on Aeschylus' *Suppliants*, namely, A.H. Sommerstein's *Aeschylus' Suppliants* (Cambridge) and the Italian book reviewed here. The Italian volume has a lot to offer and represents a reliable working tool, full of well-thought-out opinions and interesting ideas, though almost exclusively in matters of traditional philology, the *constitutio textus* in particular. The analytical introduction, in addition to offering essential data (a biography of the poet, sources of the myth, scenic reconstructions and an overview of the manuscript tradition), provides an effective synthesis with various levels of interpretation. Emphasis is given to the reason why Danaus flees from Egypt with his daughters, their presence in Argos and the ways in which marriage is achieved between cousins.

On the order of the first two tragedies, the debate is open, and the commentary follows the reconstruction of W. Rösler ('Der Schluss der *Hiketiden* und die Danaiden-Trilogie des Aischylos', *RhM* 136 (1993), 1–22), who identifies the first drama as the *Egyptians*, against the prevailing opinion, according to which *Suppliants* opened the tetralogy. The central argument is the presence in the *Suppliants* of some elements which may not make sense if the audience had not attended a previous drama. In particular, the insistence that Danaus shows in the finale in recommending his daughters not to marry, which reveals an interest in the maintenance of their virginity that seems to go beyond the legitimate concern of a father for the reputation of his daughters. Yet, again following Rösler, the authors argue that the reason for the involvement of Danaus must be knowledge of an oracle, mentioned by some predominantly scholastic sources. Since nothing of this oracle is mentioned in the *Suppliants*, it had to be remembered by the audience from a previous tragedy, that is, the *Egyptians*. The same goes for the reference to the bellicosity of the Aegyptiads in lines 741–42, which is given as a comment to Danaus without having been mentioned elsewhere.

As for the chronology of the work, the authors believe that the most likely year for the representation is 463 BC, but they do not rule out other possibilities, with a time span between 470 and 459 BC, most probably between 466 and 462. The introduction continues