

G. SCAFOGLIO, *L'Astyanax di Accio. Saggio sul background mitografico, testo critico e commento dei frammenti*, Collection Latomus vol. 295, Bruxelles: Latomus, 2006, 157 pp., ISBN 2-87031-236-9.

“Di Accio rimangono poco più di 700 versi, molti dei quali corrotti o mutili, per un totale di circa 50 titoli” we are informed at the start of this useful but at times unreliable book, whose aim is to discuss only two plays, *Astyanax* and *Troades*, comprising 32 lines (not all of them complete) from Accius’ *œuvre*.

The structure of this slender volume is bipartite. In its first part (covering 60 pages) Scafoglio (hereafter, S.) provides a comprehensive account of the presence of *Astyanax* in literature from Homer to Accius, and examines the variations in the literary presentation of the death of Hector’s son and in the identity of his killer (was it Neoptolemus or Odysseus?). The sources which S. scrutinizes are Homer, *Iliad* 24.725–38, the *Ilias Mikra* attributed to Leskhes of Lesbos, Proclus, Stesichorus, Arctinus, the *Tabula Iliaca Capitolina*, Sophocles’ *Polyxene*, Euripides’ *Andromakhe*, *Hekabe*, and *Troades*, two Hellenistic tragedies entitled *Polyxene* and attributed by the *Suda* lexicon to Euripides the Younger and to Nikomachus, another Hellenistic tragedy entitled *Andromakhe* and attributed by Aristotle to the playwright Antiphon, a papyrus fragment (30 Page) describing the ordeal of a woman and a baby forced to abandon a tomb which was their hiding place, and Ennius’ *Andromacha aechmalotis* and *Hecuba*. Each of these sources is discussed in detail and special attention is given to the incident of the sacrifice of Polyxena in honour of Achilles, while cautious remarks are made on the development of the theme of *Astyanax*’s death and the debt of Accius to his literary (dramatic and non-dramatic) predecessors. Because of the fragmentary nature of the evidence some conclusions are necessarily tentative (and rightly so), but S. often indulges in making hypothetical statements and in asking

a series of questions to which no definite answer may be given: consider, for instance, S.'s lengthy explanation on p. 22 about what Stesichorus may or may not have written concerning Astyanax's death – but all we are told by the scholiast on Eur. *Andr.* 10 is that 'Stesichorus reported Astyanax's death', nothing more, nothing less. In the chapter on Accius' *Astyanax* and *Troades* (pp. 63–75) S. discusses the two Latin passages which give information about the story of Astyanax's death (Hyginus, *Fab.* 109.2 and Servius on Virg. *Aen.* 2.457), and is inclined to think that *Troades* is an alternative title for *Astyanax*, but he is perhaps overconfident when he reconstructs the plot of Accius' tragedy on the basis of an entry by Servius on Virg. *Aen.* 3.489 ("o scolio quasi sicuramente ricalca *uerbum de uerbo* l'*argumentum* del dramma" p. 68); on the other hand, S. himself thinks it is possible that Servius' account "iguardi una tragedia ellenistica, non romana arcaica (il modello dell'*Astyanax* di Accio?)" (pp. 68–9). A final point on the first part of the book; three issues have not been addressed at all, and the book is poorer for this reason: the ancient *testimonia* on Accius, a brief account on the position and importance of Accius in the overall frame of Roman tragedy, and the reliability of Gellius, Nonius, and their sources regarding the transmission of fragments from Accius' plays. It may be that S. regarded these issues as appropriate only to a general study of the extant Accius as a whole, but since he proceeds in the second part of the book to examine fragments from two tragedies (*Astyanax* and *Troades*), he ought to have demonstrated that he has thought about these highly relevant questions.

The second part of the volume ("esto e commento dei frammenti" is shorter than the first (it takes up 44 pages), and needed more work before S. sent it to the publisher. Here I disagree with Bob Cowan, who, in his otherwise fine review of the volume, published in *BMCR* on 29/04/2007, characterises the section on the edition of the fragments of *Astyanax* as "xemplary". To begin with, it is not made clear whether S. looked at any of the MSS of Nonius listed on p. 79. I am inclined to think that he did not do so, given that he does not mention MS *Leidensis Voss. lat.* Q 116 (*saec.* IX), which contains Nonius' books 1–3, 5–15, and 17–20 (from which S. cites Accius' extracts), and that he dates MS B (*Bernensis* 83) to the fifth century, whereas Lindsay (in the

Preface to the first volume of his edition of Nonius, p. xxvi) dates it to the tenth, and Reynolds (in his entry on Nonius' MSS in L. D. Reynolds (ed.), *Texts and Transmission*, Oxford 1983, 250) to the ninth. It is also unclear to me whether S. has fully studied and/or grasped the tripartite division of the manuscript tradition of Nonius: for instance, on p. 85 he cites fr. III, vv. 4-5 of Accius' *Astyanax* (= 171-2 Ribbeck3-Klotz = 136-7 Warmington = 281-2 Dangel); these lines are found in the fourth book of Nonius' work (357.2M = 566L), which is transmitted, amongst others, in MS *Gen.* (= *codex Genevensis* 84, *saec.* IX) – this is a MS which does *not* contain the other nineteen books of Nonius' treatise. Although S. cites *Gen.* in the *apparatus criticus* and reports readings from it, he does not mention it in the *sigla codicum* on p. 79; has S. simply been copying the *apparatus criticus* from an early edition of Nonius or a previous edition of Accius without realising that different MSS of Nonius contain different parts of the treatise *De Compendiosa Doctrina*? This appears to be the case, since the same inaccuracy is repeated on p. 95, where S. cites fr. VII, v. 11 of Accius' *Astyanax* (= 175 Ribbeck3-Klotz = 148 Warmington = 270 Dangel), which – again – belongs to the fourth book of Nonius (417.10M = 673L). Even more serious is the fact that on no fewer than five occasions (pp. 89, 95, 98, 102, 105) S. cites fragments which Nonius, in books 4, 5, 8, 11, and 12 of his treatise, attributes to Accius' *Astyanax*: S. states in the *apparatus criticus* that these five instances are reported in MS F (= *codex Florentinus Laurent.* XLVIII. I, *saec.* IX¹), but F contains only the first *three* books of Nonius (see Lindsay in the Preface to the first volume of his edition of Nonius, p. xxii). What is the origin of this error?

The commentary contains mainly stylistic remarks (some of them excellent: see pp. 92 and 103), discussion of textual problems (he emends the text – as far as I could see – twice, and mostly adopts other scholars' conjectures; some lines do not scan: see fr. III, v. 5, which S. says is an iambic *octonarius*; how does he scan it?), and speculative observations on the lost context of each fragment. The *apparatus criticus* could have been briefer. Do we need to know that the MSS of Nonius 95.6M = 135L have *nihil*, which S. adopts and presumably scans as *one* long syllable with synesis, whereas Bothe prints *nil*, which S. does not adopt? Why are we

told that the edition of Nonius printed in Venice in 1476 prints *miseritudinem* in Nonius 136.13M = 198L, an emendation which S. rightly rejects in favour of the MSS reading *miseritudinem*? Why mention in the *apparatus criticus* of a fragment cited by both Gellius and Nonius that the MSS of Nonius 95.6M = 135L have the form *auris*, which S. adopts, but the MSS of Gellius 14.1.34 have *aures*, a form which makes no difference in the scansion or meaning of the transmitted text? When S. inserts a word into the transmitted text (line 1 of an unidentified tragic fragment reported by Cicero in *Tusc.* 1.16.36 = v. 25 in S.'s edition = v. 73 Ribbeck3-Klotz = v. 15 Warmington), why does he write in the *apparatus criticus* *addidi ego* rather than simply *addidi* or *supplevi*? When he emends the text of Accius' *Troades* fr. I, v. 1 (Nonius 447.14M = 717L; 478 Ribbeck3-Klotz = 658 Warmington = 288 Dangel), why does he write in the *apparatus criticus* *ego* rather than *scripsi*? Occasionally S.'s points are odd if viewed in the context of a theatrical performance, and for this reason they may seem trivial or irrelevant: for example, on p. 99 S. considers the arguments for and against printing the noun *fortuna* (fr. IX, v. 16 = Nonius 425.6M = 687L) with a small *f*. Although this point makes sense from a modern editorial perspective, S. does not say whether a Roman actor would have pronounced *fortuna* and *Fortuna* in a different way. If there was no difference, how would this affect S.'s argumentation?

The sections of S.'s commentary which are likely to appeal most or irritate most are his reconstructions of the context of each fragment and of the identity of the speaker. Even when there is hardly any indication of a speaker's or an addressee's identity in the transmitted text S. finds it difficult to resist the temptation of offering three or four possible scenarios. Consider, for instance, fr. X, vv. 17-8 (Nonius 159.5M = 234L): *in celsis montibus | pecua atque inter colles pascunt Danaï in Phrygiae terminis*. G. begins by stating sensibly that "on è facile identificare il personaggio parlante, che in questo segmento non usa pronomi o aggettivi possessivi. Il tono del discorso, insieme con lo stato d'animo, non si lascia definire: non vi sono termini di carattere valutativo o accenti emotivi; tanto più risulta difficile risalire al contesto" (p. 101). And yet a few lines later S. proceeds to speculate that these trochaic *septenarii* might have been uttered by (1) an

Achaean or (2) Hecuba or (3) Andromache or (4) Achilles' ghost. He dismisses the possibility that they were spoken by (5) a deity and concludes that the speaker was probably (6) an Achaean soldier or shepherd. The same tendency to offer a succession of possible speakers is seen in the commentary on fr. V, vv. 7-8 (Nonius 95.6M = 135L and Gellius 14.1.34). Ribbeck was of the opinion that the speaker of the lines was Menelaus addressing Agamemnon. S. argues that it is more likely that the lines were spoken by Hecuba or Andromache. But he also concedes that the speaker could have been Agamemnon addressing Menelaus or Odysseus. In fr. VI, vv. 9-10 (*nunc in consilio id reges Argiium aucupant, | id quaerunt*) we are told that 'la persona loquens può essere Ecuba o Andromaca o anche un'altra delle donne iliache...oppure è un araldo...se non stesso Ulisse' (p. 94). The catalogue of such examples could go on for too long. These hypothetical statements are interesting, because they enable us to visualise the extant words in a possible dramatic context, but they are ultimately unfounded and I am sceptical about their usefulness.

Not everyone will agree with S.'s attribution to Accius' *Astyanax* of the unidentified tragic fragment cited by Cicero in *Tusc.* 1.16.36 (XXXVIII-XXXIX incerti poetae, vv. 73-77 Ribbeck3-Klotz = 15-19 Warmington). S.'s view is certainly possible, since Cicero cites Accius elsewhere in the *Tusculans*. But I find the attribution problematic because too many assumptions are involved in its support: S. assumes that the speaker of these lines is the ghost of Achilles, that he refers with the ablative *salso sanguine* (line 4) to the sacrifice of Polyxena, and that he will proceed to speak about Astyanax in the section of the text which is no longer extant.

I very much hope that S. will continue with other editions of selected plays of Accius and that the future volumes will contain none of the weaknesses which undermine the value of this fine book.

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