

**THE TRAGEDIES OF AESCHYLUS:
LITERALLY TRANSLATED; WITH
CRITICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE
NOTES, AND AN INTRODUCTION**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649723140

The Tragedies of Aeschylus: Literally Translated; With Critical and Illustrative Notes, and an Introduction by Aeschylus & Theodore Alois Buckley

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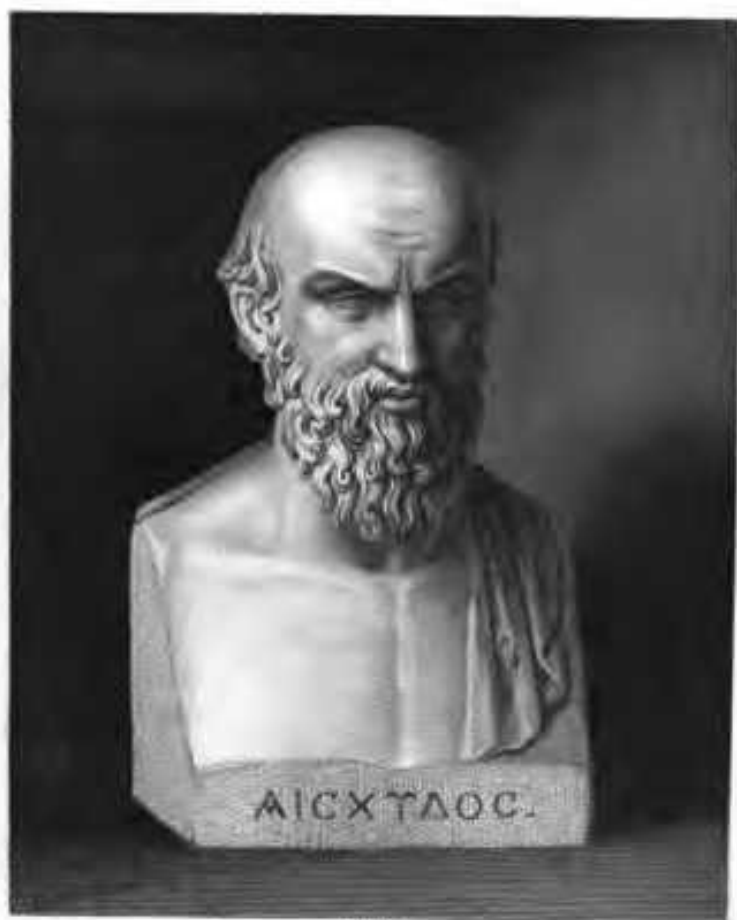
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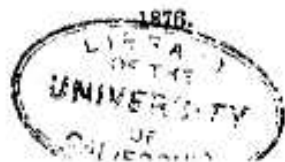
THE
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AND AN INTRODUCTION.

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LONDON: GEORGE BELL & SONS, YORK STREET,
COVENT GARDEN.



LONDON: PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, STAMFORD STREET
AND CHURCH LANE.

P R E F A C E.

THE following translation has been undertaken with the view of presenting the classical student with a close and literal version of *Æschylus*, and of furnishing the general reader with a faithful copy of the Author's thoughts and words, although the graces of poetic expression must be sacrificed in a literal prose version.

The Translator gratefully acknowledges the help he has derived from the labours of his predecessors, and trusts that he will generally be found to have preferred the best rendering consistent with the letter or the text. His object has not been to exhibit an elegant though loose paraphrase, but to render the version as close a verbal transcript of the original as could be done without absolute violation of good taste.

The best scholars of Germany and England have of late combined the duties of the philologer with those of the translator¹, duties which ought never to have been separated. The present Translator has attempted the same; but, as the limits of the work rendered condensation imperative, his aim has been rather to direct the inquiring student to sources of information, than to enter at full length upon all the difficulties of an author like *Æschylus*.

The notes, with a few acknowledged exceptions, are original, and will, it is hoped, prove useful in giving the student some idea of the present condition of the text of *Æschylus*.

¹ See Conington's Preface to his translation of "*The Agamemnon*."

If the Author shall seem on some occasions to have been severe in his condemnation of particular views, it is not from a disposition to underrate men far above him in reputation and attainments, but because their very superiority lends a dangerous sanction to clever, but unsafe, sophistry.

The translation is accommodated to the text of Dindorf, except in such instances as this scholar's own notes, or the obvious necessity of alteration, warranted a change. In all such instances, as in the translation of Sophocles lately published, the reader is duly forewarned.

In the "Supplices," the Translator has confined his notes to a mention of some necessary variations, and a few references to the able notes of Mr. Paley, as he was by no means disposed to venture on the thankless task of commenting on so corrupt a text, without long and careful re-examination of the criticism thereof. Should an opportunity of publishing the original text of *Æschylus* occur hereafter, he still thinks that much may be done, by moderate alteration, to render the heavy accumulation of mystical interpretations unnecessary.

The introductory essay, like prefaces in general, may require some apology. Matters of taste are an open question, and if his remarks shall be thought not wholly devoid of interest, the highest wish of the Author will be realized.

THEODORE ALDIS BUCKLEY.

CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD.

INTRODUCTION.

ÆSCHYLUS, son of Euphorion, was born at Eleusis, B.C. 525. His early employment to watch the grapes in a vineyard is traditionally reported to have led to the development of his tragic genius, and possibly to some less excusable propensities of his character, in which the god Bacchus was equally concerned. He first appeared as a tragedian in B.C. 499, with Choerilus and Pratinas for his competitors. In B.C. 490, he distinguished himself at the battle of Marathon, in company with his brothers Cynegirus and Ameinias. In B.C. 484, he gained his first tragic victory, and in B.C. 480, he fought at Salamis: thus, as Schlegel¹ observes, "he flourished in the very freshness and vigour of Grecian freedom; and a proud sense of the glorious struggle by which it was won, seems to have animated him and his poetry." This warlike vein is conspicuous in the "Persæ" and "Seven against Thebes," while the "Agamemnon" is replete with pathetic illustrations of the toils, dangers, and sufferings, of a soldier's life.

His journeys into Sicily involve some intricate questions, but the received opinion seems to settle his first visit in B.C. 468, immediately after his defeat by Sophocles, and he probably spent some time there, if the use of Sicilian words in his later plays may be adduced as an argument. The other journey was probably ten years after, B.C. 458, and, as Müller thinks, was undertaken in consequence of the aristocratic notions so freely expressed in his "Eumenides," which were too openly opposed to the interests of Pericles' party, then in the

¹ Lect. vi. p. 80, ed. Bohn.

ascendant, to render Athens a safe abode for our poet. Other accounts state that a charge of impiety was the real cause of his second departure, and that he only escaped the fury of the populace, through the intervention of the Areopagus. His death took place at Gela, B.C. 456. The story is, that an eagle having mistaken his bald head for a stone, dropped a tortoise upon it in order to break the shell, and that the blow proved fatal. There seems, however, little doubt but that our poet died in the ordinary course of nature, as his advanced age would render probable.

The number of plays written by Æschylus is doubtful, but, as in the case of Sophocles, seven only have survived the ravages of time. Among these seven we are fortunate in possessing a complete trilogy, consisting of the "Agamemnon," "Choephore," and "Eumenides." The remaining plays are the "Prometheus Bound," the "Seven Chiefs against Thebes," the "Persians," and the "Suppliants."

In criticising the plays of Æschylus, due regard must be had to the state in which Æschylus found the drama, and to the difference between his earlier and later works, as far as the existing specimens allow us to judge.

When we are told that Æschylus formed the dialogue of the Athenian stage, by adding a second actor, it is evident that the preceding dramas must have consisted of little else than a recitative and chorus alternately following each other. The single actor probably detailed some legend possessing a mythological or local interest, while the chorus relieved the monotony by songs and dances connected with the subject. If we consider the earliest specimens of our own drama, we shall find the dialogue heavy, and consisting of long paragraphs, whilst the more modern stage limits these lengthy speeches to narrative, argument, or soliloquy. But in the "Suppliants" of Æschylus, (which some scholars consider