

Editors' cross-references, which simply indicate the relevant chapter (in the form '→Plato'). The reader can easily deduce this, and it would have been much more helpful instead to have precise page references within chapters, since some of the items cross-referenced are often briefly treated, and the reader will sometimes have to track down five lines in a twenty-page chapter. The Editors have supplied a thematic index, which, though helpful in its way, does not ameliorate the problem.

Such minor criticisms must not detract, however, from a most useful and valuable volume. One eagerly looks forward to future instalments of *Studies in Ancient Greek Narrative*.

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### EURIPIDES' ESCAPE-TRAGEDIES

WRIGHT (M.) *Euripides' Escape-Tragedies. A Study of Helen, Andromeda, and Iphigenia among the Taurians*. Pp. ix + 433. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. Cased, £70. ISBN: 0-19-927451-7.

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W. proposes that *IT* was produced along with *Helen* and *Andromeda* in 412, making up an 'escape-trilogy', although he remarks at the end of the book that it 'would not materially alter very much of what I have written' (p. 386) if *IT* turned out not to have been produced in 412. He also toys with the idea that *Cyclops* was the tetralogy's satyr-play, but does not go so far as to include discussion of it in the book. The focus on *IT* and *Helen* (he has, in the event, little to say about *Andromeda*) is not entirely helpful, in that relevant parallels with *Ion* and *Electra* tend to be overlooked (reference to H. Strohm, *Euripides* [Munich, 1957] could have strengthened his case here). He is aware that there is little or no evidence for thematically linked trilogies (p. 53 n. 179), and it could be added that the term *τετραλογία* seems only to have been used of groups of plays with a continuous plot. His second main aim is 'to argue that the escape-tragedies are definitely, unambiguously tragic' (p. 4), i.e. 'serious, dark, pessimistic plays which raise some very disturbing questions about the audience's knowledge of their myths, their gods, and their very existence' (p. 5). In these plays, 'the possibility of knowledge is completely denied, which means that the characters can expect only unrelieved suffering' (p. 387). He thinks that failure to recognise this has led to these plays being neglected, and makes the rather surprising assertion about *Helen* that 'it is difficult to find anyone who takes the play seriously' (p. 3). His interpretative style is quite conservative, with only intermittent reference to more modern brands of theory. He can write as if the task of the critic is 'to illuminate Euripides' intentions' (p. 233), and he believes that 'Euripides is directing his audience towards a definite conclusion about the nature of human knowledge' (p. 228).

W. begins by addressing the question of genre. He is determined to refute suggestions that these plays are romances, melodramas, or tragi-comedies, arguing that such labels are anachronistic and insisting that plays produced in the tragic competition of the City Dionysia are by definition *τραγωδίαι*. He notes, however, that Aristotle exploits a more abstract concept of the tragic when he calls Euripides 'the most tragic of the poets' (*Poetics* 1453a29–30), and that Aristophanes of Byzantium identified satyric and comic features in the *Alcestis* (pp. 15, 21 n. 58). He tries to arrive

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at a definition of tragedy by looking for elements which are common to the 32 surviving examples, observing rather discouragingly that ‘the results are not particularly interesting or illuminating’ (p. 19; cf. p. 43). He has no difficulty in showing that the escape-tragedies have many features in common with Euripides’ other plays, but does little to undermine the widespread belief that they are also significantly different. His list of plays in which ‘no main character dies and no catastrophe occurs’ (p. 37) includes Aeschylus’ *Supplices* and *Eumenides*, both parts of connected trilogies in which leading characters certainly do die, and the textually problematic *IA*. W. overlooks Neoptolemus when he groups *Andromache* with plays in which ‘all of the main characters survive death’ (p. 31 n. 106). If these plays are excluded, then *IT* and *Helen* belong to quite a small group of ‘happy ending’ plays.

W.’s discussion of Euripides’ use of myth is in some ways puzzling. He might have been expected to play down the shock-effect of these ‘outrageous counterfactual myths’ (p. 60), and to stress that Euripides’ treatment of them resembles that in other tragedies. He does indeed argue that ‘Euripides did not invent the phantom-double of Helen or the substitution [of Iphigenia] at Aulis, but inherited them from a complicated and contradictory tradition’ (p. 80; cf. p. 115). He then embarks on a 25-page discussion of Stesichorus’ *Palinode* which concludes that there is no evidence that ‘Euripides’ alternative Helen-myth was in circulation prior to 412 BC’ (p. 110). It is odd that he should strain the evidence in this way, including having to explain away *Electra* 1280–3, as his case would surely be strengthened by respectable precedent for Euripides’ version of the myth. W. develops here the concept of ‘metamythology’, i.e. self-conscious reference by characters to their own myths (pp. 133–54). He rather surprisingly accepts that ‘metamythology is essentially an ironical, ludic activity’ (p. 157), but is quick to insist that there is nothing funny about it. The conclusion of this chapter argues that Euripides’ use of myth is both traditional and shocking (pp. 154–7), which seems to be trying to have it both ways.

The next chapter discusses the physical setting of the plays, ‘their geography and topography, the question of ethnicity, and the real and imaginary landscape in which the landscape unfolds’ (p. 162). W. argues that there is a lack of distinctive local detail, but does well to stress Euripides’ evocation of ‘a richly drawn landscape consisting of the sea, with its coasts and caves, and the sky’ (p. 203). The chapter depends heavily on the work of Edith Hall, although she comes in for her share of criticism. His reprimand that she mistranslates *IT* 74 (pp. 175 n. 56, 185) does no justice to her nuanced statement of the issues (*Inventing the Barbarian* [Oxford, 1989], 112).

The 110-page Chapter 4 (‘Tragedy of Ideas’, alluding to Anne Pippin Burnett’s ‘Euripides’ *Helen*: a comedy of ideas’, *CP* 55 [1960] 151–63) argues that the escape-tragedies develop Gorgias’ radical epistemological scepticism. ‘The escape-tragedies are, I believe, an explicit nod to Gorgias – indeed, more than just a nod’ (p. 276). W. is not, course, the first scholar to relate Gorgias to Euripides, but he is determined to establish the philosophical seriousness of both. He passes rather swiftly (p. 258 n. 124) over Gorgias’ own description of the *Encomium of Helen* as a *jeu d’esprit* (παύγιον, § 21). He suggests that scholars who stress that Euripides was a dramatist rather than a philosopher are not taking his ideas seriously enough (pp. 242–3, citing quite a distinguished list of offenders). He castigates Winnington-Ingram for ‘tongue-in-cheek mistranslation’ (p. 254) of *Ion* 436–7, but his own ‘more literal translation’ crucially omits the colloquial τὸ πᾶσχει (‘What’s the matter with him?’). His belief that ‘the only answer that the plays give about reality is that it is beyond human grasp’ (p. 337) is contradicted most obviously by the figure of

Theonoe, who ‘knows everything’ (*Hel.* 823, etc.). He tries to play down the usefulness of her knowledge (pp. 296–7), but cannot dispute its accuracy.

The final chapter (‘The Tragic Universe’) attacks some outdated scholarly views (‘It may be thought that these easy targets are not worth the effort of shooting down’, p. 345), and concludes that ‘Euripides’ gods, like Homer’s, are omnipotent, capricious, cruel and unfathomable’ (p. 383).

The book is evidently based on W.’s PhD thesis (Exeter, 2002), although one would not have guessed it from his acknowledgements. It has some characteristic features of the genre, including elaborate refutation of older views and lengthy discussion of issues on which he has nothing of particular interest to contribute. He tends to exaggerate his own originality, and treats other scholars in a correspondingly ungenerous and even offensive fashion (e. g. pp. 185, 204, 230, 247, 256, 359). The book often seems, despite its length, to deal rather cursorily with points which are central to the argument. In sum, not enough has been done to transform the thesis into a book.

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### THE BUDÉ FRAGMENTS OF EURIPIDES

JOUAN (F.), VAN LOOY (H.) (edd.) *Euripide: Tragédies. Tome VIII, 4<sup>e</sup> partie. Fragments de drames non identifiés*. (Collection des Universités de France publiée sous le patronage de l’Association Guillaume Budé.) Pp. xi + 181. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2003. Paper, €46. ISBN: 2-251-00510-2.

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This book concludes the four-volume set of Euripides’ fragments in the CUF series. It covers the fragments ‘incertarum fabularum’ and ‘dubia et spuria’, along with a few aids to the entire set: index of proper names; a list of papyri; index of passages commented upon in the notes; tables of concordance between this edition and the numbering established by R. Kannicht’s edition (2004) and by H.J. Mette (*Lustrum* 23–4 [1981–2] 5–448), plus a concordance with C. Austin’s 1968 edition of the papyrus fragments; a list of errata relating to the numbering of fragments in vols. 1–3.

J./V.L.’s numbering of the fragments of this volume fully anticipates Kn.’s edition, with some differences over 953b–f; as for 1094a Kn., J./V.L. must have considered it = *Ion* 764, but here contravene their (and Kn.’s) practice of enclosing in square brackets the fragments identifiable as quotations from existing tragedies and, disappointingly, eliminate it from the text. It was possibly a good initiative of J./V.L. to publish *POxy.* 3216 (= *TrGF* adesp. F654 Kn./Snell) among the dubia (\*1123a), because of the presence at l. 7 of the adjective *ἀλίστος*, which among the tragedians is attested only in Euripides; but *νεόρποις* l. 18 (M.W. Haslam’s conjecture, regarded with favour by M.L. West, *ZPE* 26 [1977] 41 and printed in the text by J./V.L.; *νεόποις* pap.) might on the same basis point to Sophoclean authorship.

The text is carefully printed. However, in 845a (four lines from a *Hypothesis*) no typographical differentiation or helpful translation or note aids the reader in understanding that ]ωνος σθένο[ς l. 2 must be a part of the first verse of the tragedy, at

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