

which is repeated at least twice (pp. 71–2) is considerably more problematic. Thus, late song, *dil(atio)*, is a motif because it occurs twice (pp. 99, 285; *O.* 1.80–1 is an erroneous third example), though it is difficult to see why a tradition would need so specific a motif; the same is true of *aen(igma)* p. 98, which anyway qualifies on the basis of a dubious example in Alkman (p. 393). However, the minimum is applied unevenly, since there are motifs represented by a single instance, e.g. *d(escriptio) de(dicationis)* pp. 99, 282, *elig(ere)* ‘choice’ pp. 99, 289, and *con(sulere)* ‘advise’ pp. 99, 280. The classification of words and phrases within the system is also problematic, since the desire to encompass everything can lump together disparate materials. Thus *d(olor)* ‘grief’ pp. 99, 281 piles together examples which have minimal resemblance to each other.

More significant, however, at the level both of definition and of classification, is the scale of the motif. P.’s units are far smaller than those which most scholars would recognize. It is this small scale which allows him to present the whole of choral lyric in terms of his system. Thus, for example, god and hero are motifs. So, for example, is *et(iam)* (‘even’ a certain type of person can experience/act in a certain way). Reduced to this scale, of necessity everything is generic; yet defined in this way, the choral lyric motif differs little, if at all, from those of any literary genre, or area of life. Some of his motifs are recognizable as *significant* recurrent elements only in combination. Thus *ca(lamitas)* (of the patron) is meaningful only in connection with *ev(entus)* ‘success’, with which it is normally combined, and this combination is itself an example of the vicissitude motif, *va(ria vita)*.

The emphasis on tradition, though not without substance, is overdone, since it obscures the dynamics of genre, which consist not of the poets’ manipulation of a finite set of motifs, but of individual styles created out of shared expectations through recurrent negotiation between poets and audiences in an environment of emulation and rivalry. It is no accident that all the examples of *lo(ngius)* ‘it would take too long’ come from Pindar (p. 322), who accentuated for his own poetic purposes the stylizing tendency of Greek choral lyric.

To return to my opening metaphor, the waters of this kind of genre study have long since receded, leaving the book beached; it is unlikely nowadays to find a sympathetic readership. It is, however, on merit, not on fashion, that scholarship should be judged. Scholarly this work certainly is, and the relentless labour underpinning it is everywhere visible. Read with a sceptical eye on the allocation of passages to motif headings, on the motif-status of some of the material, and with a recognition that some of his motifs need to be combined to be informative, the book can be of use as a second port for anyone in search of parallels/generic raw material (*TLG* being the first); but it can safely be used only by those who already know their lyric. Consultation will be considerably less frequent for the omnipresent meta-language of symbols devised by P.; it has not been found helpful and few if any will bother to master it.

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ANDROMACHE RESTORED

W. ALLAN: *The Andromache and Euripidean Tragedy*. Pp. xii + 310. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. Cased, £40. ISBN: 0-19-815297-3.

William Allan’s study is a lucid, composed, and scholarly development of the central

thesis that each play represents a distinct thematic and dramatic complex, which merits individual attention. From this deceptively simple premise, A. constructs a sophisticated, interlocking, and convincing argument. In so doing, he succeeds in his aspiration to draw attention to the ‘neglected artistry of a very impressive and interesting text’ (p. vii).

A.’s approach is consistent with recent studies of individual plays, such as McDermott’s on the *Medea* (1989), Goff’s on the *Hippolytus* (1990), Croally’s on the *Trojan Women* (1994), and, most notably, Mossman’s on the *Hecuba* (1995). A.’s monograph seeks not only to examine the *Andromache* itself but also to relate this particular play to a discussion of Euripides’ theatrical imagination in general and to the cultural, literary, and political backgrounds informing the play. The dramas of Euripides, more so than those of Aeschylus or Sophocles, consistently inspire passionate and often extreme responses—complimentary or vituperative. A. steers a judicious passage between the Scylla and Charybdis, as it were, of Euripidean criticism, a course which offers an opportunity to test and to escape ‘some long-standing commonplaces about Euripidean tragedy’ (p. 1). Often regarded as a ‘problem play’, *Andromache* proves to be ‘no less valuable than more celebrated plays for the exploration of fundamental aspects of Euripidean theatre’ (p. 2).

The essential groundwork is laid out in the first chapter (‘Myth’) and is eloquently elaborated in subsequent chapters. A. challenges the conception of Euripides as ‘debunking iconoclast’ (p. 4): rather than being constrained by a fixed mythical ‘tradition’, Euripides ‘explores the open-endedness of tragic myth with insight, exuberance and curiosity’ (p. 38). In the second chapter, ‘Structure, Stagecraft, Unity’, A.’s debt to Taplin’s *Stagecraft* (1977) and Mossman’s study of the *Hecuba* (1995) is evident. A. counters the common complaint concerning the *Andromache*’s apparent lack of unity, a frequently repeated criticism inspired by ‘presuppositions based on [a] “classical” (sub-Aristotelian) order’ (p. 42). Rather than searching for (an often elusive) thematic or personal unity, A. examines ‘what particular effects the play’s deliberate profusion of incident and overlapping of myths are designed to create’ (p. 64). A.’s sequential analysis of the *Andromache* stresses the positive aspects of variety, individuality, and innovation presented by this and other Euripidean dramas, and propounds an ‘aesthetic of surprise, with philosophical significance’ (pp. 84–5). In Chapter III, A. discusses the vexed problem of ‘Characterisation’ and draws attention to the ‘intriguing, expansive effect of motivational uncertainty’ (p. 89). Once again, A. transforms criticism into a positive attribute, which is well-illustrated from the text and coherently presented. Language, imagery, and rhetoric all contribute to ‘characterisation’. Reappraising the functions and importance of Euripidean rhetoric in Chapter IV, A. places rhetoric within the larger dramatic context of the play(s) and also views them within the wider rhetorical context of fifth-century Athenian culture. A. harnesses the prevalence of Euripidean rhetoric to the concern with characterization, building admirably upon the previous chapter. Detailed, sensitive analyses of set speeches, especially *Andromache*’s defence (pp. 184–231), highlights the mutually reinforcing relationship between rhetoric and speaker. The scope and merits of a political reading of the *Andromache* are examined in Chapter V: simple anti-Spartan polemic is replaced by a more provocative and complex reading. To interpret pleasing references to Thessaly and Molossia and anti-Spartan tenor within the play as pure propaganda is, A. argues, both ‘artless and dull’ (p. 60). The *Andromache* nevertheless ‘played a decisive role in shaping and validating the Molossian tribe’s genealogical myth’ at a time when Athenian interest in the area was particularly keen (p. 153). A. proposes that the *Andromache* is a key play in the debate about performance outside

Athens. The relevance of contemporary Athenian concerns is clear, but A. reminds the reader that these references are part of an integrated and wide-ranging dramatization of divine and heroic myth. In Chapter VI ('Gender'), the question of Euripides' alleged misogyny or feminism does not concern A.: instead he asks 'why has Euripides deliberately invented or accentuated the role of women in so many tragic myths?' (p. 164). The *Andromache* reveals a myth being constructed to foreground the women's rôle and also 'raises a wide range of interlocking issues relating to desire, sex, and marriage . . . as well as to the social and political importance of legitimacy' (p. 164). Furthermore, the pressures on 'Euripidean women' reveal much about their male agents, and A. is keen to stress the 'need to take tragic men and issues of masculinity seriously' (p. 161). The Euripidean Chorus is yet another common target for attack; A., however, shows in Chapter VII that such hackneyed complaints are unfounded. The form and content of choral songs are inextricably linked—a sure sign of Euripidean artistry rather than a random, pleasant interlude. The chorus is flexible, and their response to the changing events is shifting but coherent; they reveal a 'malleable, but also intelligible and consistent identity' (p. 232). Problem plays such as the *Andromache* challenge and complicate the all too familiar images of Euripidean tragedy: 'Euripides the atheistic iconoclast' is another tag deftly dismantled by A. in the final chapter. This is a stimulating study, especially in the questions it raises, and begins to answer, on the *Andromache* and its relationship to Euripidean tragedy.

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THEOCRITUS

R. HUNTER (ed.): *Theocritus. A Selection. Idylls 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 13* (Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. Paper, £15. 95. Pp. xi + 308. ISBN: 0-521-57420-X.

This splendid volume offers text and commentary on eight of the Idylls of Theocritus. The introduction offers sections on Theocritus, bucolic poetry, the *locus amoenus*, metre, language, and transmission. The discussion of bucolic poetry and its terminology in Theocritus is particularly useful (pp. 5–12); Hunter places emphasis on the idea of contest, but also suggests the possibility of Epicharmus being one strand of the Sicilian tradition that finds its way into Theocritus. Indeed, the concern of H. to stress links with tragedy and comedy is a very welcome feature of the book as a whole (see e.g. notes on 1.115–21, 1.136); the importance of mime for Theocritus should not obscure the influences of other dramatic genres. The sections on metre and on language are also invaluable; students will welcome the exposition of Theocritean metre (pp. 17–21), and the clarity of H.'s catalogue of Doric forms in Theocritus (pp. 24–6), particularly since H.'s commentary makes frequent reference both to metre and to language. H.'s practice of treating metre and dialect as part of the overall literary effect is admirable.

The introductions to the individual poems are as suggestive as they are informative. Thus, with Idyll 1 H. points out that the sense of tradition created within the poem may be as important as the elaborate and perhaps insoluble issue of the 'historical'