

on Ajax's burial. Once again, Finglass works hard on staging. I particularly recommend his long treatment of suicide (376–79), in which accounts of other scholars are convincingly rejected. His claim that Athena is invisible to both Odysseus and Ajax in the prologue (137–38) is questionable: he underestimates tragic parallels for ἄποπτος (15), which regularly means 'out of sight' rather than 'invisible'; I prefer Odysseus gradually seeing and approaching Athena. Elsewhere he takes for granted the use of *ekkyklema* on unproblematic grounds.

The strength of the book lies in its 65 pages of bibliography, including about 1,560 records (followed by indexes of subjects and Greek words). Everywhere, Finglass mercifully cites (and criticizes) any contribution suitable for discussion; not rarely, he also embeds direct quotations from other scholars, thus providing the reader with a useful starting-point for further scrutiny. Omissions are few: I was surprised not to see W. Jens' *Bauformen der griechischen Tragödie* (Munich, 1971) or V. Di Benedetto's *Sofocle* (Florence, 1983); a quick look to the latter and E. Medda's *La tragedia sulla scena* (2nd edition, Turin, 2002) would have provided Finglass with thoughtful feedback on staging.

Misprints are trivial: at 699 *in textu*, read Κνώσι', not Κνώι'; at page 234, line 3 fb, λόγοις is a γράφεται-variant for φίλοις, not λόγοις, etc.

In conclusion, scholars and students should be grateful to Finglass for this invaluable book: even in places where his arguments arouse reservations, they always demand careful consideration and criticism. No doubt this commentary will stand as a milestone of Sophoclean scholarship for decades to come.

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KYRIAKOU (P.) **The Past in Aeschylus and Sophocles**. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011. Pp. 596. €109.95. 9783110257526.

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In *The Past in Aeschylus and Sophocles*, Kyriakou sets out 'to examine the import of the past within the surviving plays of Aeschylus and Sophocles and determine whether the treatment of the past differs within the work of each poet and between them' (2). Given the prominence of past events in all of our surviving Greek tragedies, Kyriakou's

enterprise is worthwhile, and her book goes a long way towards filling a major gap in the existing scholarship. Although it has much to contribute to our current understanding of the workings of the tragic past, however, the volume skirts several issues which could have helped to clarify its focus.

Kyriakou covers six plays by each author, devoting a chapter to each play, with the exception of *Choephoroi* and *Eumenides*, which are grouped together. She does not discuss *Prometheus Bound* or *Antigone: Prometheus Bound* because she considers it not to be Aeschylean and *Antigone* on the grounds that 'the conflict over the burial of Polyneices ... is not directly linked to the terrible past of the Labdacid family' (12). While the lack of *Prometheus Bound* does not harm her analysis of Aeschylus, Kyriakou's decision to omit *Antigone* is indicative of one of the general problems with her approach to the tragic past. Although *Antigone* contains relatively few references to prior generations of Labdacids, the more recent past of Oedipus' family is important from the first lines of the play, and, rather than omitting *Antigone*, it might have been helpful for Kyriakou to consider how *Antigone* is shaped by a different past than that which operates in other Labdacid tragedies.

Kyriakou divides each of her chapters into sections in which she discusses different aspects of the past in the play in question. Many of these sections focus on the relationship to the past of a particular character or group; as Kyriakou makes clear, Clytemnestra's view of the past in *Agamemnon* differs from that of the chorus, and both Clytemnestra and the chorus have different perspectives on the past than that which emerges from Cassandra's prophecies. Dividing her chapters in this way allows her to present a nuanced view of the past in each play, but Kyriakou still occasionally falls into the trap of suggesting that the past can be reliably reconstructed from the statements of a particular character. In this vein, while she acknowledges that Philoctetes' view of the past has been coloured by his treatment at the hands of the Greek leaders, she pays insufficient attention to the possibility of falsehood in Neoptolemus' account of his quarrel over Achilles' arms.

Both distant and more recent past events can have lasting effects, and the tragic past can rarely be entirely separated from the present and the future. As becomes evident at multiple points in Kyriakou's discussion, many of the most important past events in Greek tragedy are oracles

and prophecies which come to fulfilment during or immediately after the present time of a given play. Although her discussion would be strengthened by further engagement with the question of how oracles delivered in the past differ from less obviously forward-looking past events, Kyriakou says much that is useful on the subject of tragic oracles. Her discussion of the extent to which Calchas' prediction in *Ajax* implies any hope for the hero's survival is particularly helpful; she argues convincingly that, given Athena's known hostility, Calchas' claim that Ajax might be saved 'with the help of god' (*Aj.* 779) indicates 'the virtual futility of the attempt' (190) to save him.

After discussing her 12 plays in detail, Kyriakou comes to the conclusion that the past in Aeschylus is primarily the concern of the chorus, while the past in Sophocles is primarily the concern – and often the primary concern – of the principal characters. This distinction is both useful and well supported, but it also raises questions about the differences between characters and chorus which, although beyond the already vast scope of Kyriakou's book, would have made her conclusions more compelling. Although more thorough discussion in this vein of her use of key terms would have helped Kyriakou's argument throughout, the volume contains many careful readings and has much to offer those who are interested in the temporal complexity of Greek tragedy.

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SONNINO (M.) *Euripidis Erechthei Quae Exstant, a cura di Maurizio Sonnino*. Florence: F. Le Monnier, 2010. Pp. 520, illus. €37. 9788800740067.

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This is a new full-scale text, commentary and translation of the extant fragments of Euripides' *Erechtheus*. The edition's analytical and meticulous nature is apparent if compared to the last endeavour of a similar kind by Paolo Carrara more than 30 years ago (*Euripide. Eretteo. Introduzione, testo e commento*, Florence, 1977). Suffice it to say that Carrara's edition offers some 25 pages of concise introduction, while Sonnino grants us some 120 pages of no less concise prefatory remarks on a text mass of less than 250 verses (many of which severely truncated).

Sonnino's introduction is exclusively concerned with the plot and central characters of the play, while linguistic, stylistic and metrical questions as well as other considerations of poetic technique are relegated to the relevant lemmata of the extensive commentary. I single out four topics that are tackled in Sonnino's introduction.

(1) The choice of the local hero Erechtheus as protagonist and the Athenian-centred topic. Sonnino rightly remarks that myths underlying the plots of Attic drama are usually more pan-helladic in nature than is the case in the present play. In order to explain this deviation, Sonnino ingeniously refers us to the (exclusively Athenian) literary genre of funeral speeches, in which the laudatory section (*epainos*) plays a particular role (36–42). This reference is illuminating not only because there are clearly strong nationalistic and epainetic elements in Praxithea's long speech in which she endorses – and even encourages – the sacrifice of her daughter for the sake of Athens (*fr.* 12, *cf.* pp. 113–19), but also because the whole plot (at the end of which Erechtheus and his three daughters lie dead, but Athens stays victorious due to Athena's intervention) must have reminded the Athenian audience of its own perils during the Peloponnesian War. This is all the more appropriate if we follow Sonnino (and most others) in dating the piece to the period of the Athenian-Spartan truce of 423/422 (27–34). *Mutatis mutandis*, part of the text may then be read as an *epitaphios* of the Athenian dead of the Archidamian War in disguised dramatic/poetic rather than the usual rhetoric/prosaic form.

(2) Erechtheus occupying the position of Ion as the defender of Athens against the Thracian Eumolpus in the mythic tradition. Concluding his extensive discussion (45–63), Sonnino remarks that the key to understanding this role switching is Erechtheus' unquestionable credentials as the autochthonous Athenian *par excellence* (while Ion on his father's side was not Athenian; 62).

(3) Eumolpus' role in Euripides' drama as compared to his appearance in other sources. Sonnino singles out two mutually incompatible sides of this mythical character: on the one hand, the pious and just Eleusinian hierophant and *archēgetēs* of the priestly family of the Eumolpidae, and, on the other, the Thracian, son of Poseidon and sworn enemy of Athens, in short the character of Euripides' *Erechtheus* (63–90). In a separate section, Sonnino offers the relevant testimonia, organized along the lines of the two aforementioned natures of Eumolpus (143–72).