

clearly signalled in square-bracketed textual notes, sometimes described as ‘convincing/attractive’ etc., sometimes with a note of scepticism (‘bold/adventurous’ etc.). Where West obelizes C. usually selects an emendation from West’s apparatus criticus. Only very rarely (*Ag.* 1196–7, 1343, *Eum.* 92–3, 573, 666) does he disagree with West outright. The divergences are listed in an Appendix, which, however, omits *Ag.* 547, *Cho.* 462, and *Eum.* 666.

The Explanatory Notes provide much helpful guidance and information, with particular attention paid to recurring imagery and themes, and with many cross-references to other notes or to the Introduction (in the latter case sometimes by page number, sometimes, less helpfully, by reference to a sub-section of a section). Less frequent are references to other Aeschylean plays, and other authors are rarely mentioned. There are good introductions to individual scenes or passages, and matters of style (alliteration, ring-composition, word-order, etc.) are not neglected. The stage-directions, admirably full though they are, may sometimes be questioned. Clytemnestra’s entries and exits in *Agamemnon* are less certain than C. suggests, and he strangely gives no indication that Aegisthus at the end of the play is accompanied, as he surely is (whatever may be the correct attribution of the lines at 1649–53), by a bodyguard, despite which even the feeble chorus is prepared to tackle him. At *Cho.* 584 Orestes and Pylades are oddly said to withdraw only ‘to one side’. Surely they should withdraw altogether from our sight, if only to collect the luggage with which they will shortly return. In his note on 886 C. comments on the short time in which the third actor has to change his costume between 887 and 892, but he does not consider the possibility that Pylades does not enter until 899. Is there any evidence in the text that the corpses of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus are actually covered by the robe in which Agamemnon was murdered (pp. xiii, lv, stage-direction at 972)?

As for non-staging matters, while the introduction to the *kommos* of the *Choephoroi* gives an excellent account of its structure, I should have welcomed more discussion of its dramatic function. In *Eumenides* C.’s account of the voting of Athena is clear and, in my opinion, correct (she casts her vote after the eleventh human juror), but a reader needs more help with the question of *when* Orestes has received purification. It is surely Hermes’ title *πομπαῖος*, not his *name*, that means ‘sender, escorter’ (*Cho.* 1–3 and *Eum.* 90nn.). Disagreements and questions of this kind are inevitable, but they in no way detract from the positive value of a fine book.

University of Glasgow

A. F. GARVIE

## TRAGIC ACHILLES

P. MICHELAKIS: *Achilles in Greek Tragedy*. Pp. xiii + 218, ills. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. Cased, £40/US\$55. ISBN: 0-521-81843-5.

The Iliadic Achilles is generally regarded as setting the pattern for for all subsequent treatments of the hero, including the Achilles of Greek tragedy. In this monograph based on his Cambridge dissertation, Pantelis Michelakis stakes out a different approach: he examines ‘the dramatists’ search to redefine the Homeric model by focusing on mythological episodes and aspects of Achilles’ personality which range beyond the spatio-temporal and conceptual boundaries of the *Iliad*’ (p. 187).

M. begins with a sketch of ‘Achilles outside Athens’—a cult hero whose sites of worship were scattered around the Greek world. He then briefly surveys ‘Achilles in

Athens'—a figure of mythological rather than religious significance who is invoked by philosophers, historiographers, and artists as emblematic of the exceptional individual. Finally he turns to 'Achilles in tragedy', cataloguing the twenty-five-odd tragedies from the fifth and fourth centuries in which Achilles played a prominent rôle, and identifying three recurrent aspects of Achilles in tragedy. The first, which tragedy shares with the *Iliad*, is that of a charismatic but controversial individual who clashes with his society, withdraws from it, and is eventually reintegrated and/or destroyed. The second is that of a post-Iliadic figure, a hero who makes his influence felt even in death, and the third is pre-Iliadic, a child or adolescent Achilles. These three aspects provide the organizing framework for the book.

M.'s first chapter takes up Aeschylus' *Myrmidons*, which, exceptionally for tragic treatments of Achilles, poses a direct challenge to Homer by adapting episodes from Books 9 and 16–18 of the *Iliad*. M. makes astute use of the fragments at his disposal to bring out the play's contemporary political resonance. He shows how the action dramatizes the tension between an aristocratic individual and the democratic collective (a tension exacerbated by Achilles' exclusionary homosexual bond with Patroclus), and makes the intriguing suggestion that the Myrmidons' threat to stone Achilles for treason—not a spontaneous act of popular justice, but a premeditated targeting of a politically dangerous individual by the group—bears 'structural similarities' to the contemporary institution of ostracism. M. is equally astute in contrasting *Myrmidons* to the *Oresteia*: '[w]ith his *Myrmidons* Aeschylus seems to problematise the linear progression from civil strife due to personal interests to the social cohesion of the newly-founded democracy, from memory to amnesty, from vengeance to (democratic) politics . . . The *Myrmidons* shows that the transition from the power of the few to the power of the many is neither linear nor smooth' (p. 56).

According to Aristophanes' *Frogs*, Achilles was memorably portrayed in *Myrmidons* as sitting veiled and silent, unresponsive to the importunings of his comrades. M. relates this posture to fifth-century vase paintings of the embassy to Achilles in *Iliad* 9 (indeed, three such scenes are reproduced in the book), and describes it as 'a codified expression of distress and anger' (p. 36). While this is a reasonable interpretation, M.'s discussion would have been enriched by taking into account the proposal of Gloria Ferrari (*Métis* 5 [1990], 185–200) that such veiled figures are metaphorically wrapped in *aĩdŏs*, which assumes visible form and envelops its possessor like a cloak.

M.'s discussion of Euripides' *Hecuba* (Chapter 3) describes an Achilles who functions as an absence rather than a presence. The ghost of Achilles never appears on stage; rather, his demands are refracted through the accounts and responses of Polydorus' ghost, the chorus, Hecuba, Odysseus, the Greek army, and Polyxena. M. argues that Polydorus is the only reliable narrator, since all the others interpret Achilles' wishes in accordance with their own interests. It is true that Polydorus is omniscient, but he is not, in my view, as disinterested as M. assumes: he too has a project within the play, namely to obtain burial at his mother's hands, and his interest in the final disposition of the events he describes leaves its imprint on his narrative. M. concludes that Achilles' identity in the play is complex and fluctuating; he is represented as 'something between a deceased warrior, a heroised warrior, an epic hero, a vengeful cult hero and a deity' (p. 83). In short, the ghost of Achilles represents the contested past.

In his fourth chapter, M. reads the Achilles of *Iphigenia in Aulis* as a 'hero-to-be' who is burdened by the obligation to live up not only to his inheritance and his education, but also to his future reputation, and who finds his heroism diminished and

overshadowed by Iphigenia's. M. discusses how the nexus of body, name, and identity functions in the tragedy, and in an illuminating excursus relates this theme to *Helen*, another late Euripidean play. M. neither ignores the play's textual difficulties nor allows himself to get bogged down by them; rather, he turns them to advantage by discussing certain interpolated passages as 'attempts at interpretation, intervention, modification, subversion, and rewriting of the ancient character of Achilles and of the plot by ancient readers' (p. 129).

M.'s final chapter swiftly but valuably surveys other tragedies that present Achilles either as a potent influence from the past (Sophocles' *Ajax*, *Philoctetes*, and *Scyrians*, Euripides' *Andromache* and *Electra*, *Rhesus*) or as a child and youth (Sophocles' satyric *Lovers of Achilles* and possibly satyric *Those Who Dine Together*, Euripides' *Telephus*).

M.'s innovative methodology has one unintended consequence. As his discussion progresses the Iliadic Achilles becomes the elephant in the room: the less he is acknowledged, the larger he looms. Thus it is difficult not to think, in connection with the brooding, immobile Achilles of *Myrmidons*, of the Homeric Achilles' description of himself as 'sit[ting] here beside my ships, a useless burden upon the land' (*Il.* 18.104). The conflict between Agamemnon and Achilles' ghost in *Hecuba* over the disposition of Polyxena bears obvious parallels to the quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles in the *Iliad* over the disposition of Briseis. And surely the motif of Achilles' anger that figures in so many of the plays discussed by M. is not 'another theme of the mythological tradition around Achilles' (pp. 92–3), but the fundamental, central theme. But if Michelakis cannot entirely succeed in displacing the Homeric Achilles from his traditional preeminence, he has nonetheless produced a deft, insightful, rigorous, and rewarding study which encourages readers to undertake their own reappraisal of what tragedy does and does not owe to Homer.

Smith College

JUSTINA GREGORY

## ANCIENT VS. MODERN IN SOPHOCLES

M. ALTMAYER: *Unzeitgemäßes Denken bei Sophokles. (Hermes Einzelschriften 85.)* Pp. 330. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2001. Paper, €70. ISBN: 3-515-07963-7.

The thesis of this book (a revised version of A.'s Ph.D. dissertation) is that Sophocles shows old-fashioned heroes who are unwilling to disregard, in favour of success, values which are opposed to contemporary political discourse and that he endorses their position. 'Contemporary' includes attitudes such as over-confidence in one's own competence, devaluation of traditional moral values, religion and family, elevation of the *polis*, willingness to use rhetoric in a manner distanced from ethics, pragmatism and opportunism. These are treated not only as sophistic but as widely accepted ideas. This broad approach is not unproblematic since practically any character displaying morals seems to be old-fashioned and it is not entirely clear against exactly which standards the heroes' attitudes are measured. A. mentions Thucydidean passages particularly often, but there is no discussion as to how generalizable they are in referring to contemporary Athenian society.

A. cleverly combines 'pictist' and 'hero-worshipper' views in his interpretation: although Sophocles' heroes uphold morals, they still may act in questionable ways. Each chapter treats one of the extant tragedies in chronological order, either following