houses, leaving behind the children of the first marriage, and enter a new marriage . . . Only Admetos . . . could keep the household together after his mate's death.

Yet in Luschnig/Roisman's concluding comments regarding Admetus' extravagant promises of mourning, we hear (p. 188): 'The Athenian audience, who looked no more kindly than their modern counterparts on lone wolves who isolated themselves from their fellows, were bound to ask what Alcestis' sacrifice accomplished and why Admetus bothered to accept if he planned to spend his days with neither pleasure nor purpose.' An intact *oikos* may not altogether satisfy *our* need for motivation, but it may go part of the way to satisfy an Athenian.

Similarly, to say (as on p. 102) 'In ancient Athenian culture, the two things desirable in a wife were good birth . . . and good looks' ignores much evidence regarding the desirability of good character, a topic at the heart of this play. There are other such claims. On p. 220, in a discursus on another 'indifferent' husband, we read 'Homer presents Menelaus as a husband whose sole care for his wife was that his marriage to her made him Zeus' son-in-law, thus assuring him a place in the Elysian fields.' The *Odyssey* does not sustain this reading. Similarly, 'there is also a good deal of spite in [Alcestis'] demand that Admetus promise not to remarry' seems unwarranted by the text, and unlikely to move students to a deeper understanding of the issues.

This play lends itself to discussion of the manuscript tradition. The use of Murray's (1902) text, and the absence of an *apparatus criticus* seems like a lost teaching opportunity, although the notes do mention when L. & R.'s text differs (occasionally) from Murray's. I do not know why the authors distinguish between dialogue and chorus only in terms of meter—would not a brief reference to the (to us) surprising use of two dialects in one art form be helpful? And the (unexplained) 'lagaoedic' (*sic*) on p. 221 as a metrical term is outmoded. I found more typographical errors (Greek and English) than are justified in a basic textbook.

There are real merits in this spirited edition, and I can imagine that its authors have inspired lively classroom discussions, yet I prefer Connacher's edition as a teaching tool.

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AN INTRODUCTION TO TRAGEDY

G. Avezzù: *Il mito sulla scena. La tragedia ad Atene*. Pp. 305. Venice: Marsilio, 2003. Paper, €23. ISBN: 88-317-8070-0.

What do we expect to find in an introduction to Greek tragedy? Different countries give different answers. The older books of Lesky and Pohlenz gave primacy to the reconstruction of the individual career of each author, and presented a full discussion of all extant tragedies. Some important recent British and American works focus on thematic issues and do not aim at giving comprehensive information about the plays. Several introductory books on Greek tragedy have appeared in Italy in recent years. Some of them give primacy to themes (D. Lanza, *La disciplina dell'emozione* [Milan, 1997]; D. Susanetti, *Il teatro dei greci* [Rome, 2003]), while others focus on specific problems (staging: V. Di Benedetto, E. Medda, *La tragedia sulla scena* [Turin, 1997]; staging and *Bauformen*: M. Di Marco, *La tragedia greca* [Rome, 2000]). F. Ferrari,

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Introduzione al teatro greco (Milan, 1996) analyses plays year by year, including comedy.

A.'s book was originally part of a three-volume, multi-authored history of Greek and Latin literature, edited by I. Lana and V. Maltese: *Storia della civiltà letteraria greca e latina* (Turin, 1998), I.236–457. This explains why A. gives us a handbook, with detailed discussion of plays and authors, rather than an essay. His work is divided into two parts: a presentation of the tragic genre (pp. 9–58) and the 'Annals of Greek Tragedy' (pp. 59–264). In turning his chapter into an independent work A. slightly abridged the general introduction, updated the bibliography, added a glossary of metrical and literary terms, and made other minor revisions.

The introductory section makes many interesting points about the careers of Attic tragedians, the chronology of their works and the relationship of Attic tragedy to Athenian politics. He has also quite a few good observations on the anthropology of satyr drama. One would welcome a longer treatment of these topics by A.; here the argument is at times compressed. One also misses a section on the Athenian festival of Dionysus (see *Storia della civiltà letteraria*, I.236–41) and a brief description of the theatrical buildings of Athens. The 'Annals' survey all the extant plays, and (most importantly) all the important the fragmentary ones. A. does not follow a vulgata. He thinks anew all the major problems in interpretation and dating, giving updated bibliography on each one. As a result, he has quite a few thought-provoking suggestions on a number of plays, and offers an accurate guide to this vast material. Advanced undergraduate students will benefit from the book; scholars looking for information on a play or a myth will find a useful, if inevitably selective, introduction to the problems.

As A. himself points out, it is difficult to follow a strict chronological arrangement given the uncertainty on exact date and order of many plays (p. 53). A. turns this drawback into an advantage. The strong point of the book lies in the attention given to the treatment of myth in individual authors. A. alters the chronological format to discuss together plays that treat similar or related myths (see e.g. p. 132: plays on Antigone; pp. 149–52: on Philoctetes; pp. 69 and 214–15: on Oedipus), and is characteristically alert to the 'innovations' each ancient author introduced in staging a myth (p. 193: Euripides, *Phaethon*; p. 232: Critias, *Peirithous*; pp. 240–1: Theodectes' *Philoctetes*; p. 251: Euripides, *Iphigenia in Aulis*). Rather than assuming that Greek writers adopted mythical variants from an indefinitely large body of 'traditional tales', A. shows how specific innovations fit each individual work (see also pp. 69 and 99).

A. often draws attention to the connections between tragedy and historical texts for rhetoric, content, or social background (see e. g. p. 150 on Aesch. fr. 451o, 53 Radt and Hdt. 8.111–12; p. 159 on Eur. *Hcld*. 174–8 and [X.] *Ath*. 2.19; p. 218 on Soph. *O.R.* 584–93 and Hdt. 5.106). I would like to single out the presentation of Ion of Chios, with a perceptive political reading of his animal imagery (pp. 109–13). See also the discussion of 'Spartan' traits in the portrayal of Orestes in Euripides' *Andromache* (p. 166) and the analysis of the presence of the 'Dorian' hero Heracles in Athenian plays (p. 189). A. rightly shies away from allegorical interpretations of plays: the treatment of possible allusions to Alcibiades in the *Philoctetes* makes useful and thoughtful methodological points (p. 238). On the other hand, A. states that Aeschylus' *Suppliants* allude to the exile of Themistocles (p. 81), which I find less convincing: there is no specific reference, the suppliants are women, and one would doubt whether the state would allow an allusion to an exile at a public festival. Where he has a little extra space, esp. on Aeschylus, A. guides the reader through the metaphors and images of

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individual tragedies. He allows himself nine thought-provoking pages to present Aeschylus' *Septem*.

Sometimes a non-specialist would welcome some information about ancient geography: not every student would be able to locate e.g. Trachis, Psophis, Tenedos, or Eleutherai (see respectively pp. 113, 141, 149, 163). The *Medea* of Euripides is given an extraordinarily brief treatment: only three pages (pp. 147–9), as much as the fragmentary *Antiope* (pp. 162–4). This is, however, an isolated example. On p. 228 A. follows Diano and von Arnim in attributing a fragment reported by John Lydus to the *Hypsipyle* of Euripides. This must come from the *Second Phrixos*: see V. Di Benedetto, *Maia* 17 (1965), 388–90.

The extensive final bibliography is divided by topic, and offers intelligent guidance in a difficult field.

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TO DO WITH DIONYSUS

C. SOURVINOU-INWOOD: *Tragedy and Athenian Religion*. Pp. xviii + 547. Lanham, Boulder, New York, and Oxford: Lexington Books, 2003. Paper, £20.95. ISBN: 0-7391-0400-4 (0-7391-0399-7 hbk).

Much recent discussion of Greek tragedy has focused on its relationship with the *polis*. In a very substantial new book based on her Jackson Lectures at Harvard in 1994, Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood seeks to redress the balance: in her view tragedy was, both in its early development and in its fifth-century heyday, principally a *religious* phenomenon. Her argument is complex and demanding. It has two parts. One part considers how proto-tragedy might have evolved into the form in which we know it. The other part sets out how, according to S.-I., we should interpret the religious dimension of the surviving plays.

The reconstruction of proto-tragedy is extended, painstaking and necessarily speculative. For S.-I., the Great Dionysia began in the later sixth century

> as a festival focussing on a ritual *xenismos* of Dionysos . . . In the earliest form of the festival the *xenismos* of Dionysos took place at the prytaneion; it involved the sacrifice of a *tragos* accompanied by the singing of hymns, of a processional dithyramb as a *prosodion* and other dithyrambs at the altar. After the *xenismos* the procession escorted the statue from the prytaneion to the sanctuary of Dionysos Eleuthereus. (p. 197)

In their choral re-enactment of the original *xenismos* the singers had, S.-I. suggests, a double temporal identity: they were Athenian citizens of the present, looking back upon the mythological past, but they were also invested with the persona of those original Athenians who had first rejected Dionysos and then welcomed him as a divinity. For S.-I., tragedy at its origin was emphatically something to do with Dionysos.

From the dithyrambs sung at the *tragos*-sacrifice there emerged, according to S.-I.'s reconstruction, a form of proto-tragedy involving a *hypokrites* and an unmasked chorus; this in turn developed into mimetic, masked drama, and eventually into the tragedy we know. Coupled with this process was a modification in the stance of the chorus: from being 'a segment of the Athenian community representing the whole

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