mentioning the misattribution of my work at p. 162 n. 46. And on the following page, the lines of *Supplices* translated 'For in the eyes of women it is merely fitting that everything be done by males' might be rendered more precisely 'For it is proper for women who are wise to do everything through males'. The slightly different emphasis in the Greek is germane to M.'s overall argument.

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ALCESTIS

C. A. E. Luschnig, H. M. Roisman: *Euripides'* Alcestis. With Notes and Commentary. (Oklahoma Series in Classical Culture 29.) Pp. xv + 284. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003. Paper, US$24.95 (Cased, US$49.95). ISBN: 0-8061-3574-3 (0-8061-3458-5 hbk).

This annotated edition targets undergraduates whose desire for sophisticated literary analysis combines with limited Greek. The authors imagine third or fourth semester students. Thus they include review of irregular forms and syntactical structures such as conditionals; a basic vocabulary list (highlighting multiply used words) appears at the end. Students may consult an online translation by Luschnig, and there is a useful bibliography.

Classical undergraduates certainly need the text's reminders to think of staging. Following line-by-line notes, lengthy discussions appear, to be read after students have formed their own opinion. These sometimes juxtapose contrasting interpretations of the two editors, as indicated by initials. Other sections of explication or interpretation do not bear attribution, and so I found myself wondering whether these passages reflected consensus.

At the outset, the authors direct readers to keep in mind two criteria: 'Does it fit the text?' and 'Does it make sense on the stage?' While these are important, experience teaches that students also need historical context in order to evaluate what they are seeing. I miss reference to Csapo and Slater's survey, which situates beginners in the world of Greek tragedy. True, we moderns constitute an 'audience', and our instinctive response matters, but an unmediated and (as is common with undergraduates, strong) personal reaction should mark the beginning of a learning curve. The authors justly observe (p. 164) that there is no one 'answer' to the play, but surely some interpretative approaches lead to better readings than others.

So what kind of interpretative readings feature here? For example, if one wishes to address the question of why Alcestis chose to die, the notes ad loc. (p. 98) mention her 'love' for her husband and concern for the children. They also mention concern for the house, but without making clear that this is a case where cultural context must shape our reading. As A. Michelini (*Euripides and the Tragic Tradition* [Madison, 1987], p. 327) observes, there are two relevant Greek words for love (*eros* and *philia*), and confusion between them has led scholars to misread Alcestis' sense of her marital rôle. Michelini further observes

> Euripides did not have to explain to the audience what was part of their background knowledge about life: young women, once widowed, would ordinarily return to their fathers'

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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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