appears on the page. The Greek in l. 204 should be corrected from βαρυνθεὶ̓ς to βαρυνθεὶς.

Colby College HANNA M. ROISMAN

TRAGIC VIOLATIONS

E. BELFIORE: *Murder Among Friends. Violation of* Philia *in Greek Tragedy*. Pp. xix + 282. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. Cased, £36.50. ISBN: 0-19-513149-5.

Elizabeth Belfiore's book covers more ground than its main title suggests, discussing all kinds of violation of *philia* and defining *philia* broadly to include relationships with *xenoi*, suppliants, and even (with reference to Ajax's suicide) oneself. Harm to *philoi*, B. argues, is a consistent and fundamental concern of tragedy (whether or not Aristotle meant to imply this in *Poetics* 14), and is pervasive in its main plots and many incidental features. While kin-murder is its strongest manifestation, other violations are assimilated to kin-murder and represented in analogous ways.

Chapter 1 sets out this thesis and summarizes B.'s conclusions from a survey (detailed in three appendices) of the known plot-material of tragedy. She discerns seventeen extant tragedies about violence between blood-kin, nine about *pathê* involving married couples, *xenoi*, or suppliants, and six concerning significant though less obvious violations of *philia*. In the fragments, harm to *philoi* or something analogous is found to have been central to about 75% of plots (though often the basis for classification is slight; titles alone suffice for 78 of the 110 plays by minor tragedians included in this count.).

Chapters 2–6 discuss five plays where B. sees the theme of *philia*-violation as crucial. In *Iphigenia in Tauris* salvation is achieved through the reassertion of *philia*-obligations which previous generations of the family of Pelops have denied. In Aeschylus' *Supplices* the issues of marriage, *xenia*, and suppliancy are seen as central and interrelated, so that 'the union of Zeus and Io can be interpreted as the prototype of an ideal Greek marriage' (p. 56) characterized by suppliancy, *aidôs*, and persuasion; the trilogy may have culminated in the reconciliation and marriage-renewal of Zeus and Hera as well as the proper marriage of one or more Danaids. In *Philoctetes* B. traces the development of a *xenia* relationship between Neoptolemus and Philoctetes which increasingly inhibits the younger man from its betrayal, and goes on to argue that the play's allusions to Skyros make it an unheroic antithesis of Troy, reminding us of Achilles' seduction of Deidameia and Neoptolemus' illegitimate birth, and so contributing to a distinctly ambivalent characterization of Neoptolemus. *Andromache* is analysed as a tragedy of obligations towards friends and against enemies thrown into turmoil by Neoptolemus' misalliance with Andromache (and behind that, Peleus' misalliance with Thetis). In *Ajax*, B. argues, the suicide has a paradoxically positive value: on the one hand to kill oneself is to harm one's own greatest *philos*, but on the other hand Ajax sees his death as a means of fulfilling his obligations and restoring his standing *vis-à-vis* both enemies and friends: 'Just as he will yield honor to his enemies in order to get honor from them in his turn, so he will give present pain to his friends in order to benefit them in the future' (p. 112).

B. offers useful insights into each of her chosen plays, but in promoting her main thesis she sometimes pushes interpretations too far or treats texts in questionable ways. In *Poetics* 11 *anagnôrisis* is surely not 'the realisation that one is in a state of friendship

© The Classical Association, 2003

https://doi.org/10.1093/cr/53.1.16 Published online by Cambridge University Press

or enmity with one's *philoi*, because one's actions are, were, or will be those of a friend or enemy' (p. 4). I doubt if *tous enthade* in *IT* 389 means the human race in general (p. 23), and the text of *IT* gives little attention to the fact that Pelops was the killer (*authentês*) of his wife's father (pp. 23–4). B.'s argument for supposing that Sophocles' Neoptolemus has really been robbed of his father's arms by Odysseus (pp. 75–6) elides the fact that traditionally (as in the *Little Iliad*) Odysseus was awarded the armour but later passed it on to Neoptolemus. Her translation of *Phil*. 942–3 to suggest a reference to Neoptolemus' acceptance of the bow at 776 (p. 70) overlooks the rhetorical parallelism between 942–3 and 941, and the fact that *labôn* is a supplementary participle. Preference for the MSS reading *ôpheloumenos* at *Phil*. 1383, so that 'Neoptolemos shows an Odyssean concern with profit, even at the end of the play' (p. 78), seems to me misplaced.

B.'s brief characterizations of the other extant tragedies are sometimes reductive, with concentration on the violation-of-*philia* template tending to divert attention from the particularity and complexity of individual plays. Thus in *Eumenides* 'mother, in the guise of her Furies, torments son' (p. 13), in *Prometheus* 'Zeus tortures his uncle' (p. 14), and in *Persians* 'Xerxes' act of attacking Greece can also be seen as unintentional harm of his own kin and other *philoi*' (p. 155). Rapid identifications of what the fragmentary plays were 'about' in terms of harm to *philoi* seem strained in some cases, while in others B. omits points that might support her. In Euripides' *Melanippe Desmôtis* (pp. 171–2) the queen's plot against her stepsons led to her own brothers' deaths. In Sophocles' *Odysseus Mainomenos* (p. 197) the crisis must have been Odysseus' near-killing of his own son. Sophocles' *Lakonian Women* (p. 197) must have had attendants of Helen as its chorus, and was probably about Odysseus' dealings with Helen as her xenos and suppliant in Troy.

If B.'s interpretative touch is not always as deft as it might be, her basic claim that *philia*-violation is a generic feature of tragedy is broadly convincing, and her book is a useful reminder of how tragic plots can be understood in these terms.

University of Calgary MARTIN CROPP

THE ART OF ARISTOPHANES

M. S. SILK: *Aristophanes and the Definition of Comedy*. Pp. 456. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. Cased, £50. ISBN: 0-19-814029-0.

Silk's main concern in this book is to explore the literary greatness of Aristophanes. His emphasis on Aristophanes as a poet and writer means that his approach is literary critical in the strictest sense, that is, it focuses on the analysis of the aesthetic qualities of Aristophanes' writings rather than on the historical context in which the plays were produced and performed. Discussion of Aristophanic comedy almost always ends up debating the question of whether, or to what extent, the plays are serious, usually in relation to Athenian politics. S. points out that even though critics may reach opposing conclusions (for some comedy is primarily a form of entertainment with no serious political intent, for others it can express serious political views), they share certain basic assumptions: that the seriousness of the plays depends on the poet's intentions; that it can only be interpreted in relation to external circumstances; that seriousness is better than non-seriousness (we say 'I was only joking', but never

© The Classical Association, 2003

https://doi.org/10.1093/cr/53.1.16 Published online by Cambridge University Press