Il taglio dato allo studio, originale e interessante per gli obiettivi che si prefigge (dimostrare «la varietà del modo di porsi dei guerrieri iliadici di fronte agli imperativi ’eroici’ di abnegazione e coraggio», p. 365), risente a volte di un eccessivo scrupolo tassonomico, che conduce per esempio a stilare diverse categorie tipologiche di discorsi (si rivelano tuttavia utili le tavole alle p. 333, 365, 383, etc.). Resta comunque fondamentale l’immagine di «un universo bellico slacciato e molteplice, in cui la disposizione verso la battaglia e la morte e l’atteggiamento nella lotta sono disegnati con grande varietà [...] con difference di vedute tra i vari guerrieri [...] ma anche incoerenze interne ai singoli personaggi» (p. 418).


In definitiva, pur senza apportare sostanziali elementi di novità alle problematiche affrontate, i saggi presentati in questo volume, per la ricchezza dell’apparato interpretativo e la finezza delle analisi, forniscono una significativa ed utile testimonianza dell’inesauribile fermento di ricerche e di prospettive ancora da realizzare ed aprire nel campo degli studi omeristici. Il merito delle autrici è di mettere a disposizione degli studiosi dell’epopea omerica uno strumento di verifica punteggiato e stimolante.

Parigi

Marella Nappi


In the present book, Martin Hose, who, along with other scholarly achievements, is well regarded among scholars of Greek tragedy in particular for his comprehensive study of the Euripidean chorus¹ and for his central role in the review of Euripidean bibliography covering 1970–2000,² offers an introduction to the surviving plays intended for an educated general audience. The heart of the book is H.’s discussion of the 17 surviving complete tragedies, although the satyr-play Cyclopes is also treated in an epilogue (S. 233–239) preceding the short conclusion (240–242), and together with Troades (121–136) H. includes consideration of the lost Alexandros and Palamedes and speculates on their significance for reception of the third tragedy of the production of 415. In tune with the goal of the book, all ancient quotations are presented in German translation, and there are no foot-

notes, and the bibliographic suggestions (243–250) refer mainly to texts, commentaries (German or English), German translations, a few key articles on the tragedies, and general books in German on the historical and intellectual background.

A general reader will be well served by Hose’s treatment. It is respectful of the flexibility of the genre of Attic tragedy and of the variety and experimentation that characterize Euripides. It does not conceal the open-endedness and emotional and moral difficulties that confront the audience of most Attic tragedies and, more acutely, of Euripidean drama in particular. It contains a few suggestive brief remarks about choruses and the lyrical elements, although as in most books of this nature the discussion generally focusses on the characters and the plot. Despite the somewhat old-fashioned subtitle ‘The poet of the passions’ (which evokes, for me, Max Pohlenz’s obsession with «Versenkung in der Seele» and other twentieth-century approaches that considered the psychological to be of paramount importance), H. does not in fact try to force a single interpretive key upon the plays, and one wonders whether the subtitle is present more for marketing reasons, to make the title more attractive to the general reader.

The scholarly reader will no doubt be frustrated at times by the brevity with which some points are made and the allusiveness with which some traditional problems are treated (some examples below), but in my view a more interesting question raised by the book for professional classicists is how convincing it is to develop a narrative arc of Euripides’ career and of his evolving concerns and interests. I shall return to that question at the end of the review.

H. begins with the contest in Aristophanes’ Frogs, demonstrating the predominance in the play (as later in Plato) of the model of ‘admirative’ identification between audience and dramatic figures, to the exclusion of other possibilities (‘ironic’ or ‘sympathetic’ identification). On the basis of this model, Euripides loses the contest, and H. relates this to the rarity of victories for the poet in the contest of the Great Dionysia, despite his acknowledged stature as a poet who could be imagined to compete for the ‘throne of tragedy’ and whose works, after a certain point in his career, must have been accepted into the contest virtually every time he offered them to an archon. Be that as it may, what I miss here (and what would be of help to a general reader) is a sharper critique of the idea that a single model of identification is appropriate (even to major figures in Aeschylus and Sophocles, or to Homeric heroes) and some discussion of the ideological contests that lie behind the adoption or promotion of this single and simple model.

The second preliminary to H.’s analysis of the plays themselves is a cautious review of the limited data about Euripides’ life combined with a concise account of the major political, military, and cultural developments of fifth-century Athens. H. tentatively suggests that the difference between the perceptions of the world and of mankind detectable in Sophocles and the slightly younger Euripides may be related to their different experiences in their formative youthful years (the success of Salamis and subsequent Kimonian imperial expansion for Sophocles vs. the ups and downs and significant military defeats of the 460s and 450s for Euripides). H. accepts the view that in the first half of the fifth century tragedy was to some large degree a political art, contributing to the education of
the citizen-body becoming accustomed to the practices and responsibilities of the democratic system, but holds that this aspect became less important as time went on, making greater room for other perspectives. Thus, for H., Euripides began his dramatic career with a sense of public responsibility: «Vielleicht war die Beteiligung an den Agonen der Dionysien und Lenäen seine spezifische Form des Bürgerengagements» (29; H.’s emphasis).

The chapters on the individual plays present, in general, judicious background information and balanced readings in a brief scope. The longest treatments go to Bacchae, Hippolytus, Orestes, Heracles, and Iphigenia in Aulis, while the shortest are those of Heracleidae, Supplices, Andromache, Medea (because so well known to readers already?), Hecuba, and Iphigenia in Tauris. Obviously, given more space, more could have been said on many topics, but within the limits of the chosen length, H. has done well. The extra attention paid to the late plays, in particular, is rewarding, and even in the shorter-than-average section on Andromache, H. concisely argues for the unusual structure of the play as a valid literary experiment (84–85). Nevertheless, I will mention some points that seem to me mistaken, or at least too briefly expressed to avoid the possibility of misleading a general reader.

35: The contests of actors began already in the fifth century, not the fourth. 40 (also 56): H. describes the background of Phaedra’s desire for Hippolytus in the terms assumed by Seneca and Racine («während einer längeren Abwesenheit des Manoes, dessen Wiederkehr unsicher erscheint»), but not by Euripides in the surviving play, where Theseus is assumed to have been absent for only a short time and his return (within a short time) is expected.

53–54: H. is inclined (as I am) to accept Medea 1056–80 as Euripidean without major cuts; in his bibliographic note (246–247) he refers to ‘a new explanation’ as supporting his retention of the passage, but it is not clear to me exactly what is new in his treatment (he cites Seidensticker, but not Foley, who gave one of the best expositions of the idea of Medea as divided between heroic and maternal aspects). In any case, the stage direction suggested by «[Der Pädagoge] geht mit den Kindern ins Haus (V. 1002–1020)» cannot be accepted.

72–79: Held, and Su., together with Andr. and Hec., are treated in one chapter entitled ‘Der Krieg bricht über die Tragödie herein’, relating the centrality of war in these plays to the first stage of the Peloponnesian War (with, however, one slight hint of tentativeness: «wie es scheint» [72]). The two political suppliant dramas are treated in parallel in a single discussion, and, in my view, this arrangement makes the already brief treatment unnecessarily weak. These plays are rich and varied enough to deserve separate treatment (I recommend the book of Mendelsohn, which could well have been cited in the bibliographic note along with the famous work of Zuntz).

85–90: H. has some fine remarks on the significance of the choral odes in Hecuba and has suggestive things to say about the sufferings of Hecuba and her turn to extreme vengeance, but by neglecting the rhetorical aspects of the play and the intense scrutiny of supplication, reciprocity, and the stability of character these pages give a rather incomplete guide to this drama.

105: H. sees in the Lycus of Heracles more than a simple villain. He points to Lycus’ calculation (Her. 165–169) in killing the hero’s children so that they cannot grow up to be avengers, and he would relate this figure to a new generation of Sophist-trained politicians. While there are no doubt ‘sophistic’ features in Lycus’ argument against the value of Hera-

2 Daniel Mendelsohn, Gender and the City in Euripides’ Political Plays (Oxford 2002).
cles' claims and achievements (Her. 146–164), the idea of killing one's enemies' children is nothing new (note the killing of Astyanax in Ilias Parva and Ilias Persis, and Eurystheus' motivation in Hscld. 1000–1008).

124: H. usefully describes for the general reader what the main lines of the Alexandros seem to have been in order to suggest how its details are recalled in Troades. But it is odd, I think, to say that when Cassandra delivers her predictions of the future in Alexandros «niemand glaubt ihr» and then later in the same paragraph say «Denn Hekabe weiss, dass, verschont sie den Sohn, ihre Stadt dem Untergang geweiht ist. Sie nimmt dies offensichtlich in Kauf.» Apart from the problem of the curse of Cassandra (that no one will believe her), we do not, given the state of the fragments, know the exact circumstances of the sparing of Paris and his acceptance into the family. H. expresses himself more cautiously about this point at the very end of this chapter (136).

126: there is nothing new about the notion conveyed in Tro. 88–91 that a large number of Greeks will die in the punishing storms that will afflict the fleet after it sails from Troy: see Aesch. Agam. 648–672, which is presumably based on the Epic Cycle.

147: I would not call Menelaus «die traditionelle Verkörperung des kriegerischen Sparta». Rather, his status in Greek literature (and this is what would count for the Athenian audience) is generally that of the handsome warrior who is not really among the best fighters and, besides, is too subject to his attachments to women (Helen, Hermione).

149: as H. himself notes elsewhere (116, 167), the rejected schemes of one partner (often the male in a male-female dialogue) in a deliberative stichomythia are a conventional element, so I am uncertain how strongly they contribute in Hel. 1035–1048 to making Menelaus appear «als überraschend schlichtes Gemüt».

154: H. quotes IT 56–60 in translation without comment; experts will be somewhat surprised, since lines 59–60 provide «one of the clearest cases of interpolation in Greek literature».

1 Later, in dealing with Phoen. he makes no reference within the chapter to disputes about the authenticity of certain parts of the play and refers, for instance, to Phoen. 1013–1018 and 1710–1763 (183, 185) without comment; nor does the bibliographic advice give a hint, so that the curious will discover the problem only after consulting either of the two works cited there (250). Although it was not necessary in a book of this kind to enter into arguments or lengthy discussions of disputes about possible interpolations, one would expect a little more guidance for the general reader, or perhaps a statement that, in principle, H. treats the texts as transmitted (if that is the position he has adopted: note that for IA he seems inclined to accept the whole prologue: 222–224). On the other hand, he does pause in the discussion of the Phrygian's scene in Or. to mention that Or. 1366–1368 represent an alternative version, but does not indicate whether that alternative is necessarily post-Euripidean (197).

157–158: H. is among those critics who find IT lacking in complexity and tension in comparison to Helen. I do not think he gives enough weight to the psychic pain and doubt that afflict both Iphigenia and Orestes and to the themes of violence, purity, and redemption. Admittedly, these latter themes are developed more intensely in later versions like Goethe's, but they are already significant in the Euripidean original.

163: In drawing out the contrast between the audience-perspective in Hel. and IT and that in Ion, H. rightly notes how the divine plan revealed to the audience in the prologue of Ion appears at various points to have misfired; but I would say that despite the greater uncertainty about immediate developments of the plot felt by the audience of Ion, they would still expect that a happy ending will come about somehow, both because of what Hermes has told them and because of their background knowledge of who the young Ion is destined to become in their local history.

206–207: through an unusual lapse, H. twice misrepresents the sense of Bat. 242–243 as indicating that (Pentheus believes that) the Lydian stranger declares himself to be the son of Zeus.

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1 Poultheria Kyriakou, A Commentary on Euripides’ Iphigenia in Tauris, Untersuchungen zur antiken Literatur und Geschichte, Bd. 80 (Berlin and New York 2006), 66.
218: H. states as fact that Dionysus exiles the Theban population from their city at the end of *Ba*. It would be better to admit the uncertainties involved in relying on lines in *Christus Patiens* to reconstruct lost portions of the ending. It is much more likely that there was no reference to exile of the Thebans at all (so Seaford) or that it was expressed as something that would befall the Thebans at some time in the future (so Dodds).

I return, finally, to the question I raised earlier. As the general reader perhaps expects, H.’s treatments of the individual plays, with their many helpful and suggestive insights, are framed within a larger narrative that attempts to follow the alleged course of the interests, perceptions, and reactions of the human individual Euripides during the passing years of his career. The narrative offered by H. is not unfamiliar. *Alcestis*, *Medea*, and *Hippolytus* are grouped together under the topics of gender-roles, marriage, family, and sexuality. War is identified as the common factor underlying *Heracleidae*, *Supplices*, *Andromache*, and *Hecuba*, with the first pair evoking patriotic themes through the use of the motif of political supplication and the second pair evoking the costs of war with more attention to the helpless victims. Having reached the limit of a certain style of portraying tragic suffering in *Hecuba*, Euripides turns to other models in *Electra* and *Heraclès*. After the Sicilian campaign, the trio of *tyche* dramas invite a more detached engagement of the audience with the vicissitudes of the characters. In *Phoenissae* and especially *Orestes*, the breakdown of the cohesion and order of the city is reflected. And the new perceptions of human weakness and instability, of the complexity of human motivations, are intensified in *Bacchae* and especially in *Iphigenia in Aulis*.

For a major author of the modern era, such a project may be practical because of the massive documentation available to illuminate the politics, economy, and culture of the world experienced by the author and his contemporary audience, and in the best case also because of ample documentation of personal details of the author’s life and family, work habits, drafts, correspondence, interviews, etc. But is such a narrative actually something that classical scholars can supply for a tragedian of the fifth century? What survives is a but small fraction of what was written and was known to the poets and their audiences. When we group *Hippolytus* with *Alcestis* and *Medea*, what have we lost by having so little knowledge of the dozen or so other plays Euripides produced between 438 and 428, not to speak of the several dozen plays by other dramatists? Even among the surviving plays, the use and abuse of rhetoric and themes like war and gender-conflict are present in various ways across much of the corpus, and this is even more so when one tries to take account of what we know of the fragmentary plays. When we detect something ‘new’ in a conception of tragic form or tragic characterization in a particular work, this ‘new’ can only be in the context of the meager survivals, and the probability is high that a fuller context would force us to moderate or modify such claims. If H. is correct that Euripides’ outlook may have been strongly shaped by the experiences of imperial ambition and military failure of the 460s and 450s, did he require the events of the Peloponnesian War to take an interest in the sufferings and distortions caused by warfare? Or if we propose that Euripides’ works changed in response to the shifting moods of the Athenian

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audience rather than because of the varying psychic responses of an historical individual, how far do we go in the direction of the thesis adopted by, for instance, the Schlegels and Gottfried Hermann, that Euripides’ weakness was his continuing struggle to pander to the tastes of his audience, and how do we reconcile such a reconstruction of responsiveness with the impression of iconoclastic criticism of social and ethical values that his plays so often give us? To me, at any rate, it seems better to resist the temptation of narrative and acknowledge even to a general audience that we are better equipped to appreciate the variety of the corpus and the specific strategies, themes, and challenges of individually fascinating and rewarding dramas than to articulate a trustworthy pattern of relations and developments over time.

To conclude, I repeat that H.’s book should provide much of value to the general reader in many of its general observations and specific insights. Professional scholars, however, will recognize what a difficult challenge the author faced and the ways in which this treatment of necessity neglects what they consider important and fascinating problems about the limits of literary history.