

P. KYRIAKOU, *A Commentary on Euripides' Iphigenia in Tauris*, Berlin: de Gruyter, 2006, 504 pp., ISBN 3-11-019099-0.

An entire scholarly career can be devoted to producing an edition with commentary on one Greek play: Barrett's *Hippolytos* (1964) and Dunbar's *Birds* (1995) are notable examples of the genre. It is unsurprising, therefore, to read of the long years of this large book's 'germination' (gestation, surely) spanning two decades (p. viii). It is more surprising, indeed remarkable, that Kyriakou (K. thereafter) forms no independent judgments in textual matters but is content to follow Diggle's OCT (1981) throughout: '... I am skeptical or reserve judgment in some cases but these are extremely few and nowhere would I certainly make a different editorial choice' (p. vii). No text is printed. While it is safe to suppose that users of K's commentary will be in possession of the OCT of Diggle – that of Murray (1913) would not of course serve the purpose; nor would those of Sansone (1981) or Kovacs (1999) – it is nevertheless inconvenient to be forced to have this constantly to hand for reference while using the commentary.

The Euripidean commentator is faced with many difficult choices (*expertae credite*). Determining the preferred text is just the first of these. The format of a commentary is inevitably conditioned by the author's reactions to predecessors: in this case, to the old Platnauer (1938) and the new Cropp (2000). Much reference is made to the latter work, to which K. had access before its publication; agreement outweighs disagreement. Decision as to which, when, and how extensively, other commentators on other plays should be cited is delicate. K. makes some idiosyncratic choices: in the case of Sophocles, Griffith's *Antigone* (1999) is much mentioned and indeed singled out for inclusion among commonly cited works (p. 484); Kamerbeek, not present in this list, is cited once as Camerbeek, *sic* (p. 425, on *OT*). Some abbreviations too are idiosyncratic, such as FJW for the commentary of Friis

Johansen and Whittle (1980) on *A. Supp.* (p. 58 on 20-4; p. 146 on 392-7, and elsewhere).

Decision as to when, and how extensively, parallels in expression should be cited presents similar problems: while one close parallel is far more telling than half a dozen related expressions accumulated indiscriminately, it can be hard to exercise restraint. K's tendency to over-cite is ubiquitous; see for instance p. 56 on 10-14 and p. 142 on 380-91. Citation of previous editors' citations makes tedious reading and lengthy parentheses containing references break the flow of the argument. Analysis of detail in the sense of particular Greek words or phrases is often excessive: see p. 170 on 489b-91, on the precise sense in context of *τύχη* 'fortune'. Even on 'standard Greek' much effort is expended (p. 173 on 499-500). In short, an editorial blue pencil was needed throughout.

A serious flaw, related to the constant presence of a welter of detail, is that it is often hard to isolate Diggle's reading, and to disentangle the author's preferred interpretation. This is exacerbated by K.'s frequent disregard for the cardinal principle that citation and interpretation of the text to be read should precede citation and interpretation of other readings and emendations. Among many instances are these: at p. 65 on 50-5a, the statement 'it is better to preserve the main clause' (unspecified) comes after, instead of before, we are told about Porson's emendation; at p. 81 on 118-22, a lemma with Heath's emendation and comment on this ('the best available') is required at the start of the note, before reference to and dismissed defence of L's reading; at p. 290 on 895-99, we again need the lemma upfront; at p. 341 on 1057-9, reordering, with discussion first of Diggle's reading, is needed for clarity.

Although literary texts are extensively cited, K. fails to note relevant material in other areas. The evidence of inscriptions, not mentioned, is highly relevant to the discussion of 'temple guardians and altar attendants' (p. 411 on 1284). The evidence of medical texts would be a cogent adjunct to notes on 'grievous or lethal' injuries to the *ἦπαρ* (p. 432 on 1368b-70: cf. e.g. *Hipp. Aph.* 6. 18); on the meaning of the term *ὄψις* (p. 375 on 1166-7: there is a short Hippocratic treatise with the title *περὶ ὄψις*; and especially on Orestes' seizure (pp. 119-20 on 281-308). In

the last of these – in general, a thoughtful note on the progress of the condition – the analogy with schizophrenics is bold and similarly the ‘Kafkaesque’ comparison (p. 315 on 968-9) belongs if anywhere in the introduction.

Choosing material to go in the introduction and determining the appropriate degree of cross-reference required, while eliminating repetition, between introduction and commentary is never easy: K errs on the side of repetition. K’s introduction covers basic topics in seven sections, in which there is a degree of overlap: The play (with three subdivisions – Plot-structure and the question of genre; The siblings and their family; Gods and mortals); Myth and cult; Characters and chorus; Production; Date; The play’s reception in literature and the visual arts; The text. By far the longest section (11 pages) is that on myth and cult. Here and throughout on questions of religion, K. is thorough and thoughtful. (In the commentary, there are good notes on divine anger at p. 57 on 17-34; on the archaeology of Delphi at p. 400 footnote 29; on the narration of dreams at p. 64 on 42-3; on the Choes at pp. 311-3 on 958-60.)

In the first section, it is suggested that the play is fully tragic. (Here it is not quite true, p. 8, that ‘nobody has seriously doubted *Philoctetes*’ tragic status’ – an argument for considering *IT* too a ‘full-fledged tragedy’ – see my article in *Ant. Class.* 1979, 12-29; and, while it is true that Aristophanes does not state that Euripides’ plays were not ‘proper tragedies’, he certainly indicates in *Ran.* and elsewhere that Euripides was not a proper tragedian.) In the section on the characters, as elsewhere, K. is perceptive on Euripidean innovation within the tradition. The section on reception makes good use of evidence from Roman art. The work ends with a metrical analysis of the play’s lyrics, a bibliography and three indexes (passages; subjects; Greek words). The book is very well produced and I noted few misprints (but in the Acknowledgments, doubtless written last and perhaps hastily, at p. viii ‘I have not always been fable’ is an unfortunate lapse); inevitably there are some mistaken or misleading references (e.g. at p. 59 on 20b-24a we are told to ‘see on 208’, but not that we are to find 208 after 220).

There is room for more than one commentary, and more than one type of commentary, on any play. This is very much

a reference commentary and as such serves a different purpose from the type accompanied by translation and shorter notes, exemplified by the Aris and Phillips series. One advantage of the latter type is that a good literal translation can frequently obviate the need for a lengthy explanatory note. (If translation had been incorporated by K. for instance at p. 398, in discussion of 1246-9, the note would be clearer and could be shorter.) The discipline demanded in writing short notes, with or without translation, forces the commentator to eliminate inessentials. It is likely that many scholars – and all students – turn first to Denniston and Page and only secondly to Fraenkel for help in reading *Agamemnon*. In the same way, previous commentaries on *IT* are not superseded, but will have a place alongside K. on library shelves.

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