

BERND MANUWALD, *Sophokles, Philoktet. Herausgegeben, übersetzt und kommentiert von B. M.*, Berlin-Boston: De Gruyter, 2018, x+475 pp., 59,95 €, ISBN 978-3-11-034467-7.

Bernd Manuwald's edition of Sophocles' *Philoctetes* is the third commentary on a Sophoclean play to appear in Dr Gruyter's series 'Griechische Dramen', after *Oedipus the King* (2012, by the same editor, and reviewed by me in *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* 2013–05–16) and *Electra* (2016, by T. A. Schmitz, reviewed by me in *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* 2017–03–47); other volumes have appeared in the same series on Euripides and Aristophanes.

The book opens with a one-page 'Vorwort der Herausgeber' – i.e. of the Series Editors, who set out the purpose of the series, which is to make ancient Greek drama accessible to people with little or no Greek. The author's 'Vorwort' follows, after which comes the sixty-six page 'Einführung', which consists of six major sections: 'Sophokles: Der Dichter in seiner Zeit', 'Zur Geschichte des Philoktet-Stoffs', 'Sophokles' *Philoktet*' (itself divided into the following subsections: 'Übersicht über den Inhalt', 'Inhaltliche und formale Strukturierung', '*Philoktet* – eine Tragödie?', 'Szenerie und Fragen der Inszenierung', 'Zur Weissagung des Helenos', 'Konzipierung der Figuren und des Chors', and 'Zum *Deus ex machina* und zur Deutung des *Philoktet*'), 'Zur Rezeption von Sophokles' *Philoktet*', 'Zur Überlieferung des Textes', and finally 'Zur dieser Ausgabe' (divided into 'Anlage', 'Zitierweise', and 'Abkürzungen'). The text, translation, and commentary then make up the heart of the book. At its end comes a near-thirty page 'Anhang', which begins with a list of divergences from the edition of Lloyd-Jones and Wilson, followed by 'Ergänzende Kommentarbemerkungen' and 'Ergänzende textkritische und sprachliche Erläuterungen', and then metrical analyses and the text of the hypotheses (ancient prose summaries) of the play. The book closes with a 'Literaturverzeichnis' of eighteen pages (although two pages of works frequently cited appear, somewhat confusingly, at pp. 64–5). It is unfortunate that the book lacks indexes of any kind.

The opening section of the Introduction, on the life of Sophocles, is largely repeated from Manuwald's edition of *Oedipus the King*; this is fair enough. The subsequent section gives a good overview of the myth before Sophocles (though it is strange to see M. calling the author of the *Bibliotheca* 'Pseudo-Apollodorus', when there is no reason to deny that individual his true and proper name: see R. L. Fowler, *Early Greek Mythography*, vol. II (Oxford 2013), 383–4). There follows an overview of the plot, with some remarks on

structure; then a few words come on whether the play is truly a tragedy, after which there is a discussion of the staging. The nature of the prophecy which drives the action, a prophecy described differently at different times and by different characters throughout the play, now receives due attention. Each of the characters, plus the chorus, is then analysed, as is Sophocles' decision to end the play with a *deus ex machina*. The section on the reception of the play briefly considers evidence from antiquity and the mediaeval west (though not Byzantium, unfortunately), with more detail devoted to the modern period from the sixteenth century onwards; M. helpfully refers to Eric Dugdale's recent survey in R. Lauriola and K. N. Demetriou (eds.), *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Sophocles* (Brill's Companions to Classical Reception 10; Leiden and Boston 2017). An account of the transmission of the text is followed by description of a few points of the present edition. As a whole, the introduction provides an efficient account of some key topics for students and other readers interested in the play.

The main part of the book prints, on the left-hand side of each two-page spread, a translation of the Greek at the top, followed by the Greek text, followed by an apparatus criticus containing not only basic information about manuscript readings and conjectures, but also assorted comments on textual choices and Sophocles' use of Greek, with some reference to secondary literature. On the right-hand side of the two-page spread is a commentary, keyed to the translation rather than the Greek. This format is familiar from previous volumes in the series. But whereas the apparatus in Schmitz's *Electra* is brief and often non-existent, Manuwald's is quite detailed, always taking up a substantial chunk of the page. This has the advantage of informing readers with advanced Greek about the basis of the text and pointing them in the direction of some useful bibliography, but has the disadvantage that, as a result, the number of Greek lines on any double-page spread is quite small, often in single figures, and in a smaller font than the one used in Schmitz's edition. This makes the experience of actually reading the play a less pleasant experience than it might have been, for the sake of providing the kind of detailed analysis which will be of no value or interest to the book's target audience, namely readers with little or no Greek. Any commentary has to be carefully targeted at its audience, and this book does not manage that as well as it might have.

Although the reading experience is not quite optimal, Manuwald's text is nevertheless a good one. He has considered all textual matters afresh, and prints an independent recension that does not simply follow that Oxford Classical Text, as can be seen in the substantial list of divergences found towards the end of the book. Unlike Seth Schein, whose commentary on the play was published by Cambridge University Press in 2013 (and reviewed by me in *BMCR* 2013–11–31), Manuwald does not adopt an excessively conservative position; it is welcome to see, for instance, that lines 1218–

21 are deleted, ruining as they do the sudden entrance of Odysseus and Neoptolemus. The commentary gives good guidance to the readers at whom the book is aimed; the format ensures that excessively long notes are simply impossible, and Manuwald does a good job of explaining the action, aspects of characterisation, and the necessary background to the myth, among other things.

In short this is a strong contribution to a valuable series. Three volumes in six years is an impressive rate of delivery: let us hope that the remaining four plays will soon be on their way, and perhaps also a volume dedicated to the major fragments too.

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