

discourse of phallogocentrism' (p. 114). On p. 41 she points out the paradox inherent in such interpretations: '*Trachiniae* ... [paradoxically becomes] an early manifesto of the feminist movement'.

S. offers an original view on this tragedy that includes valuable discussions of its literary sources and existing scholarship. Even if her feminist reading will not convince all, her close readings shed useful light on thematic issues such as sexual violence and guilt.

University of Amsterdam

LOLA BOS
l.a.s.bos@uva.nl

SOPHOCLES IN TRANSLATION

KOVACS (D.) *Sophocles: Oedipus the King. A New Verse Translation*. Pp. xii + 109. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020. Paper, £12.99, US\$15 (Cased, £30, US\$40). ISBN: 978-0-19-885484-5 (978-0-19-885483-8 hbk).

MARCH (J.) (ed., trans.) *Sophocles: Oedipus Tyrannus*. Pp. viii + 314. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2020. Paper, £29.99 (Cased, £95). ISBN: 978-1-78962-792-3 (978-1-78962-254-6 hbk).

TAPLIN (O.) (trans.) *Sophocles: Antigone and other Tragedies*. Antigone, Deianeira, Electra. Pp. xlii + 223, map. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020. Cased, £20, US\$25. ISBN: 978-0-19-928624-9. doi:10.1017/S0009840X22002451

These contrasting volumes challenge readers to consider what they want from an edition or translation. All three translators are established academics with impressive publication records. All three volumes are clear examples of the impact their previous work on tragedy has on their translation approaches. These are impressive and useful books. In this synoptic review, I do not discuss them in detail, but consider the experience of reading each in the light of the others, and how the translations and notes reflect the translator's pre-existing interests. Although Taplin's *Oedipus the King* is in a different volume, I discuss March and Kovacs on *Oedipus*, and all three in the general context of what it means to translate Sophoclean tragedy today.

Kovacs gives a short introduction to *Oedipus the King* and its themes. He draws on H. Lloyd-Jones's Loeb text (1994), with a few changes listed in the introduction. March has an introduction, Greek text with facing English translation and commentary. Taplin includes an introduction to the three plays, and English translations of each, prefaced by short introductions.

Each translator also focuses on different key topics. Kovacs emphasises the role of the gods in *Oedipus the King*, building specifically on his article 'On Not Misunderstanding *Oedipus Tyrannus*' (*CQ* 69 [2019], 107–18; March continues this discussion with reference to Kovacs, p. 35). Section 3 of his introduction works through a range of aspects concerning Apollo, arguing that this is not a tragedy of destiny, puppets and marionettes, but that divine interference is important. He makes the dramaturgical point that Sophocles wanted to write an effective play to win the competition, so that some elements of how the

divine dimension of the play works may be misguided over-readings. He draws a distinction between prediction and causation, between Apollo causing Oedipus' woes versus controlling knowledge of them, which precipitates elements of the tragedy. He argues that the cost of ignoring passages making Apollo responsible for Oedipus' doom is narrative or mythological incoherence, which does not fit our concept of Sophocles as master dramaturge.

He also presents his view on the ending of the play, demonstrating an integration of research with standard Sophoclean background information. While he does not take as drastic an approach as R.D. Dawe (*Oedipus Rex*, 2nd ed., Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics [2006]), Kovacs here argues for cutting the end substantially, keeping 1416–67, but excising 1468–530 (Kovacs, 'The End of Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*: the Sceptical Case Restated', *JHS* 134 [2014], 56–65). He does, however, translate these lines, maintaining the 'completeness' of the play as transmitted. March gives a more piecemeal approach, excising 1424–41, 1438–45 and 1515–23.

Kovacs, as is evident from his self-citation, focuses heavily on the religious context to *Oedipus*. The use of the introduction to lay out important background for novice readers, while simultaneously reflecting recent developments in scholarship is another elegant characteristic of all three volumes. Taplin takes the approach furthest, relegating controversy to footnotes and stating rather than discussing some controversies. Examples include p. xxxvi n. 3, where he writes that the section of the *Poetics* giving scene divisions is probably not by Aristotle. He makes frequent reference to staging, props and the overall physicality of Greek theatre, which is his hallmark approach (O. Taplin, *Greek Tragedy in Action* [1989]). March gives the most comprehensive mythological background to the Oedipus story, filling in contextual information and plot variations to ground readers in the mythological world.

The commitment all three have to Sophocles is evident in their strength of language and elegance of expression. In Kovacs this yields dense, high-register verse, while March's breathless prose tugs you relentlessly onwards. Only Taplin gives much space to discussing his translation approach, outlining how concepts of translation have changed over time, how his seems 'close' by modern terms but might not have looked so in the past. He feels translation into verse is important in order to convey the musicality and colour of Sophocles' language, a mission he achieves extremely well.

Kovacs claims he is trying to provide a clear, accurate and readable translation of the play (p. vii). From the outset, however, the grammar is stilted, which leads to a difficult reading experience (e.g. 'Know that I mean to do | what in me lies to help: I would be heartless | did I not pity suppliants like you', vv. 11–13). Vocabulary is high-register; while this is true of Sophocles in general, words such as 'inconcinnity' are not accessible to most readers, and the use of old-fashioned words such as 'hither' (v. 7) or 'thence' (v. 29) make reading the text relatively effortful.

March's approach results in a more personal and reflective experience. Her syntax flows fluidly in natural English. Her tendency to start sentences with 'And' increases the fast-paced nature of the prose translation and carries readers along, engaged and inspired by her obvious excitement in the text. Her clear and accessible language, however, sometimes risks flattening the nuance of key themes. *κακός*, for example, is translated as 'cruel' (v. 1330), then 'evil' (v. 1365), then 'troubles' (v. 1431). While Gilbert Murray's 1911 translation imposes a highly Christianised reading of the play by translating a range of negative moral terms as 'sin', March risks the opposite problem of a lack of clarity over moral terms. The same is true of the repeated use of 'wretch / wretched' for a variety of Greek words, diminishing the impact of Sophocles' rich moral landscape. A good example

of the balance between enthusiastic beauty and slight awkwardness in this translation comes with Oedipus' exit: 'I am revealed as born from those I should not, and coupling with those I should not, and killing those I should not' (vv. 1184–5). It is an eminently readable translation for readers who are not looking to interrogate the Greek too closely, allowing for that further engagement through inclusion of the Greek and the extensive commentary.

All the translators grapple with the richness of Sophoclean vocabulary, particularly the extensive word-building and word-play. Taplin gives us, for example, 'unbed' for ἄλεκτρα (*Electra* 492, 962, mirroring *Antigone* 917). One of the strengths of Taplin's collected volumes is that he uses the notes to draw useful intertextual parallels and demonstrate a consistency of translation approach to Sophocles in general. This is particularly evident in his discussion of complex compound words.

March's commentary uses English entries, but untranslated Greek text, balancing the book's appeal to those with differing levels of Greek knowledge. She offers contextual background, some textual discussion (having already explained that she keeps textual points to a minimum), explanation of typical metaphors, linguistic background, mythical background and some staging comments. The other translations lack both Greek and commentary; we must rely more on the translations themselves to make coherent sense of the translator's approach to Sophoclean poetry. Taplin and Kovacs provide comparable levels of background notes (8–10 pages per play), offering comment on topics such as staging, mythological background, textual interpolations, context and occasionally reception.

In terms of presentation, the volumes are again very different. Kovacs, a slim pocketbook volume, is printed in a small font, which is often hard to focus on; Taplin's notes are similarly too small for ease of reading. Kovacs's verse sections are italicised, regardless of how inaccessible block italics are. Stage directions are added in-line, but can be hard to differentiate from the main text. March's stage directions are italicised, and the text is more generously spaced out. The Greek font is clear; she mentions working on it in her introduction. Taplin's formatting is extremely clear, with lyric sections blocked differently to iambics, and stage directions italicised. He introduces scene divisions, which may help readers navigate the shape of the plays. A map of relevant locations is a useful addition; his notes emphasise the importance of appreciating geography / topography in understanding Greek tragedy. His and March's lack of index, however, makes it harder to use the books for study purposes. Kovacs's index is short (19 entries), including both Jocasta and Wilamowitz, but not, for example, Aristotle. Taplin's and Kovacs's translations use superscript circles to mark notes. Endnotes preserve the flow of the translations, but the lack of specific reference markers in addition disinclines the average reader from making good use of the notes.

Each translator gives a range of secondary literature. Kovacs offers two pages of 'Suggestions for further reading' and two pages of 'Works Cited'. These cover a range of standard sources and some more recent materials, with a heavy reliance on his own work. As one might expect of an Aris and Phillips volume, March's bibliography is more extensive (ten pages), again giving a good spread of standard sources and more recent research. Taplin's bibliography is the shortest, with a few entries for each play designed to help ground readers in the core sources; he is the only one to give Reception Studies specific space.

The different styles and characters of each translation demonstrate how rich Sophoclean poetry is and how alive the discipline of translation studies can be as a form of Classical Reception. I would encourage Sophoclean enthusiasts to read all three and to ponder where

the space lies for the next translation, personal interpretation and exhibition of scholarly enthusiasm.

University of Oxford

CRESSIDA RYAN
cressida.ryan@theology.ox.ac.uk

THE SCHOLIA TO SOPHOCLES' *ANTIGONE*

XENIS (G.A.) (ed.) *Scholia vetera in Sophoclis Antigonam*. (Sammlung Griechischer und Lateinischer Grammatiker 20.) Pp. xx + 219. Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2021. Cased, £82, €89.95, US\$103.99. ISBN: 978-3-11-061677-4.

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Scholars investigating the ancient scholia to Sophocles have long been limited to dated critical editions. The scholia to *Ajax*, *Oedipus at Colonus* and *Philoctetes* have received editions within the last century (edited respectively by G.A. Christodoulou [1977], V. de Marco [1952] and T. Janz [2004] in an unpublished Oxford D.Phil. thesis), while, for the other plays, the latest edition available has long been P.N. Papageorgiou's 1888 omnibus edition. In recent years X. has produced welcome new editions for Sophocles' *Electra* (2010), *Women of Trachis* (2010) and *Oedipus at Colonus* (2018). To these we can now add this most recent volume on the scholia to *Antigone*. Thorough, well-documented and with a focused editorial philosophy, X.'s latest edition happily follows the path laid out by the previous three volumes.

The text opens with a brief preface, where X. details his goals for this edition, namely, that he will 'restore the scholia vetera to *Antigone* in their earliest recoverable version and corpus' (p. v). Those who have not read X.'s earlier volumes will lack the full details of the methodology that undergirds this theoretical claim. This is unfortunate, as X. makes a powerful case in the introduction to his edition to the scholia to *Electra* for presenting a purely 'Laurentian' version, finally stating that to publish an edition with mixed versions would end in 'creating a hybrid version and establishing a scholion which originated from nobody's conscious decision but the editor's; such an item never had any existence in the real world' (2010, p. 22). A slightly more detailed introduction that elucidates the basics of his critical philosophy would be helpful for new readers or those interested in only the scholia in this volume. The omission is understandable, however, as it would be tedious to repeat this material in every new volume, with the introductions to the scholia to *Women of Trachis* and *Oedipus at Colonus* being similarly brief. Moreover, X. makes this omission clear in the preface and duly cites the relevant explanatory material from earlier volumes throughout this edition.

After the preface comes a description of the surviving manuscripts with scholia to *Antigone* and the data establishing the familial relations between them. Here, he follows the same model as in the earlier volumes, exhaustively cataloguing the conjunctive and disjunctive features that exist across the twelve manuscripts consulted. X. does not limit himself to evaluating the relationships between manuscripts, but also offers valuable insights on individual manuscripts discovered in this investigation, such as his conclusion that the extensive errors found in Lp militate against the conclusion of some palaeographers that its author was Marcus Musurus. This section concludes with a *stemma codicum*,