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A COMPANION TO EURIPIDES

EDITED BY
LAURA K. McCLURE

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This volume has been several years in the making. Due to unforeseen circumstances, the original editor had to step down before his work could be finished. Several years after the original submission date, Haze Humbert, acquisitions editor at Wiley-Blackwell, persuaded me to see the project through to completion. Profound thanks are owed first of all to the other thirty-four contributors to the companion. They exhibited remarkable patience and good cheer despite the protracted publication schedule. I am grateful for their willingness to revisit, revise, and update essays written well over five years ago. Special thanks are owed to Hanna Roisman and Anna Lamari for agreeing to contribute excellent chapters on *Electra* and *Phoenician Women* at a very late stage, and to Armand D'Angour and Ian Storey for recommending them. As ever, Haze Humbert and everyone at Blackwell have been a delight to work with. Thanks also to Sweta Ravikumar and Sakthivel Kandaswamy for deftly overseeing the final production process. Finally, Robin Mitchell-Boyask is to be thanked for his work in assembling an outstanding cast of contributors. Without his vision, this book would never have come to light.

Madison, Wisconsin
February, 2016

List of Abbreviations

This list of abbreviations follows the conventions of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (third edition). They are used throughout the volume when referring to Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and their plays. These and a few other abbreviations of commonly cited works are below.

Aesch.	Aeschylus
Ag.	*Agamemnon*
Cho.	*Choephori* or *Libation Bearers*
Eum.	*Eumenides*
DFA^3	A.W. Pickard-Cambridge, rev. J. Gould and D.M. Lewis, *Dramatic Festivals of Athens*, 3rd ed. (1988)
Eur.	Euripides
Alc.	*Alcestis*
Andr.	*Andromache*
Bacch.	*Bacchae*
Cyc.	*Cyclops*
El.	*Electra*
Erech.	*Erechtheus*
Hec.	*Hecuba*
Hel.	*Helen*
Heracl.	*Heraclidae* or *Children of Heracles*
HF	*Hercules Furens* or *Madness of Heracles*
Hipp.	*Hippolytus*
IA	*Iphigenia in Aulis*
IT	*Iphigenia in Tauris*
Ion	*Ion*
Med.	*Medea*

Or.	*Orestes*
Phoen.	*Phoenissae* or *Phoenician Women*
Rhes.	*Rhesus*
Supp.	*Supplices* or *Suppliant Women*
Tro.	*Troades* or *Trojan Women*
FGrH	F. Jacoby, *Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* (1923–)
IG	*Inscriptiones Graecae* (1873–)
Kannicht	Kannicht, R. (2004), *Fragmenta Tragicorum Graecorum*, vol. V: Euripides. Göttingen.
K-A	R. Kassel and C. Austin, *Poetae Comici Graeci*, vol. 1 (1983), 2 (1991)
LIMC	*Lexicon Iconigraphicum Mythologiae Classicae* (1981–)
PMG	D.L. Page, *Poetae Melici Graecae* (1962)
P.Oxy	*Oxyrhynchus Papyri* (1898–)
Soph.	Sophocles
Aj.	*Ajax*
Ant.	*Antigone*
El.	*Electra*
OC	*Oedipus Coloneus*
OT	*Oedipus Tyrannus*
Phil.	*Philoctetes*
Trach.	*Trachiniae* or *Women of Trachis*
TrGF	B. Snell, R. Kannicht, S. Radt (eds.) *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, 4 vols. (1971–85), vol. 12 (1986)

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Laura K. McClure

Euripides has enjoyed a resurgence of interest in recent years, thanks to important publications on multiple fronts. The long-awaited fifth volume of *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta* (Kannicht (2004)) makes available an updated and expanded version of the complete fragments of the poet, replacing an outmoded nineteenth-century edition. The Loeb Classical Library recently added an eighth volume to its Euripides' series, rendering for the first time an extensive collection of the fragments into English translation. A spate of commentaries on the plays and fragments have also appeared in the last two decades, introducing the poet's work to a new generation of students of ancient Greek, including *Medea* (Mastronarde (2002)), *Phoenissae* (Mastronarde (2004)), *Phaethon* (Diggle (2004)), *Alcestis* (Parker (2007)), *Helen* (Allan (2010)) and *Rhesus* (Liapis (2012)). The recent publication of *The Art of Euripides* (Mastronarde (2010)), the first scholarly treatment of Euripides' oeuvre to appear in almost three decades, offers a commendable overview of critical approaches to the poet and nuanced analyses of critical issues such as genre, dramatic structure, the Chorus, religion, rhetoric, gender, and reception across all of the extant plays. Collections of essays, such as *Oxford Readings in Euripides* (Mossman (2003)), have contributed contemporary perspectives on the poet's work to the ongoing critical dialogue. And vibrant new translations of the plays continue to appear in rapid succession. Experimental translations such as *Grief Lessons* (Carson (2008)), which consists of evocative renderings of *Heracles, Hecuba*, *Hippolytus*, and *Alcestis*, convey the excitement of Euripides' poetry while translations specifically geared for performance, such as *Medea* (Rayor (2013)), have helped to bring his plays to modern audiences. *The Complete Euripides* (Burian and Shapiro (2010–2011)) offers the general public contemporary critical introductions and notes to earlier

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translations of the plays. Even Grene and Lattimore's iconic *Complete Greek Tragedies* series, without a doubt the most widely circulated twentieth-century translations of the plays in English, has been recently revamped for today's classroom (Griffith and Most (2013)). This flurry of scholarly and creative activity attests to the poet's enduring relevance to the modern world.

This volume is the product of much of this recent work. Many of the essays draw on the texts, commentaries, and scholarship addressed above, as well as the vibrant scholarly dialogue on the poet engendered by conference papers and journal articles over the last two decades. Like the other companions in the Blackwell series, this one is intended for several audiences, from general readers, students and teachers, to the academic specialist. The companion as a genre has the advantage of bringing together a large number and variety of scholars at various stages of their careers all working on a single subject from a wide variety of perspectives. As a result, specific issues and themes begin to emerge across the chapters as central to our understanding of the poet and his meaning for our time. The individual chapters also operate on multiple levels. First, they offer summaries of important scholarship and methodologies, synopses of individual plays and the myths from which they borrow their plots, and conclude with suggestions for additional reading. Second, they do more than simply look backwards. Instead, they aim to develop original and provocative interpretations of the plays that in turn promise to open up future paths of inquiry. Finally, the individual chapters taken together contribute to a much larger conversation about the place of Euripides in our reception of the classical past and his value in articulating pressing contemporary concerns.

1 Euripides

Euripides' first play, *Daughters of Pelias*, a story from the Medea myth, was produced in 455 BCE at the annual theatrical festival of the City Dionysia just three years after Aeschylus' acclaimed *Oresteia*, and thirteen years after Sophocles' first play in 468 BCE. Euripides was to compete against the latter poet for almost a half century. His last play, *Bacchae*, was produced just after his death in 407/6. Thus by the beginning of his career, the tragic genre had already reached a mature form and a stable foundation from which to experiment. His death, in turn, marked the end of this amazing period of literary history. Little is known of his life and much of the biographical information is unreliable as is so often the case with ancient authors (Scodel, chapter 3). Ancient scholars attributed 92 tragedies of which only 17 are extant (excluding the satyr play, *Cyclops*, and the play probably erroneously attributed to him, *Rhesus*). Fully 70 plays never reached the medieval manuscript tradition. But that is far more than for any other tragedian, thanks to the "happy accident" of the alphabetic plays (Mastronarde, chapter 2). (For comparison, only six authentic tragedies of Aeschylus and seven of Sophocles survive.) Despite 24 productions at the dramatic festivals, Euripides won only four first prizes, far fewer than his tragic colleagues.

More than any other ancient author, Euripides has suffered from distortions of literary criticism, biography, and anecdote. Indeed, a full account of his reception

would more than fill one book (for good introductions, see Mastronarde (2010) 1–28; Michelini (1987) 3–51). Since antiquity, Euripidean tragedy has occasioned controversy. The comic poet Aristophanes, in plays such as *Acharnians* (425), *Women of the Thesmophoria* (411), and *Frogs* (405), portrays the poet as debasing the tragic genre and corrupting the morals of his spectators through his innovative lyrics, clever rhetoric, and penchant for sensationalist myth. Aristotle in his *Poetics* takes this criticism a step further, enumerating his dramaturgical defects, such as faulty characterization, irrelevant Choruses, piecemeal plots, and contrived endings, while at the same time upholding Sophocles as the tragic model. The Hellenistic scholars largely reiterated these flaws in their scholia on the plays and so it passed on.

Despite his negative critical reception, Euripides' popularity rapidly eclipsed that of the other two tragedians after his death. His plays were regularly staged both at Athens and abroad as Greek drama rapidly expanded its audience throughout the Mediterranean in the fourth century. In addition, there were virtuoso performances of excerpts from the plays accompanied by new musical forms and dance. Fragments from both fourth-century tragedy and Middle Comedy show the imprint of Euripides' language and style, while the plot devices of New Comedy, such as recognition, rape, and exposure, and structural elements such as the prologue, clearly attest to the poet's profound influence on later drama. By the Roman period, familiarity with Euripides served as the mark of the educated class. Roman rhetorical models, such as those of Quintilian, found Euripides more useful than Sophocles for students of oratory while incidents and speeches from his plays provided material for rhetorical exercises.

Ancient sources such as Aristotle, Quintilian, and the scholia influenced modern reception of Euripides, beginning in the sixteenth century. German romanticism propagated a form of classicism that sought aesthetic perfection in both literature and art. According to the Schlegel brothers, tragedy evolved from a primitive stage in Aeschylus and reached its ideal in Sophocles, only to decline in the hands of Euripides. This view followed Aristotle's original criticisms and subsequently found an even more vitriolic outlet in Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy* (1872), which identified the poet with a dying and decadent art form. Early twentieth century critical appraisals tended to follow suit, somewhat understandably, since the anomalies of Euripides' technique—his lack of dramatic unity, fondness for rhetoric, political allusions, genre experimentation, mythic innovation, and problematic characters, namely, unmanly heroes and insubordinate women—set him apart from the other tragedians. Early stylistic and formal studies of Euripides represented a turning point in his reception. By elucidating aspects of language, dialogue, and dramatic structure, they moved the focus away from dramaturgical defects to an appreciation of his form and mastery of the complexities of tragic conventions.

2 New Approaches

In the last fifty years, there has been an important critical shift in scholarship on Euripides. Stylistic and formalist studies yielded to explorations of symbolic meanings and systems within the plays, informed by structuralist and semiotic theories.

A second popular approach has broadly evolved from historicizing methods and concerns influenced by Marxist, feminist, cultural, and religious studies. These approaches have allowed new and enhanced attention to questions of politics, gender, and sexuality, and the construction of personal and social identity (Mastronarde (2010) 14–15). Deconstructionist readings have also helped to show how Euripides' plays continually resist interpretation, exhibiting an openness of form, structure, and meaning that invites, indeed compels, ancient spectators and modern readers alike to determine their own perspectives on the play's characters and actions. As evidenced in the following chapters, these new methodologies and concerns have profoundly affected the ways we view Euripides' oeuvre and our construction of classical antiquity itself.

3 This Volume

The book is divided into seven sections. Parts I and V–VII cover a broad range of topics central to our understanding of Euripides. Parts II–IV consist of a series of individual chapters dedicated to the treatment of a single play, organized in chronological order (to the extent it can be determined). Part I, "Text, Author, and Tradition," provides an overview of both historical and technical issues: who was Euripides and how has his work come down to us? How did his tragedy resemble and differ from that of the other two tragic poets? Mastronarde (Chapter 2) traces the history of the transmission of Euripides' plays, from its original composition on papyrus scrolls to Hellenistic and Byzantine copies and finally to modern editions. Scodel (Chapter 3) surveys the evidence for the poet's life as gleaned from the mostly unreliable ancient biographies and anecdotes, which describe him as a woman-hating son of a vegetable-selling mother, a painter-turned poet who died torn apart by wild dogs. Gibert (Chapter 4) addresses the place of the poet in the Greek dramatic tradition as one of continuity and innovation that extended the range of meanings and interpretation of the tragic genre.

The three sections on individual plays are divided into earlier (438 to 416 BCE) and later (415 to 405 BCE) periods. Several leitmotifs recur in the discussions of individual plays that resonate with the broad overviews of form, structure, content, and reception addressed in the final chapters of the companion. One important strand of criticism addresses Euripides' treatment of the emotions. Visvardi (Chapter 5), for example, explores how the poet deploys the contradictory emotions of pity and desire in *Alcestis,* linking them to the tragic and satiric genres to create a hybrid genre that plays with new possibilities of feeling. Ebott (Chapter 8) similarly takes up the portrayal of human emotions in *Hippolytus*, arguing that sympathy counteracts the destructive passions of Phaedra by bringing about the reconciliation of father and son. Marshall (Chapter 13) argues that *Heracles* constructs a new form of heroism, rejecting the gods in favor of a new emphasis on compassion.

Another prominent issue in this section is the interplay between the theater and Athenian political ideology. Goslin (Chapter 7) exposes the uneasy relationship

between power and political idealism in Euripides' unsettling play, *Children of Heracles*, while Turkeltaub (Chapter 10) draws a parallel between the war atrocities portrayed in *Hecuba* and contemporary anxieties about abuses of power and the possibility of objective morality in wartime. McClure (Chapter 11) grapples with the question of why Euripides' assigns such a prominent role to mothers in his expression of political orthodoxy in *Suppliant Women*. Moving beyond politics, Swift (Chapter 6) addresses the challenge of Euripidean characterization in her analysis of his most complex and ambiguous character, Medea, whose portrayal continues to divide modern readers and audiences alike. Storey (Chapter 9) rescues *Andromache* from critical obscurity by elucidating how a repeated motif, that of a distressed character rescued unexpectedly, and theme, broken unions, link together the play's three distinct movements. Roisman in turn (Chapter 12) considers the multiple ways that *Electra* destabilizes received mythic tradition, accepted social roles, and gender hierarchies.

A new emphasis on literary self-consciousness, as expressed by intertextual allusion, mythic variation, and metatheatrical reference, emerges in discussions of some of the later plays included in Part III. Boedeker (Chapter 17) shows how in Euripides' *Helen* unfulfilled expectations, dramaturgical anomalies, and the inversion of familiar tragic patterns create a pervasive atmosphere of uncertainty, thereby underscoring the limitations of human knowledge. Barker (Chapter 19) considers how *Orestes* participates in a double discourse by creating a disjunction between the events enacted onstage and mythic tradition, bringing into conflict the heroic and the contemporary. In *Iphigeneia in Aulis*, the poet similarly confronts the problem of creating a new story within the confines of the mythic tradition and in the process lays bare the ways it call attention to the poet's literary artifice (Torrance, Chapter 20).

Religion is also a critical focus in the later plays thanks to the prominence of gods, priestesses, and cultic aetiologies. Kosak (Chapter 15) explores the ambiguity of divine salvation in *Iphigenia in Tauris* as elusive, morally fraught, and impermanent. Griffiths (Chapter 16) addresses similar questions of divine morality in *Ion* and suggests how references to food and feasting might help counteract psychological suffering.

As in the early plays, there is a similar engagement with female characters and Choruses. Rabinowitz investigates how *Trojan Women* (Chapter 14) reinforces gender norms, arguing against its status as a feminist anti-war tract, a view implicit in many modern performances. Reitzammer (Chapter 21) also focuses on Euripides' representation of women in her discussion of *Bacchae*. She argues that the play problematizes the forms and meanings of Dionysus' worship, and more generally, foreign cults at Athens, particularly their effect on women.

The fourth section, "Satyr, Spurious, and Fragmentary Plays," serves as a kind of catch-all for plays that depart in some significant way from the extant corpus. O'Sullivan (Chapter 22) considers the paradoxical characterization of the satyrs in *Cyclops*, the only complete surviving satyr play from antiquity, as encompassing a range of often contradictory identities, by turns playful, ironical, and even pathetic. Liapis' reading of *Rhesus* (Chapter 23) convincingly argues that the play was not

composed by Euripides but rather points to "a derivative concoction of a later innovator," probably composed in the fourth century BCE. Collard (Chapter 24) examines the extant fragments, tracing their transmission from antiquity to the modern period and the outlining the process of reconstruction.

Part V, "Form, Structure, and Performance," investigates core issues across a range of texts. Dubischar (Chapter 25) surveys the formal structures and narrative patterns common to Euripidean tragedy, arguing that the two must be seen as closely inter-related. Roselli (Chapter 26) argues that Euripides' tragic form must be considered in the context of performance and social change. In his view, the openness of his dramatic structure and its material effects on performance contributed to his rising popularity at the end of the fifth century. Focusing on another important aspect of tragic form, Murnaghan (Chapter 27) shows how divergent Euripidean Choruses could be, and the depth of the poet's engagement with choral form as a link to non-dramatic poetic traditions and the origins of drama. Another aspect of form closely related to performance is the poet's use of music, since productions of Greek tragedy were more akin to modern opera than theater. D'Angour (Chapter 28) examines both metrical and melodic aspects of Euripides' tragedy, and the relation of melody to word-pitches. Aristophanes' parodies of Euripides' musical style provides valuable insight into the only direct evidence we have of his melodic practice, a musical papyrus that preserves seven lines of choral song from Euripides' *Orestes* accompanied by instrumental and vocal notation.

Part VI turns from formal matters to address Euripides' engagement with contemporary intellectual, religious, and social issues. Dunn (Chapter 29) explores the ways in which Euripides might have contributed to the intellectual ferment of the late fifth century, including the spread of literacy, the development of specialized skills, such as rhetoric, and progressive new ideas about knowledge, culture, and human agency. Wright (Chapter 30) expands on the poet's adaptation of myth found in the discussions of individual plays, showing how the poet exploits ambiguities and inconsistencies by contradicting his own earlier treatments of myth. This mythic self-consciousness, in which characters seem aware that they are characters in a myth, aligns the poet with the philosophical tradition. Fletcher (Chapter 31) explores the varieties of religious experience depicted in Euripides, from representations of the gods, to instances of impiety, ritual practices—some spurious or perverted—and priestesses. Religious activities add a touch of realism while also shaping the dramatic action. Mueller (Chapter 32) traces the history of scholarship on women and gender in Euripides, and the critical methodologies they deploy, and then considers specific female characters in context, including heroic wives, vengeful mothers, female conspiracies, and how they create morally complicated situations with no clear answers.

The final portion of the volume considers the reception of Euripides' plays, a topic that has attracted much scholarly attention in the past decade. This volume includes just four perspectives on how later authors and artists responded to the poet, starting with the comic poet, Aristophanes, and continuing up to the modern era. Worman (Chapter 33) looks at how the comic poet's mockery of Euripides, especially his use of gendered innuendo, targets particular styles of speech associated with the

sophists as polished and pliable. This portrait in turn initiates a set of literary-critical conventions that draw on the body's metynomies. Duncan (Chapter 34) examines the popularity of Euripides in the fourth century when his plays were regularly performed both at Athens and abroad, with a particular following in southern Italy, due to his plot elements featuring exotic locations, mad scenes, and controversial heroines. Star (Chapter 35) in turn explores how Seneca detaches Euripidean drama from its original civic and religious contexts and transforms it into a means of confronting the anxieties of the Roman Empire. Seneca's engagement with Euripides' *Phoenician Women, Madness of Heracles, Trojan Women, Hippolytus*, and *Medea*, was instrumental for the transmission of these plays into the Renaissance. Finally, Goff (Chapter 36) examines the meanings of Euripides for the modern era, focusing on contemporary productions both in the US and the UK. She shows how the so-called problems in Euripidean dramaturgy gradually come to be viewed as strengths due not only to ideological shifts but also to a new turn toward performance. In this realm, the plays have attracted avant-garde productions and theatrical practices that form an important part of our understanding of modernity.

4 Conclusion

The Euripides that emerges from these pages is the product of centuries of textual transmission, critical reception, and interpretation. Each culture and period brings to his work new concerns and finds new meanings relevant to their time. Whereas audiences and readers in the early twentieth century, influenced by the burgeoning field of psychology, found in the poet an emotional depth unparalleled by the other tragedians, so today Euripides speaks to our deepening anxieties about a deteriorating global political landscape and profound engagement with questions of personal and social identity. Each generation of readers remakes the poet according to their own time. As a poet "vital to how we understand the classical and its relevance within the twentieth century" (Goff, Chapter 36), Euripides continually compels us to reflect on our own engagement with the classical world.

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PART I

Text, Author, and Tradition

CHAPTER 2

Text and Transmission

Donald J. Mastronarde

The modern reader may encounter the Greek text of Euripides' surviving plays in many forms: in print either in complete editions such as in the Oxford Classical Text series (Diggle (1981–1994)) or in the Loeb Classical Library (Kovacs (1994–2002)) or in separate editions of single plays published with translations or commentaries or both, and in digital form at well-known sites on the internet. Despite minor variations in wording and punctuation from one edition to another, modern versions follow certain conventions. The words are separated by spaces and provided with accents, breathing signs, and apostrophes as necessary. Proper nouns and adjectives are usually the only words to be capitalized. Phrases and sentences end in one of four punctuation marks (comma, high stop or Greek colon, period, and Greek question mark). Every time there is a change of speaker, an abbreviated name in the left margin indicates the speaker. Lyric passages are visually recognizable by labeling of stanzaic structure or by characteristic differences in line length. Line numbers are provided at intervals to facilitate reference to the text. In many editions variant readings are reported in an *apparatus criticus*, usually located at the foot of each page. In order to understand why the editions vary in some details and how confidently we can trust these details when analyzing the plays or extracting evidence from them for literary, scholarly, or pedagogical purposes, it is important to know something of the overall story of the transmission of Euripides' works over the course of the twenty-four centuries since his death.

A Companion to Euripides, First Edition. Edited by Laura K. McClure.

1 The Earliest Copies

When Euripides composed his plays, he is most likely to have written on a papyrus roll, although for rough drafts of small sections he could have used wax tablets, loose papyrus sheets (perhaps even recycled ones), or pottery sherds. In order to produce and direct a play, he and probably the lead actor would have needed a full written copy. Part-scripts may have sufficed for the second and third actors and for the Chorus-trainer, and an anecdote suggests that the Chorus-members learned their lines by repeating after the trainer (Kannicht (2004) T 70 = Plutarch, *Mor.* 46B). We do not know whether poets had to submit a text to the archon in order to be granted a Chorus or whether the archon would decide on the basis of an oral proposal or the recitation of some portion of the dramas. Most people will have known plays from attending productions and from hearing and learning recitations of popular selections, and only a few enthusiasts will have been interested in acquiring a written copy of an entire play (Aristophanes, *Frogs* 52–54). We have no papyrus rolls surviving from the period of Euripides' lifetime, but by extrapolating back from some of the earliest bookroll fragments that do survive from the fourth century, we can guess that the fifth-century copies were written in mostly rectilinear letters similar to those of contemporary inscriptions on stone or of careful dipinti on vases, with no space between words and no diacritic marks, but perhaps with some sporadic use of interpuncts. The alphabet used was probably the Ionic, since in casual use Athenians had been writing Ionic letters from the middle of the fifth century. Change of speaker must have been indicated in the texts in some way, perhaps already in the way that is apparent in papyri more than a century later.

Whereas the iambic trimeters of tragic dialogue (as well as trochaic tetrameters and the rare dactylic hexameters) must each have occupied a single line even in the oldest texts, the treatment of the lyric passages has been disputed. The traditional view of modern scholarship has been that in the earliest texts of tragedy the lyrics were written in a prose-like fashion, in long continuous lines with divisions made between stanzas, in contrast to the later layout of lyrics in shorter metrical units known as "cola" (limbs or members). In the past two decades, various arguments have been offered to support the view that musical annotation and lyrics laid out in cola were transmitted continuously from the author's copy to the Alexandrian tradition on which our medieval manuscripts ultimately depend (Kopff and Fleming (1992)). Many of these arguments do not withstand careful scrutiny, and the available evidence still favors the traditional view (Prauscello (2006) 7–121; a prose-like layout of the lyrics is found even in the second-century BCE papyrus of *Cresphontes*, P.Köln 10.398).

The century after Euripides' death was immensely significant for the survival and transmission of his work, but evidence is scanty and indirect, and inferences from it very uncertain. At Euripides' death, copies of some of his plays will have been retained by his family (we are told that a son or nephew named Euripides was responsible for producing the posthumous trilogy of *Iphigenia in Aulis*, *Bacchae*, and *Archelaos*), some copies will have been in the possession of acting troupes, and some copies in public circulation among the few who used and collected books at this