



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1984 Volume II: Greek Civilization

Euripides' *Alcestis*

Curriculum Unit 84.02.06
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Overview

Our view of Greek literature is rather like a view of a great mountain range in which few peaks stand out in perfect clarity against a blue sky while the rest of the range is patchily, tantalizingly hidden by banks and drifts of clouds. ¹

It is with deepest gratitude and respect that I mention those men and women who have spent their lives in pursuit of discovering and preserving the treasures of Ancient Greece. It has to have been an act of love and dedication seldom thought about by many and thankfully able to be carried on by those who have taken up the quest of continuing discovery and study.

Indeed, the treasures of Ancient Greece, plead to each generation of scholar, to be sought after, saved and relished. Classicists, for hundreds of years, wrestled the jewels of Ancient Greece's artists, writers, poets, philosophers and thinkers from the dry sifting sands of Egypt. It is because of these scholars that this unit can be presented to a classroom of students in Connecticut in the year 1984 A.D. It is also because of this that much of the information about this ancient time is filled with conjecture and legend. However, we have a few peaks that stand out clearly, mainly, because others before us have climbed through the mist and cloud to beckon us to stand with them upon the mountain peak and feel the promise of knowledge, inhale the air of challenge and realize the mystery that is Ancient Greece.

This unit, Euripides' *Alcestis*, is an introductory approach to the understanding of Greek tragedy and Euripidean tragedy in particular. The unit is designed for the middle school student of varying reading levels. It is a six week course that will use an interdisciplinary approach. It is structured so that all activities will culminate in the actual performance of the *Alcestis*. Because the *Alcestis* is a fast moving, easily understandable, relatively short and still relevant to today's times, it was an exciting choice for this unit.

The *Alcestis*

The *Alcestis* was produced in 438 B.C. and is probably the earliest of nineteen surviving plays of Euripides, unless the *Rhesus* is considered genuine. It was the fourth play in the tetralogy which included *The Cretan Woman*, *Alcmaeon in Psophis*, and *Telephus*. It is a position, in all other cases that are known, to be occupied by a satyr play. However, a true satyr play, such as *Cyclops*, is a short, slapstick piece characterized by a

chorus of satyrs, half men, half beasts, who act as a farcical backdrop to the traditional mythological heroes of tragedy. The *Alcestis* in spite of its position “is clearly no such play.”²

It has no satyrs, no openly farcical elements. Even the merriment of Heracles is toned down to fit the dignity of serious drama. The uniqueness of the *Alcestis* is not its happy ending, which was not uncommon in Greek tragedy, but its positioning within the 438 B.C. tetralogy. Its relative shortness and fairy-tale like theme which is unusual in extant Greek tragedy adds to its uniqueness and controversy.

Euripides' *Alcestis* has always been a critic's battlefield. Even the genre to which the play belongs is disputed—is it a tragedy, play, or the first example of a tragicomedy?³

Though the story of the *Alcestis* appears relatively simple it too has been the object of study and controversy. It is the story of a young man who is king. His name is Admetus. Through the trickery of his friend, the god Apollo, Admetus escapes Thanatos, Death. Apollo, in the prologue of the *Alcestis*, laments the situation he has gotten his friend into. He had persuaded Death to take a substitute for Admetus. It seemed a fine idea to both Admetus and Apollo, however Death made one stipulation, the substitute had to be a voluntary one. Admetus, still undisturbed, believed his elderly parents would lovingly and willingly take his place and die. Instead, his parents made it clear, especially Pheres, his father, that life was sweeter and more precious as one got older and his parents had no intention of dying for him.

None, except his young beautiful wife and queen came forth. Alcestis voluntarily places herself in her husband's stead. Death comes for Alcestis, leaving her grieving husband to contemplate a life of shame, promised celibacy and isolation. Now enters Heracles. Heracles sees his friend in mourning and questions him as to who has died. Admetus assures his friend that it was simply an outsider and that Heracles was very welcome to stay. Heracles takes Admetus at his word and begins to party and make merry as was his custom. Finally, a servant tells Heracles that it is the queen, Alcestis, that has died. Heracles, angry and hurt confronts Admetus and learns that this is true. He asks Admetus how he could deceive a friend in such an embarrassing and cruel way.

Admetus painfully tells Heracles the story. He tells Heracles that he is sorry for his humiliation but that he did not want to refuse Heracles hospitality since he felt that hospitality was the only thing left that he had to give his friend. Heracles not only forgives his friend but feels his pain in the loss of Alcestis.

Heracles, being the super-hero of those times, goes off to Hades and wrestles Death for the life of Alcestis. He wins and brings Alcestis back to Admetus in disguise. It is as if Alcestis is still dead. It is not until Admetus begins to understand the true pain of his deeds, that the veil drops from Alcestis' face and her husband recognizes her. And so the happy ending.

As its genre, the story also poses questions:

Who is the main character, Alcestis or Admetus? And through whose eyes are we to see this wife and this husband? Is Alcestis as noble as she says she is? And is Admetus worthy of her devotion, or does he deserve all the blame his father, Pheres heaps upon him? And is the salvation of Alcestis a true mystery, a sardonic 'and so they lived happily ever after' or simply the convenient end of an entertainment?⁴

It is because of the countless questions that arise from the study of this play that I found it to be such a useful tool in the investigation of Greek tragedy and Euripidean tragedy in particular. In addition, though its author is shrouded in legend and conjecture, the play is complete and well researched. It is the hope of this unit that

the students will be as motivated and fascinated by this piece of literature as was I and others.

Euripides

The author of the *Alcestis* is no less controversial than his work. Euripides was born in Athens between 485 and 480 B.C. His predecessor Aeschylus and his elderly contemporary Sophocles place him in a pivotal position in the development and eventual demise of classical Greek tragedy. Unlike Sophocles, Euripides seemed to stay on the fringes of his society's activities. His plays are considered by some to be ways in which he gave "manifestos" ⁵ to his fellow Athenians. Associated with the Sophists, and Socrates in particular, Euripides was always an object of suspicion, and in the case of Aristophanes, the great author of Comedy, an object of ridicule.

He first came into prominence in 455, when a tetralogy (a set of three tragedies followed by a satyr play) was accepted for competition in the chief dramatic festival at Athens, the City or Greater Dionysia. As only three tragedians were chosen each year to enter a tetralogy in the festival the mere privilege of being allowed to compete was an honor. Actually, Euripides rarely won the first prize, and in the twenty-two times or so in which he did compete (his total production amounted to about 88 plays) he won the first prize only five times, the fifth being for a posthumous production of a tetralogy which included the *Bacchae* and *Iphigenia at Aulis* .

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The lack of official approval at Athens did not mean that he was neglected. The tireless attacks of Aristophanes from the comic stage show that he was a deeply disturbing element in the cultural life of the day . . .

Euripides' comparative withdrawal from public life and his evident involvement in the open-ended thinking of his age loosened his ties with the community, the 'polis' which traditionally claimed a man's allegiance . . .

Euripides . . . is often a pattern-maker, and stands apart from his creation in a mood of scepticism, disenchantment, or simple virtuosity. ⁷

It seems to be in the above state of mind that Euripides left Athens to reside at the court of king Archelaos in Macedonia, where he died in the winter of 407-406 B.C. Behind him he left the great tragedy *Medea* , the poetic excellence of *Hippolytus* , the depth of *Bacchae* , and the controversy of the *Alcestis* , simply to mention a few of the great works this tragedian has bequeathed to literature. Throughout his works Euripides struggled to show the human side of his characters and tried to elevate their actions to a status of importance and not just as a consequence of the intervention of the gods. For this reason Euripides stands apart as does his works.

An age seems to separate Sophocles and his successor, the great exponent of the new spirit of individualism and the new humanism, Euripides. In the older poet the spirit of Hellenism is strong. Euripides, who reputedly was of humble origin, is distinctly the first of the moderns. The apostle of humanism, Euripides issued his dramas as epistles to mankind. ⁸

Greek Tragedy

Tragedy was an Athenian creation, and by 500 B.C. its presentations were established as a part of one of the annual festivals in honor of the god Dionysus, the City Dionysia, celebrated in spring. Greek tragedy may have grown out of the choral dithyramb, and although the details of its origin are obscure, it had a long tradition of epic, lyric and dramatic poetry behind it. Although it was always associated with religion and religious ritual

the plays themselves were concerned fundamentally with human values, with man's dignity and his individual responsibility to himself and the gods.

The plays are on the level of universal tragedy and bear out the definition, made almost a century after the Periclean Age by Aristotle in his *Poetics*, to the effect that tragedy is an 'imitation' of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude, while its function is—by rousing pity and fear—to provide a catharsis, or purging, of these and like emotions. The ideal tragic hero continues Aristotle, must be a highly renowned, though not pre-eminently virtuous, man whose misfortune is brought upon him by some error of judgment or frailty, rather than by vice or depravity. ⁹

(Note: "Frailty" in the above quote, translates *hamartia*, which is now generally regarded as meaning a "mistake.")

The majority of the dramatists who spoke to their fellow citizens in fifth-century Athens are irretrievably lost; others are known to us by name only. Those who have survived are represented by a mere fraction of their total production. In spite of the loss of so many masterpieces, three of the four greatest tragedians in history are Greek: Aeschylus, who produced his first plays about 490 B. C. and died in 456 B.C.; Sophocles, who first produced in 468 B.C. and continued until his death early in 406; and Euripides, whose career runs from 455 until his death early in 406. These were the masters of Greek tragedy, yet its flowering and fading as an art-form were practically encompassed by one century, the fifth century B.C. ¹⁰

Plays were performed in the open air and in daylight. If the action was to be thought of as taking place in the dark, the words of the play had to make that plain, and the audience's imagination was expected to cooperate. Poets tended to construct action which could plausibly be thought of as taking place out of door; and when the need of an interior scene was unavoidable and necessary it could be effected only by rolling out a low trolley, which attempted to bring the interior outside. ¹¹

Greek traditions established the celebration of festivals with choral song and dance, and the earliest tragedy is said to have extended this form to include an actor able to engage in dialogue with the chorus leader. A second actor was added in the fifth century, and a third in the 460s. The actors wore masks, and the same actor could be required to take more than one part in the course of a play, but serious restriction on how many of them he could bring on stage to speak in same scene was imposed. Every tragedy was written in poetry and every tragedy had a chorus. Each tragedy was a molding of poetry, dance, chorus and dialogue.

The tragedians commonly used the myths of the heroic age as their themes. Hence, the same titles occur and recur throughout the history of tragedy. Since these myths were known throughout the audience a "surprise ending" was seldom the objective of the poet. Instead, the poet modified the myths by selection, interpretation, and invention.

The actor, who were always men, were highly trained and were paid by the government. Admission was free up until the fourth century, when a small fee was charged those who could afford it. A great procession normally occupied the first day of the festival, on the second day ten dithyrambic choruses of fifty each competed and on the third, five comic poets each produced a play. The last three days were given over to the tragic poets, each of whom presented a tetralogy. ¹²

The Greek tragedy generally opened with a prologue—especially with Euripides—which gave the general situation. Then the chorus entered (*parados*) and sang. The chorus which was a group of fifteen, made the

audience feel itself a part of the play. The remainder of the play was devoted to an alternation of episode (act) and stasimon (choral ode), until the exodos (finale) when the chorus left the orchestra and the play ended. Occasionally, a kommos, which was a passage sung by actors and chorus together, was substituted for a stasimon. Episodes were written in iambic trimeter, the stasima, in various meters, which presumably were governed structurally by the music that accompanied them.

Because of the large size of the theater, changes in facial expression could not be recognized by the audience. To compensate for this the actors wore masks that set the general type of the character. In addition, it is believed the masks also acted as megaphones although the acoustics of the theaters scattered across Greece still amaze visitors.

Objectives

The overall objective of this unit is to give students the chance to understand and appreciate Greek tragedy. It is also designed to allow students to focus upon one tragedian, Euripides and one work, the *Alcestis*. Through this focusing, students will move out from that point to Greek Civilization during the 5th century B.C. and back to the heroic times and their myths. Students should begin to understand the vastness of the knowledge uncovered and the monumental loss of those works that will be buried forever. They should also be encouraged to continue the search in their own way, if not as scholars of Greek Civilization then as appreciators of its treasures.

Specific objectives for students.

1. Students will read the *Alcestis*.
2. Students will learn of the dramatist Euripides, the man and legend.
3. Students will learn the elements of Greek tragedy.
4. Students will learn the differences in Euripidean tragedy and those of other dramatists through comparative readings of other plays.
5. Students will learn of the stage production of Greek tragedy.
6. Students will learn of the uses of masks in Greek tragedy.
7. Students will make their own masks for the production.
8. Students will make comparisons between Elizabethan drama, modern drama (*Death of a Salesman*, *The Cocktail Party*) and current soap operas.
9. Students will perform the *Alcestis*.

Strategies

Just as the Greeks did not immediately start to write down everything they composed in verse and prose, but were content to recite orally their stories and accomplishments, this unit, too, will begin with oral recitation and stories. It is an important strategy for it attempts to familiarize students with the way things happened in Ancient Greek times. Once a story is told, whether it is of an actual myth or one made up by the student, and the process of oral repetition is experienced, students will begin to understand why so much of the great works have been lost and how recurring themes may occur in various stories, but with different details and episodes.

This unit will have to introduce the mythology that was Greece's from its earliest history. Stories of the gods, rituals in their honor and man's relationship with them was the subject of lyric and oral tradition for many years before the 5th century B.C. The tragedians used these themes in their plays as had been the custom for many years. They wove each theme into their own individual pattern.

These myths will be used by students also, to understand the themes of the tragedians, and to stimulate their own creativity and their own writings. Heracles and Apollo, since they are characters in the *Alcestis*, will introduce the students to this rich and wonderful tradition. (See Linda McGuire's unit on Heracles.)

Another strategy, in addition to story telling, is the use of art, research and creative writing to make these stories even more real and memorable. Taking one particular story that had been orally given and writing it down will demonstrate its ability to be preserved as it was originally stated. However, adding to that a different dimension by varying where and how it was written down will add to the students' understanding of how Greek literature suffered such losses over these hundreds of years. For example, if a short poem was written on the blackboard, in playground sand, on paper, and burned into a piece of wood it would illustrate the point well. If we then took various types of surfaces and buried them for two weeks the lesson will be even more memorable. Could other class members find these "treasures," and if and when they did what condition will they be in?

It is the design of this unit, therefore, to give each student as much of an experience in Greek literature and civilization as it is to impart a chance to gain knowledge of this great civilization.

Other activities will include:

1. Making maps of ancient Greece.
2. Making the family tree of the Greek gods. This will include student's research and representation of how they imagine their god or goddess looked.
3. Choosing a god or goddess and drawing a story with that god or goddess, much like a comic or story book, but illustrating a real myth.

Sample lesson plan and activity

Objectives

1. Students will learn the Prologue of the *Alcestis*.
2. Students will become acquainted with Thanatos, the priest of Death and Apollo, the god and friend of Admetus.
3. Students will investigate the elements of the Prologue as used in Euripidean tragedy.

Preparation: Have a copy of the *Alcestis*' Prologue available for each student. Students should be arranged in groups of four or five.

Discussion: Point out that the Prologue had been used in other tragedies but Euripides made it truly his own. In his tragedies the Prologue eventually became one of his trademarks. It was in the Prologue that Euripides acquainted the audience with the happenings leading up to the drama. He also boldly set the action in motion as to what the audience might expect especially in the Prologue of the *Alcestis* . Let's read this section of the *Alcestis* and see if we can identify these characteristics of the Euripidean prologue.

Have two members of the group read the parts of Thanatos, and Apollo while the remaining two jot down descriptions and notes of those lines that set up the drama and foreshadow action to come. Then they can alternate roles.

Excerpts from the Prologue of the *Alcestis*
 translated by Dudley Fitts
 Robert Fitzgerald

Apollo:

House of Admetus, where I lived so long,
 Fed with the food of slaves and hired soldiers,
 And I a god—!
 Can I forget how Zeus
 Stabbed my son with his lightning through the heart,
 And I, raging,
 Cut down the old Wheelleys, God's fire-forgers?
 Or how for this the Father of Heaven bound me
 Servant to death-bound man?

4. Creating a story in which a god or goddess intervenes in their own everyday life.
5. Making masks for their play and doing the research on stage masks.
6. Constructing a stage and props. (This will entail its own research and surprise, since they will discover that the stage didn't have a curtain and there was very little in the way of scenery and props.)
7. Studying Greek urns, especially those that dealt with the *Alcestis* and other Greek tragedies.
8. Performing the *Alcestis*.
9. Using small groups in a "Socratic" type dialogue to discuss questions raised in the *Alcestis* .

In addition, students will keep a notebook of their writing, discussions, and excerpts from various writings that will be introduced, studied, and compared to the *Alcestis*. Each student will have a copy of the *Alcestis*. These notebooks will include famous Greeks, including Socrates, Aristophanes, Aristotle, and the Sophists, since all in their own way relate to the *Alcestis* and Euripides.

Once hands-on kind of activities have been experienced and materials have been presented that need to be recalled, a series of tests will be administered for accountability for retaining certain information. However, it is the express design of this unit to emphasize the experiences and activities as a means of introducing students to this “great mountain range in which few peaks stand out in perfect clarity.”¹³

Summary

The information presented in this unit is meant only to give teachers a skeleton of information in order to provide for them an opportunity to decide whether or not this unit interests them and if so to be able to begin it with some basic understanding of its scope. It is meant as an introduction to the subject and could never presume to be an exhaustive study of the topic.

I came down into this country and served Admetus
As herdsman for his flock. I guarded his house,
I saved him from death when I tricked the
Three Sisters of the frail thread, forcing
Their word for it that he need not go down
Into the dark land, if he found a friend
To take his place among the Dead.
A friend? He went to all his friends in turn,
To his father and mother also; and he found
None but his wife who dared to die for him,
Dared to give up the sweet sunlight for him!

(In this section of the Prologue, Apollo tells the story of how Admetus got into the situation he now faces. He introduces himself and his part in the tragedy. Students should be able to list the information Apollo gives about himself and the plight of Admetus. Once Death enters, Thanatos and Apollo spar with words. Apollo

tempts Death to be a good sport and take Alcestis as an old woman, thereby saving face and still reap the riches from mankind. Death tells him that riches mean nothing to him, nor should they to man. Finally, Apollo forecasts the coming of a man who will wrestle Alcestis away.)

Apollo:

You need not be afraid of me, Death. I will not wrong you: only, Admetus is my friend, and I suffer for him.

Death:

Yet you go armed, Apollo.

Apollo:

I go armed always.

Death:

And are always over-kind to Admetus' house?
Are you planning how to cheat me of this new death?

Apollo:

Did I take Admetus from you by force?

Death:

He walks
Above ground; why is he not beneath it?

Apollo:

He has given you his wife—

Death:

And I have come to take her.

Apollo: Take her, and go!

—But stay, Death:

If any words of mine could move you—

Death:

To what?
To kill a life that is forfeit? O Apollo,
You need not teach me my office.
(The argument continues until Apollo gives a final address to Death)

Apollo:

Death, Death, I say to you
This day your bitterest cruelty is too weak!
Listen: a man is coming,
Here, to Pherae: a man is coming,
Stronger than all your strength. Here, in this house, Admetus will receive him and honour him.

And it is he, Death, who will wrestle with you and take Alcestis back from you at the door of Hell!

For you must yield her, Death:

And though you deny me now, you shall yield at last to my hate!

(Death moves away to claim his victim)

After the group has finished the reading of the Prologue and taken notes, have the recorder for the group list past information provided in the Prologue and the next group would report future actions foretold in the Prologue. Alternate group reports until all groups have been heard.

Ask students to discuss which character do they think will win and how?

Stress how Euripidean prologues do set the scene for the action to come and that this is a characteristic to be remembered in Euripidean tragedy.

Assignment

1. Write a report on Apollo and Thanatos, Death.
Include information on Hades.
2. Create a story in which you visit Hades and meet Thanatos. How did you get there? How do you get out?

Footnotes

1. Dover, K.J. and others. *Ancient Greek Literature* , (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), p.5.
2. Wilson, John R. ed., *Twentieth Century Interpretations of Euripides ' the Alcestis* , (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968), p.3.
3. Ibid, p. 1.
4. Ibid, p. 1.
5. Ibid, p. 1.
6. Ibid, p. 3.
7. Ibid, p. 2.
8. Robinson, C.A., Jr., ed. *An Anthology of Greek Drama*, (New York: Holt, Rhinehart and Wilson, Inc., 1949), p. xiii.
9. Ibid, p. viii.
10. Ibid, Dover, p. 51.
11. Ibid, Dover, p. 52.
12. Ibid, Robinson, p. xvii.
13. Ibid, Wilson, p. 5.

Annotated Bibliography

Bates, William Nickerson. *Euripides: A Student of Human Nature* . New York: A.S. Barnes and Co., Inc., 1961.

This book is a study of Euripides and his tragedies. It is well documented and amply peppered with illustrative plates.

Butcher, S.H., *The Poetics of Aristotle* . London: Macmillan and Co., 1920

A text and translation of the Poetics form part of the volume entitled, *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art* . This edition has its translation and enlarged critical notes.

Dover, K.J. et al. *Ancient Greek Literature* . New York: Oxford University Press, 1980.

Excellent reference and good reading especially on Euripides and his works.

Fitts, Dudley and Fitzgerald, Robert, translators. *The Alcestis of Euripides* . New York: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1936.

A translation of the *Alcestis* .

Godolphin, F.R.B. ed. *Great Classical Myths* . New York: The Modern Library, 1964.

This is a comprehensive collection of myths from the creation to the gods, to the underworld. It tells of the heroic and Homeric heroes. Excellent reference.

Grene, David and Lattimore, Richmond, editors. *The Complete Greek Tragedies* . Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1959.

An anthology of Euripides' dramas with an introduction and commentary to each.

Jones, John. *On Aristotle and Greek Tragedy* , New York: Oxford University Press, 1962.

This book discusses Aristotle's comments on drama in his work, the *Poetics* . Since Aristotle is quoted so often by contemporary scholars and critics a student should become aware of the source.

Little, Alan. *Myth and Society in Attic Drama* . New York: Octagon Books, Inc., 1967.

This book attempts to present Attic drama within its Attic society. It gives detail on the beliefs, traditions, democracy and thought of the Attic society at the time of the plays. Good historical backdrop for the dramas.

Lucas, D.W. *The Greek Tragic Poets* . New York: W.W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1959

This an easy reading of the three great tragedians, their lives and work: Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides.

Lucas, F.L. *Euripides and His Influence* . New York: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1963.

This book is entirely on Euripides, his work and his influence from his own time down to the Neo-Classic age.

Lucas, F.L. *Greek Tragedy and Comedy* . New York: The Viking Press, 1967.

Essays on Greek tragedy and comedy. Good chronological table included.

Norwood, Gilbert. *Essays on Euripidean Drama*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1954.

This is an admittedly subjective study of Euripides. It extensively questions the workings of the Euripidean tragedy.

Robinson, C.A. editor. *An Anthology of Greek Drama*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1949.

Main interest is its section on the production of Greek drama.

Rosenmeyer, Thomas G. *The Masks of Tragedy*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1963.

Essays on six plays including the *Alcestis*. The title is deceptive for the author does not deal with the tragedean masks but with the dramas themselves. Some good material in comparing Elliot's, *The Cocktail Party* with the dialogue in the *Alcestis*.

Segal, Erich, ed. *Euripides: A Collection of Critical Essays*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968.

A collection of essays on Euripides and several of his works including one by Anne Pippin Burnett, "The Virtues of Admetus."

Vellacott, Philip. *Ironic Drama: A Study of Euripides' Method and Meaning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975.

Definitely not easy reading but full of in depth study of the ironic structure in Euripides' plays.

Whitman, Cedric, H. *Euripides and the Full Circle of Myth*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1974.

An essay spotlighting Euripides' *Iphigeneia in Taurus*, *Helen*, and *Ion*. However, there is a chapter that deals with the interrelationship between the tragedies and the myths.

Wilson, John R. *Twentieth Century Interpretations of Euripides' Alcestis*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968.

Excellent scholarly collection of essays by some of the most respected Classicists. Very enlightening and appropriate readings concerning the *Alcestis* and the inner workings of Euripidean tragedies.

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