WHEN HEROES SING

Sophoclean heroes engage in lyric song and lyrical speech far more than other heroes of tragedy. This has profound implications for both the hero himself and tragedy as a genre. The lyrical voice grounds the heroes in a world of poetic identity and power, demonstrating how tragedy was influenced by other kinds of poetry in fifth-century Athens. Yet, at the same time, the heroes’ lyrical voices set them apart from their communities and lend them the authority and abilities of poets. Through close readings, this book demonstrates how the voice of each hero is inflected by song and other markers of lyric poetry, in order to discuss the purpose of their lyric passages and the wider issue of defining the nature and function of the poetic voice. This study offers new insight into the ways that Sophoclean tragedy inherits and refracts the traditions of other poetic genres.

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When heroes sing: Sophocles and the shifting soundscape of tragedy
Sarah Nooter

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First published 2012

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data
Nooter, Sarah.
When heroes sing: Sophocles and the shifting soundscape of tragedy / Sarah Nooter. p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
1. Sophocles – Language. 2. Tragedy – History and criticism. I. Title.
PA4432.N66 2012 882’.01 – dc23 2012002690


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Acknowledgements

I have been lucky to have copious guidance and support in writing this book. The seeds of the work were planted under the wise and generous stewardship of my dissertation adviser, Helene Foley, the wit and guidance of Frederick Griffiths, the interrogation and encouragement of Simon Goldhill, the exacting eye of Deborah Steiner, and the advice, humor, and affirmations of Nancy Worman. Rachel Kitzinger and David Sider offered invaluable suggestions as outside dissertation readers. Mark Payne led me to think about poetry more creatively at both the beginning and end of the project. Seth Schein and Kirk Ormand added depth to my sense of Sophocles in the later stages. Thomas Kingsley suggested acute improvements and Rachel Hostyk's editorial insight enhanced every paragraph. Felix Budelmann and the other anonymous reader from Cambridge University Press offered excellent guidance and corrections. Michael Sharp patiently allowed this project to come to fruition and Gillian Cloke graced it with tireless and good-humored copy-editing. I can offer only my thanks to these great influences.

My father, Thomas Nooter, read the whole dissertation and made me believe that someone might someday wish to read the book it would become. My mother, Alice Schlesinger, offered faith in me past all reasonable measure, as usual. My beautiful son, Henry, gave me a reason to finish. My wonderful husband, Michael Fish, edited and improved the book immeasurably, and improves its author daily.

This book is dedicated to my first inspiring teachers of the classics, on whom there can be no improvement: Gail Brousal, Robert Henneman, Paul O’Rourke, and the late Victor Marchioro.
Note on the text


In citing Sophocles, I have used the most recent OCT, edited by Lloyd-Jones and Wilson, with modifications in accordance with readings from Pearson and other editions, as indicated throughout. Translations are mine, unless otherwise stated, and are included for all quotations of Greek text.
List of short titles and abbreviations


