

Vayos Liapis/Antonis K. Petrides (eds.): *Greek Tragedy after the Fifth Century. A Survey from ca. 400 BC to ca. AD 400*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2021. XIV, 415 p. £ 29.99. ISBN: 978-1-009-06983-0.

The book contains comprehensive and thorough studies of Greek tragedy from the death of Euripides to Late Antiquity. It examines neglected plays in the light of theatrical and social topics, such as the expansion of Greek Tragedy beyond Athens and after Euripides's death, theatre performance, music and dances, society and politics. Special emphasis is placed on the reception of Greek Tragedy in the Second Sophistry and in Late Antiquity.

In the introduction (pp. 1–21), Antonis K. Petrides outlines post-classical tragedy and theories of decline as well as continuity and change in Greek Tragedy after the fifth century.

The book consists of three parts.

Part I (“Texts”, pp. 23–146) comprises four chapters, which deal with textual evidence for post-classical Greek Tragedy and discuss key texts or fragments of texts.

Chapter 1 (“Greek Tragedy in the Fourth Century: The Fragments”, pp. 25–65) by Vayos Liapis and Theodoros K. Stephanopoulos, examines all major fragments of fourth-century tragedy. There are included the remains of four prominent tragic playwrights, Astydamos, Carcinus (junior), Chaeremon, Theodectas, but also those of less famous ones, Diogenes of Athens, Dicaeogenes, Antiphon the tragic poet, Patrocles of Athens, Dionysius of Syracuse, Diogenes of Sinope and Sosiphanes of Syracuse. The authors show the prevalent influence of Euripides and the tendency of the fourth-century playwrights to stretch the tragic genre to unparalleled extremes.

Chapter 2 (“The *Rhesus*”, pp. 66–89) by Almut Fries, provides an accurate survey of the most crucial questions of the play, such as scene and settings, the plot, the sources, structure and meaning, dramaturgy and stagecraft, language and style. The chapter concludes with a summary of *Rhesus*' literary reception in Antiquity.

In chapter 3 (“Hellenistic Tragedy and Satyr-Drama; Lycophron’s *Alexandra*”, pp. 90–124) Simon Hornblower focuses on the possibility of interpolation writing in the time of Flamininus and the question of generic categorization of the play. The ending of the chapter provides a brief rundown of the revival of Hellenistic Satyr-Drama in the early Hellenistic period with special emphasis on Lycophron of Chalcis, Sositeus and Python’s *Agēn*.

Chapter 4 (“The *Exagōgē* of Ezekiel the Tragedian”, pp. 125–146) by Pierluigi Lanfranchi, inquires into the identity of the author, the date and the subject of the play, the place and the occasion on which it was produced, and the effort that Ezekiel has made to reformulate the content of the biblical text into the metrical forms and dramatic structure of Greek Tragedy.

Part II (“Contexts and Developments”, pp. 147–294) reveals aspects of the socio-political, cultural, literary-historical and performative structure of Greek Tragedy after the death of Euripides.

The purpose of chapter 5 (“Beyond Athens. The Expansion of Greek Tragedy from the Fourth Century Onwards”, pp. 149–179) by Brigitte Le Guen is threefold: 1. to shed light on the regions and the socio-political contexts in which tragic performances were produced; 2. to describe the diffusion of tragedy in the Hellenistic period and to explain its reasons; 3. to define the meaning of the term ‘tragedy’ in this period and the role of choruses.

Chapter 6 (“Theatre Performance After the Fifth Century”, pp. 180–203) co-authored by Anne Duncan and Vayos Liapis, looks at the canonization of the fifth-century tragedy. It explores the influence of Euripides and Aeschylus, the theatrical environment and equipment as well as the process of performing a tragic play, such as the rise of the action, the acting style, the standardization of masks and the important role of the dramatic chorus in the postclassical tragedy.

Chapter 7 (“Music and Dance in Tragedy After the Fifth Century”, pp. 204–242) by Mark Griffith, opposes to the common misapprehension concerning the reduced role of sung and danced scenes in the tragic plays after the fifth century. Griffith shows that Hellenistic tragedy remained a greatly musical event, which was subject to significant changes in the actual music played, i.e. the melodies, tunings and musical styles. This allows him to conclude that postclassical theatre music was a fusion of different music styles from around the Greek world and innovations and changes, alike.

In the next chapter (“The Fifth Century and After. [Dis]continuities in Greek Tragedy”, pp. 243–269), Francis Dunn sets out developments in late-fifth-century tragedies and establishes the extent of these into the fourth. He first investigates aspects of song and plot in late-fifth century tragedy. He then takes into consideration broader developments in naturalism, literary and theatrical self-consciousness, and ethical contingency.

In the chapter 9 (“Society and Politics in Post-Fifth-Century Tragedy”, pp. 270–293), David M. Carter asks to what extent fifth-century tragedy involves a strong resemblance to the fourth-century one. He also places great emphasis on the political, intellectual, and ethical aspects of the plays. In addition, he singles out the relationship between the fifth and the fourth centuries as regards the values and the discourses that in the matter of political and rhetoric issues were quite comparable to those of Sophocles and Euripides.

Part III (“Reception and Transmission”, pp. 295–349) inquires into aspects of the tragic dramas in the imperial period. It presents a general view of tragedy from the postclassical scholar’s standpoint.

Chapter 10 (“Attitudes Towards Tragedy from the Second Sophistic to Late Antiquity”, pp. 297–323) by Ruth Webb, gives an outline of varied attitudes towards tragedy in the first centuries AD. It pays particular attention to the practical background represented both by the ongoing performance of tragedy and by the didactic uses made of it beyond the stage. Indeed, tragedy was a subject taught in schools, at home and in social events. The ending of the chapter focuses on concise comments on the idea of tragedy and the tragic actor.

The last chapter (“Scholars and Scholarship on Tragedy”, pp. 324–349) by Johanna Hanink, highlights the importance of the tragic scholarship and provides a short survey of its evolution and general tendencies from its beginning in Classical Athens to its height in Alexandria, Pergamum and Rome. It provides an overview of the birth of scholarship as it occurred in Aristotle and the philological preoccupations of Alexandrian scholars working under the patronage of the Ptolemies. The last part of the chapter is dedicated to the corpora of ancient tragic scholia (*scholia vetera*) that survived in medieval manuscripts and Tragedians’ *Lives*.

The present volume ends with a rich bibliography, an *Index Locorum* and a General *Index*.

This totality of essays constitutes an essential contribution to a more exact and well-rounded knowledge of postclassical drama studies. The contributors succeed to make manifest the vitality of postclassical tragedy and to reject the widespread idea of decline from a fifth-century highest point. The collection is one of very great interest and value because post-classical tragedy is situated in its socio-political contexts for first time. Therefore, the non-democratic aspect of post-classical tragedy is highlighted on several occasions. Throughout the book, some topics, such as the gradual spreading of theatres, the continued participation of choruses and the professional aspect of tragic performance, are often occurring, which is explainable by the thematic organization of essays. In sum, the characteristic feature of this collective volume is contributors' profound expertise and erudition in literature as well as philology. The clarity and exactitude of the studies make this an exceptional contribution to any scholar dealing with the evolution of Greek Tragedy from the Classical period to Late Antiquity. By integrating multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary theories, the essays reveal the main aspects of this evolution and the importance of ancient scholarship in the transmission of Greek texts.

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Empfohlene Zitierweise

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