The Origins of Theater in Ancient Greece and Beyond: From Ritual to Drama. Edited by Eric Csapo and Margaret C. Miller. Cambridge University Press, New York 2007. ISBN 978-0-521-83682-1. XIX, 440 pp. GBP 50, USD 90.

The origins of theatre and the relation of ritual and drama have been discussed in many research areas from the 19th century onwards. This volume is a thorough and many-sided contribution to the discussion. The first two parts are dedicated to the role of theatre in ancient Greek culture, while the third introduces comparative cases from other cultures. Each part begins with an introduction, and Parts I and III respectively end with a discussion of the themes dealt with. The 16 contributors present a wide range of subjects that bring together ritual and drama in the context of ancient theatre. The volume ends with Part IV, Richards Seaford's conclusion ("From ritual to drama: A concluding statement", pp. 379–401).

In the general introduction (pp. 1–38), the editors Csapo and Miller provide a handy and thorough overview of the scholarship of the origins of drama in Greece. They ask whether the central position of Greece is justified within the theories of the origin of drama and also remind us of the importance to revise studies that hold a central position in scholarship, a good example for the Greek theatre being the work of Pickard-Cambridge.

Part I, "Komasts and predramatic culture", contains three chapters on komasts and padded dancers, preceded by an introduction (pp. 41–7) and followed by a discussion (pp. 108–17), both by Thomas H. Carpenter. The central question is, as Carpenter puts it, "of what use, if any, is archeology for an understanding of the prehistory of Greek drama?" (p. 41). The following chapters aim at answering this question, each handling the archeological material from slightly different angles.

Tyler Jo Smith begins the discussion with the essay "The corpus of komast vases: from identity to exegesis" (pp. 48–76). She discusses the problems of identifying a figure as a komast and goes through the evidence for komasts in different regions and their relation to drama. Smith pays attention to cases where some context for the komasts can be detected, such as symposion, festival and ritual, Dionysos, pantomime and play. She rightly notices that "crediting the scenes with such importance [i.e. origins of Greek drama] involves a certain amount of imagination" (p. 62). The factual hints at drama (as we understand it) are indeed rather scattered, and, in line with that, Smith concludes the chapter with a cautious statement (p. 72): "The diverse nature of the evidence makes difficult a single, tidy explanation for the entire iconographic corpus."

Cornelia Isler-Kerényi continues from this to a detailed discussion on dancers in relation to ritual ("Komasts, mythic imaginary, and ritual", pp. 77–95). Isler-Kerényi is somewhat more optimistic than Smith in connecting komasts with ritual and especially with Dionysos but she, too, concludes that "here ends our certainty" (p. 92). The connection between komasts/padded dancers and drama cannot in fact be proven. What becomes clear already in the contribution of Smith is that there is some divergence in terminology. The dancing figures in archaic vases are called komasts, padded dancers or grotesque (or even burlesque) dancers (p. 82), all these terms referring more or less to those figures which Isler-Kerényi describes as fat, unproportioned and clothed men executing "inelegant but standardized movements", and which are mostly anonymous and appear in groups (pp. 84–85). Isler-Kerényi herself shows slight inconsistency when she speaks mostly of grotesque dancers in her text, although 'komast' is used in the title. Furthermore, it would have been good to elaborate briefly on the difficulty

of interpreting an image as a representation of dancing and not to have stated bluntly that "this performance is clearly a dance" (p. 84). A thorough discussion of this theme can be found in the fundamental book on ancient dancing by F. Naerebout, *Attractive Performances* from 1997.

In the third essay of Part I, J. Richard Green discusses padded dancers ("Let's hear it for the fat man: Padded dancers and the prehistory of drama", pp. 96–107). The author states that the identity and function of the padded dancers "continue to be elusive" as well as the reasons they were shown on vases, but he continues by observing that "these images seem to offer our major primary source of information about the early evolution of the Greek drama" (p. 96). While the previous chapters pointed out the regional representations of these dancers, Green explicitly reminds us that "the situation we see in Corinth, for example, need not tell us all that much about the role(s) of these figures in Athens or Samos, let alone Sparta or western Greece" (p. 97). Green is perhaps the most straightforward of these three authors in what he says about regional practices and how these may have been used by painters in other areas and how modern scholarship takes up examples of vases to form an idea about what is typical and what irregular – simple facts that tend to be overlooked or forgotten. Green observes that even though it is tempting to see dancers that are named on a vase as representatives of pre-dramatic performances, there remains "a confusion between whether we are looking at created figures or young men dressed up and performing in the roles of such figures" (p. 100).

Unlike in Parts I and III, in Part II, "Emergence of drama", introduction and discussion are combined in the contribution of Gregory Nagy (pp. 121–5). He states that the terms "drama" and "ritual" should be rethought especially if one is versed only in classics and not also in anthropology. One easily tends to think that "drama" is "basically a matter of literature whereas 'ritual' defaults to some kind of subliterature" (p. 121). Nagy calls for an approach influenced by anthropology, namely, that ritual activity be described as systematically as possible, set in its historical context and only then compared to the practices known from other locations in the ancient world. For example, evidence from Archaic Corinth should be examined in the historical context of that place, and only then compared with, for example, Athens.

The first essay of Part II is by David Depew with the title "From hymn to tragedy: Aristotle's genealogy of poetic kinds" (pp. 126–49). According to his *Poetics* 4, Aristotle regards comedy as evolving out of solos performed by the leaders of phallic processions and tragedy as rooted in dithyramb. As Depew notes, despite the fact that Aristotle considers himself to "be reporting historical facts" (p. 127) and is seemingly good at details, his account has "met a good deal of scepticism in modern classical scholarship" starting with Pickard-Cambridge. Contemporary scholars, however, are willing to look at Aristotle's claims in a more positive light (e.g., D.W. Lucas or R. Janko). Depew's essay is clear and well-structured on a theme that is central to ancient Greek drama and worth a thorough discussion.

Guy Hedreen's "Myths of Ritual in Athenian Vase-Paintings of Silens" is the second essay in Part II (pp. 150–95). Hedreen examines vase-paintings as representations of mythical performances constituting "prototypes of historical choral song and dance" rather than "documentary evidence of ritual practices of masquerading as a silen" (p. 151). He discusses different themes related to choroi of silens, for example, playing strings or shown at the wedding of Dionysus and Ariadne of which one of the most famous is the Pronomos Vase, "the fullest surviving visual statement about the nature of satyrplay" (p. 176). With regard to a passage of a choral song by Pratinas of Phleious, in which the silens claim their authority in Dionysiac song and dance, Hedreen states that the vase paintings contribute to this argument, that is, the choroi

of silens are not a literary innovation of the late 5th century but rather a much earlier concept (p. 184). When the author compares the wedding scenes on vases with the concluding passage in Xenophon's *Symposion* (9,3–5) about Dionysus and Ariadne, he states that although the text is of a much later date than the vases, the "comparison is useful because it helps us to see that the scene [on the vases] can be understood as a form of dance" (p. 175). This is, indeed, the recurring idea in the whole volume: it is about dance, and this is why the word "dance" should have been used in the title.

Matthias Steinhart discusses specific scenes with komasts in Corinthian vase-painting under the title "From ritual to narrative" (pp. 196–220). He views these scenes as presenting mimetic dance, and thus "the komasts form an essential link between cultic dance and dance narrating myths or mundane events" (p. 216). Steinhart especially focuses on the relation of komasts to dithyramb and comedy, discussing not only the vases but also literary passages ranging from Pindar to Suda. The huge temporal and cultural gap in the sources is somewhat problematic, but Steinhart copes with this problem, and his concluding remark is reasonably cautious when he states that the mimetic narrative dances can be seen as catalysts for dithyramb and drama (p. 217).

Part II ends with a well-organized essay by Barbara Kowalzig, "'And now all the world shall dance!' (Eur. *Bacch*. 114): Dionysus' choroi between drama and ritual" (pp. 221–51). The author examines the cultic environment in mid-6th century Sicyon in relation to the classical Athenian tragic choroi. In a more direct way than many other writers in this volume, she reminds the reader of the important dynamic between drama, ritual and their social context. The idea that there would be no initiation to Dionysus without dancing (esp. pp. 226–32) is inspiring for a dance historian; it underlines the aspect of dance as an effective medium of communication between humans and gods, between "us" and "the others". Along similar lines, in the concluding section, Kowalzig argues (p. 245) that the choros may be "understood as the medium that makes Greek theatre a ritual", that is, the communication with the god is in this specific gathering of people made possible through dance (choros).

Part III, "Comparing other cultures", begins with a short introduction by Kimberley C. Patton (pp. 255–8). The first case beyond the boundaries of ancient Greece is Egypt: Ronald J. Lephron writes about "Ritual drama in ancient Egypt" (pp. 259–92). This article provides an overview of some of the relevant texts. The article, however, lacks clarity when discussing the date and language of the texts; it is important to know whether a text is written in Egyptian (and in what form) or in Greek, and one can never be too lighthearted about the vast time span of the material from Egypt. Without the information that papyrologists or Egyptologists are familiar with, for example, which papyrus publications deal with texts only written in Egyptian or in Greek, the reader may be rather confused or even ignorant of the importance of the issue of language. One example is the discussion of a Ptolemaic document: the text dates to the Greek period but the reader is not given information about its language (p. 268–9). Further, it is a bit confusing to read chapter 4 ("Greek sources"), as one would expect something more than just brief discussions of two passages of Herodotos (pp. 273–4). As to the discussion about the masks (pp. 270–2), it would be good to consider the possibility of a pantomime performance, that is, the person who wears the mask does not need to speak himself but can "tell the story" without words, especially when the tradition of the history of the ancient Greco-Roman pantomime claims the origin of the genre to derive "from the East" (Alexandria and Cilicia). All

in all, the role of Egyptian sources and culture deserves to be discussed and studied in depth in respect to theatre, drama and religious public performances in the ancient world, and this paper is one step in that direction.

The second case is by Günter Zobel on "Ritual and performance, dance and drama in ancient Japan" (pp. 293–328). Since most probably the average reader of the volume has Greek and Roman antiquity as providing his/her background knowledge, this section is the most unfamiliar in terms of its context. Zobel has successfully presented the historical framework, giving enough facts and dates for the reader to be able to put the performances into their context. As I am in no way expert on Japanese culture or history, this was perhaps the most thought-provoking paper of the volume inasmuch as it gives fresh ideas of how to approach the ancient Greek and Roman sources on drama and/or religious performances. I especially enjoyed reading the sections on ecstasy and dance/performance (e.g. pp. 294–8) as well as on the element of entertainment within the discussed performance genres (pp. 304–6). This article serves also as a reminder of how cultural practices change over time: they can be incorporated in new, "outsider" practices or be influenced by other religions and cultures, for example, a living religious performance.

This point takes us finally to Nils Holger Petersen's article on "Representation in European devotional rituals: The question of the origin of medieval drama in medieval liturgy" (pp. 329–60). Petersen divides the paper into two main sections, first discussing the concept of "liturgy" and then the so-called *quem quaeritis* ("Whom do you seek?") ceremony. Petersen views the *quem quaeritis* ceremony as a liturgical drama, a ceremony included in the Easter morning church celebrations that has dramatic elements. What caught my attention was the brief mention of how "the relationship between words and music – in general – is not a topic that has been much discussed in 'liturgical drama' scholarship" (p. 347). In fact, this theme should be addressed even if our factual knowledge of the realization of music is limited. For me, this is a general problem in theatre studies: too often the focus is only on the text.

This brings us to Kimberley C. Patton's concluding discussion for Part III (pp. 361–375), which provides an excellent example of the need for such a chapter in a book by many authors. The author manages to bring all three cases of Part III together to form a coherent whole. As she puts it, in quoting Roy Rappaport on performers in rituals and comparing Rappaport's idea with drama: "But one may surely make the same claim [i.e. the ritual is dependent of its existence on the instances it is performed, on its performers] for dramatic works, no matter how enshrined they have become in the literary canons of their respective cultures: if it is not performed, a play is a literary artifact, a skeleton of a living and lived entity, capable of being studied but nevertheless half-dead" (p. 373). And even though we cannot go back in time to participate in the theatrical displays at the theatre of Dionysos in Athens in the 5th century BC, we should not ignore the performance as a whole if we are to study ancient plays or theatre as an institution.

A few minor comments for the whole volume. It is always a problem where to print figures and images in a book in which the images are referred to in more than one section; so also in this volume. The reader needs to leaf through pages in order to find the relevant picture, return to the text and then find the next picture referred to. It would have been more convenient to print the illustrations at the end of the book. In the index, there could be more detailed information for indexed words (e.g. komast, "definition of", etc.). The lack of the word "dance" in the title of the book is, however, the greatest shortcoming. But in general we can say that the

book is an extremely interesting, important and many-sided discussion of ritual, drama – and dance.

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Ruth Scodel: *Introduction to Greek Tragedy*. Cambridge University Press, New York 2010. ISBN 978-0-521-87974-3 (hb), 978-0-521-70560-8 (pb). VIII, 216 pp. GBP 53, USD 84 (hb), GBP 17.99, USD 26 (pb).

These days, introductions to various areas of ancient culture are frequently being published, which probably mirrors a genuine general interest. Greek tragic theatre is not an exception. With the prime quality work by many scholars in the recent past, the new introduction to Greek tragedy by Ruth Scodel faces intense competition.

In essence, the book is divided into chapters of two types (excluding the final chapter). In the first four chapters, Scodel seeks to provide the necessary background for understanding Greek tragic drama. Definitions of Greek tragedy, ancient and modern approaches to tragedy and its origins, and festivals and competitions are discussed, as well as the historical and intellectual context in which Greek tragedy existed. The mission of equipping the reader with an ability to analyse tragic texts is laudably carried out. After each chapter, a list of further reading and sources is given in a very user-friendly fashion, as Scodel does not only catalogue the texts, but also comments on them briefly. The following eight chapters are dedicated to analyses of seven chosen plays and one trilogy (*Persians* and the *Oresteia* trilogy by Aeschylus, *Antigone* and *Oedipus the King* by Sophocles, and *Medea*, *Hippolytus*, *Helen*, and *Orestes* by Euripides). The selection of the plays is a successful one**,** as the plays are different enough from each other to enable Scodel to raise various points of view, possibilities, and thematic considerations. In my opinion, the analysis of *Helen* is the strongest. Examining the play, Scodel succeeds in finding a remarkable balance between making the play understandable and at the same time demonstrating the genuine difficulties in interpreting of the play.

The final chapter, "Tragic Moments", is divided into two parts (somewhat confusingly, as the sections do not form an entity). At first, Scodel offers a comparison of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides as tragic writers. In the latter part of the chapter, the afterlife of Greek tragedy is discussed. Scodel covers both topics properly, but the tragic tradition especially could have been discussed in more detail as it is such a central part in understanding Greek tragedy.

The shortcomings of the book are few and disagreements are largely a matter of taste. For one thing, a larger number of excerpts from the tragedies could have been explicitly laid out to aid the discussion (as opposed to giving just the numbers of verses). As the title of the book suggests "Greek tragedy" and not "Classical Greek tragedy", more discussion could have been accorded to the Hellenistic era. Occasionally, one might say that Scodel oversimplifies the subject matter. For example, she writes that the tragedians produced and directed their own plays (p. 45). Sometimes they did not, and often we cannot know whether they did. Moreover, it is not even self-evident what producing and directing actually meant in the various contexts of Greek tragedy. Admittedly, these simplifications are largely due to the introductory nature of the book. In any case, what Scodel presents as simple facts and what as more debatable and complex matters is of great interest to specialists and non-specialists alike.