

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

Manna Satama

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.

The book has no illustrations. This editorial decision seems questionable, as a non-specialist reader could certainly have benefited from some visual aid and clarifications. A more important role for visual material would also have fitted well with Scodel's multi-faceted approach.

However, the positives easily outweigh the negatives. Scodel's general approach is to be commended, and especially praiseworthy is her readiness to present her views on many debatable issues. Scodel writes in a sharp and thoughtful style, and a reader with little previous acquaintance with the subject matter is supportively guided to comprehend the complexity of Greek tragedy, but the book does offer food for thought for advanced students as well.

*Kalle Knaapi*

DANA LACOURSE MUNTEANU: *Tragic pathos. Pity and Fear in Greek Philosophy and Tragedy*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2012. ISBN 978-0-521-76510-7. XIII, 278 pp. GBP 60, USD 99.

Dana Lacourse Munteanu (from now on DLM) states her aim in the Preface: "this book is an examination of how ancient Greeks described and understood the emotions stirred by tragedy" (p. ix). The subheading of the book refers, however, to the real players: not ancient Greeks in general, but some Greek philosophers and some tragedies: Gorgias (pp. 37–51), Plato (pp. 52–69), Aristotle (pp. 70–138), Aeschylus' *Persians* (pp. 151–63), *Prometheus Bound* (pp. 164–80), Sophocles' *Ajax* (pp. 181–207), and Euripides' *Orestes* (208–37). Aristotle's *Poetics* is not mentioned in the subheading, but naturally it is his short work and its depiction of tragic emotions – "pity" (*eleos*) and "fear" (*fobos*) – which dominates DLM's discussion in her book. It would not be complete without handling the peculiar affections Aristotle assimilated to tragedy: tragic pleasure and *catharsis*. Owing to its complicated nature, DLM deals with *catharsis* separately in the Appendix ("Catharsis and the emotions in the definition of tragedy in the *Poetics*").

To the interesting question of why Aristotle chose pity and fear as *the* very emotions arising from tragedy, DLM answers, of course, by adducing Gorgias' *Encomium to Helen*, mentioning also Plato's *Ion* 533d–e, though only in a footnote, p. 94 n. 65. Furthermore, the book begins with a brief survey of the Indian dramatic tradition (in which DLM does not claim any expertise) as an example of Indo-European dramatic art (pp. 29–36). DLM suggests that emphasizing "pity" as the emotional experience of tragic art seems to be unique to the Greeks – based perhaps on the influence of their great subtext, Homer's epics. DLM refers at various times to the concluding scene of pity in the *Iliad*. However, later on she speaks of the "pleasure of mourning", which is combined with an ancient "Indo-European technique of consolation", that is, that mourning functions not only as an outlet of emotions but also as a way to put one's own sorrows and sufferings in perspective (pp. 136–8). Instead of these vague suggestions, there could have been a more precise outline of the conceptions of pity and fear in the Greek context (pp. 14–20), accompanied by a survey of their lexical variety and modern equivalents (like sympathy, empathy, dread and anxiety).

DLM notes that the Greeks also distinguished between other emotions that tragedy or artworks in general were supposed to arouse. She points out the passage of Gorgias' *Encomium*, where the rhetorician speaks not only of pity (toward Helen) but also of hate (toward Paris),