

## BOOK REVIEW

*Poetik des Satyrspiels*. By REBECCA LÄMMLÉ. Bibliothek der klassischen Altertumswissenschaften, Neue Folge, 2. Reihe, Band 136, Heidelberg, Winter Verlag, 2013. Pp. 530. Hardcover, €58.00. ISBN 978-3-8253-6064-1.

12 years after Pierre Voelke's "Un Theatre de la Marge: Aspects figuratifs et configurationnels du drame satyrique dans l'Athenes classique" (Bari 2001), Switzerland provides us with yet another excellent study on the satyr play: Rebecca Lämmle's Basel dissertation is both a comprehensive survey of classical satyr play and an innovative contribution to the subject.

The book begins with a brief synopsis of the most important results, theses, and hypotheses of the study. Beginning with the conclusion(s) may appear surprising, but has the advantage of making readers curious and providing them with a first orientation for reading. The résumé is followed by considerations about the gradual decline and eventual disappearance of the genre. To the reasons previously identified by critics of the genre, Lämmle adds the interesting but not unproblematic suggestion that comedy increasingly took over the function of satyr play to reflect and comment on tragedy (40).

The main part of the book is formed by seven chapters. The first presents a short introductory remark about Demetrius' definition of satyr play as "playful tragedy" (*tragodia paizousa*) followed by a survey of the genre's characteristics, which leaves nothing to be desired. After a short chapter on the tetralogic form of the tragic competition at the Great Dionysia, Lämmle discusses the function(s) of satyr play. She is right in stressing that the many different theses that have been put forward are not mutually exclusive, but the reader would welcome a critical judgment on which theories Lämmle considers less plausible or false. She herself puts special emphasis on a theory already promoted in antiquity, namely that the introduction of satyr play into the tragic competition served to bring Dionysus back to the tragic stage. Her qualifying addition "especially the comic and cheerful sides of the god and his cult," (99, 147) apparently takes account of the fact that, over the last few decades, many scholars of Greek tragedy have tried to demonstrate the presence of Dionysus in the preserved tragedies.

Chapter 4, in which Lämmle shows that and how Dionysus is present in the satyr play—despite the fact that the genre, just like tragedy, mostly dramatizes non-Dionysiac stories—forms the core of the book. Interpretations of Euripides' *Cyclops* and a number of other satyr plays document the paradoxical simultaneity of absence and presence of the god (Lämmle uses the term "*inkludierende Exklusion*"), which can also be seen in the various myths of opposition to Dionysus. According to Lämmle, satyr play repeats the marginalization of Dionysus by tragedy, but does so only to show that he cannot be marginalized or even completely excluded, and this, she argues, should be understood as "comic self-reflection of the tragic poets" (147–149).

The next two chapters are dedicated to the satyrs and their dances: In chapter 5, Lämmle describes nature and life of the satyrs as they appear in the preserved plays, and shows that the "*condition satyrique*" is not only shown implicitly by what they say and do, but time and again thematized explicitly and self-referentially. This, according to Lämmle, is particularly evident in the remarks and comments on the dance of the satyrs, which are analyzed in Chapter 6.

Following up on Albert Henrich's groundbreaking studies on self-referentiality, choral projection, and metatheatricality in the choral odes of tragedy, Lämmle attempts to show that the passages in which the *choreia* of the satyrs is thematized should be understood as metatheatrical reflections. On the basis of the observation that the dance of the satyrs generally is problematized, Lämmle draws the reasonable conclusion that the tragic poets intended to mark the *choreia* of the satyrs in the orchestra as a deficient form of the ritual dancing of the Dionysiac *thiasus* (249). Less convincing, however, is her thesis that the incompatibility of the satyr dances with the non-Dionysiac stories, into which they are integrated, is to be understood as a comment of satyr play on the tendency of tragedy to more and more reduce scope and significance of the chorus (242). For this idea does not seem to fit with the fact that we find the problematization of the *choreia* of the satyrs already in Pratinas fr. 3 and in Aeschylean satyr plays, i.e. already at a time when the choral element in tragedy is still very strong.

In Chapter 7, Lämmle foregrounds an aspect of the poetology of satyr play, which so far has not received the attention it deserves: The fact that the satyrs always form the chorus imparts an episodic character to the genre and makes it appear a joint project of all tragedians. The serial character of satyr play is not only displayed in the use of the ever same chorus of satyrs, however, but also in the preference of the genre for stories in which serial offenders, such as Busiris or Kerkyon, are finally stopped by heroes, such as Heracles or Theseus, who them-

selves are known as serial stoppers of serial offenders. Lämmle makes the ingenious proposal to read the serial character of satyr play poetologically: Just as the serial heroes time and again defeat the serial villains, ogres, and monsters, so satyr play at each end of the tragic competition stops the series of atrocities presented in the three preceding tragedies and thus questions the hierarchy of the two genres.

The third part of the book, in which Lämmle offers brief interpretations of the *Cyclops* and of the four best-preserved satyr plays (Einzelstudien I) and then gives a survey of the typical motifs and themes of the genre (Einzelstudien II) is less original than the seven chapters of the main part, but rounds off Lämmle's impressive portrayal of satyr play and its poetology in a welcome way.

Neither the wealth of observations, ideas, and hypotheses put forward by Lämmle nor the critical questions that could be raised can adequately be presented in such a short review. Lämmle's study is not only the most complete and reliable, but also one of the most original contributions to our understanding of a genre, which over the last decades has attracted a lot of critical attention. Her book will serve both as a basis, and as a stimulus and challenge for further research on the satyr play for a long time to come.

BERND SEIDENSTICKER

*Institut für Griechische und Lateinische Philologie, bs1@sedat.fu-berlin.de*