

## BOOK REVIEW

*Reperforming Greek Tragedy: Theater, Politics, and Cultural Mobility in the Fifth and Fourth Centuries BC.* By ANNA A. LAMARI. Trends in Classics – Supplementary Volumes. Volume 52. Berlin, DE and Boston, MA: Walter de Gruyter, 2017. Pp. x + 198. Hardback, \$114.99. ISBN: 978-3-11-055986-6.

Anna A. Lamari's *Reperforming Greek Tragedy* serves as a useful compendium and marshaling of primary and secondary sources involving arguably one of the most significant recent avenues of Classical Studies. One may learn much from Lamari's intelligent handling of a wide range of ancient and modern secondary sources. The author correctly identifies the reality of 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>-century reperformance and the mobility of the tragic poets that enabled them to disseminate their art through much of the Hellenic world. As Lamari correctly observes, "Ancient reperformances of drama have waited until roughly the twenty first century in order to be seen in their true dimensions" (1). The "single performance dogma" (2) was an invention of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and held "sway well into the 1990s, when it also gained a strictly Athenian identity" (61-2).

Contrary to previous generations' Athenocentric vision of once off performances at the City Dionysia typifying the whole 5<sup>th</sup>-century experience of tragedy, Lamari utilizes the considerable evidence for tragedy's re-performance and pan Hellenic dissemination from Aeschylus' career onwards. Perhaps the healthiest surprise in Lamari's book is the fact that so much is known about travelling poets and reperformance that has simply been ignored by more recent dogmas about single performances and the all-importance of Athens. The sheer number of theaters spread out around the Greek speaking world should have led scholars to assume greater theatrical mobility much earlier. Athens never had a "monopoly" on drama, though it did play "a large part in disseminating drama" throughout the Greek world (57). Even more persuasive than the well-known biographical backgrounds of the poets are the tragic (and Aristophanic) texts themselves, with their frequent intertextuality that assumes their audience to have a wide experience of earlier drama in performance. Without reperformance as a foregone conclusion, Aristophanes' *Frogs* of 405 BC would have been an impossibility.

Lamari, with her characteristic common sense, observes that nearly a third of the ancient *Vita* of Aeschylus concerns his successes in Sicily, leading ultimately to his “lavish burial and a hero cult at his tomb” in Gela (24). She recalls that the earliest play in existence, Aeschylus’ *Persians* was granted a reperformance in Sicily under the invitation of Hieron. While Sophocles was more “Athenocentric” in his focus on his productions, he is known to have produced tragedies at Eleusis and other parts of Attica (18). Euripides, like Aeschylus before him, may have travelled to Sicily himself and his life was certainly rounded by his famous sojourn in Macedonia. Lamari convincingly suggests that travelling poets may have altered their plays—especially their prologues—to suit “different theaters, with different audiences” (52). Euripides’ *Bacchae* is pointed out as a good example of a work “incorporating non-Athenian local elements” within its Athenian identity, making it fit either Macedonian or Athenian performance (52-3).

Lamari adeptly utilizes recent scholarship, especially Eric Csapo’s work, to successfully bolster her arguments. The only flaw in Lamari’s book is a certain propensity to restate facts established in earlier sections in the book. Tighter copyediting might have ameliorated this repetitiveness. It is also doubtful that all readers will be persuaded that textual corruption of tragic texts rests predominantly with “the very procedure of copying the texts” (161) and not in at least equal measure with later actor’s histrionic insertions. The large problems posed by Aeschylus’ *Seven Against Thebes* and Euripides’ *Phoenician Women* alone would seem to call any simple answer into question. Lamari’s quotations from scholia castigating post 5<sup>th</sup>-century actors for their incomprehension of the “old” scripts are quiet entertaining, however, and I enjoyed her characterization of ancient (or modern) scholars as “textually scapegoating” actors for tampering with the plays (128). Despite these small caveats, Lamari’s book is an excellent and useful introduction to an important aspect of the ancient Greek theater that is only recently getting the attention it deserves.

MARK RINGER

Marymount Manhattan College, mringer@mmm.edu