

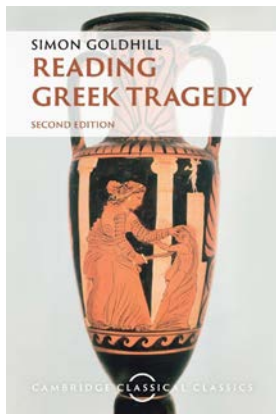
## Book Review

### Reading Greek Tragedy

Goldhill (S.) Pp. xiv+365. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023 (2nd edition). Paper, £22.99 (Cased £85). ISBN: 978-1-009-18303-1.

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Simon Goldhill's *Reading Greek Tragedy* offers both depth and accessibility, making it a valuable text for Classics students studying Greek tragedy. This second edition delves into the thematic and structural elements of Greek tragedy, focusing on the works of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. Goldhill's approach is both comprehensive and engaging, making complex ideas approachable for younger audiences while maintaining academic rigour.

The opening chapter, 'Re-Reading Reading Greek Tragedy,' details some of the updates from the original edition and outlines the new insights and contemporary scholarly perspectives that have been incorporated. This sets the stage for a deeper understanding of the subsequent analyses. For example, the chapter 'The Language of Tragedy' explores the intricate use of language and its impact on audiences, while 'Staging and Performance' provides a vivid account of how these plays were originally performed, bringing ancient Greek theatre to life for modern readers.

The book encourages direct engagement with primary texts, a practice that aligns well with an educational emphasis on primary

source analysis. Students can benefit from Goldhill's clear explanations of difficult passages and thematic explorations, fostering a deeper appreciation and understanding of the texts. By promoting critical thinking, the book encourages students to consider various interpretations and the cultural contexts of Greek tragedies. The discussion questions and thought-provoking commentary provide a robust framework for students to explore and understand the multifaceted nature of ancient texts.

Goldhill provides a thorough examination of the historical and cultural backdrop of Greek tragedies, allowing students to grasp the significance of the plays within their original setting. Despite its scholarly nature, Goldhill's writing remains accessible. He avoids overly technical jargon, making the material suitable for students who may not have a background in classical studies. The book is well-organised, with clear headings, subheadings, and summaries that help students navigate through the content. The inclusion of illustrations and maps further aids in visualising the ancient world.

One of the book's significant strengths is its comprehensive analysis of specific tragedies. Goldhill's breakdown of narrative techniques, character motivations, and thematic elements provides a solid foundation for understanding and interpreting the plays. However, some of the thematic discussions may be challenging for younger students, particularly those new to Greek tragedy. These challenges can serve as opportunities for classroom discussion and guided exploration, allowing students to delve deeper into the material with appropriate support.

While the book's depth is a notable strength, it may be overwhelming for some school-aged students. Teachers may need to provide additional support and context to help students fully grasp the material. The inclusion of highly detailed scholarly debates might also prove daunting for younger readers and could potentially deter less confident students. Additionally, the book assumes a certain level of prior knowledge, which may not be present in all students.

This volume offers a balanced mix of accessibility and scholarly depth, providing a solid foundation for further study in Classics. With appropriate educator guidance, it can help to enhance students' understanding and appreciation of ancient Greek tragedy.

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