

revived the suggestion (*CQ* 37, 332), or that E. Gruen had again rejected it in 1992 (*Culture and Identity in Republican Rome*, p. 14 n. 39).

Misprints are rare, but p. 23 l. 17 (6.20.4) ἀκοσπισταί should be ἀκοντισταί, and the bold marginal chapter-indication has disappeared at the beginning of 8.11 (p. 212 l. 21).

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## TRAGIC HEROINES

H. P. FOLEY: *Female Acts in Greek Tragedy*. Pp. x + 410. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001. Cased, £26.95. ISBN: 0-691-05030-9.

This wide-ranging and important book explores the ways in which tragic women disrupt, invert, or otherwise depart from the cultural norms that circumscribed their real-life counterparts in classical Athens. In particular, it focuses on female ethical interventions that revolve around funerary ritual, marriage rights, and inheritance. Much in this volume will be familiar to readers of tragedy, not only because six of the ten chapters have appeared previously, but because Foley's work has had a major impact on the study of women in Attic drama for over two decades. This book is more than just a collection of essays, however: individually, the chapters gain depth by their juxtaposition; taken together, they are unified by the overarching focus on moral agency.

Throughout the book, Foley characteristically combines evocative and original readings of a staggering array of sources with a detailed analysis of their cultural and historical milieux. Indeed, one of the book's pleasures is the unexpected and fruitful juxtaposition of plays and characters not always considered together: Helen and Alcestis, Clytemnestra and Medea, Aethra and Hecuba. Foley's method is brilliantly encapsulated in Section II, 'The Contradictions of Tragic Marriage'. After discussing the marital systems of Homeric society and classical Athens, she adduces numerous passages from tragedy, including fragments, to show how central a concern this institution was for the tragedians and their audience. The section on concubines, a familiar but underinvestigated staple of Attic drama, is particularly strong. Like the *hetaira* in New Comedy, the ambiguous social and political status of this figure makes her an ideal vehicle for conveying broader social and political concerns.

The argument for women's moral agency is developed over the six chapters that comprise Section III, 'Women as Moral Agents in Greek Tragedy', half of which represents new material first delivered as the Martin Classical Lectures. The emphasis on women as moral agents implies that they are capable of public actions and that they undertake them in service of some greater good, capacities not normally associated with women in Greek ethical thought. Foley rightly observes, however, that tragedy is preoccupied with flawed individuals confronted by morally ambiguous dilemmas; in just such situations, alternative forms of morality can be effectively explored. Thus the decision of Homer's Penelope to remarry in her husband's absence typifies female moral agency and tragic choice, because it affirms the importance of social cooperation over self-interest. This ethic similarly informs the actions of the virgins who use funerary ritual to set aright disrupted households and afflicted cities. Foley convincingly argues that the actions of Electra and Antigone, although masculinized, assume a positive form because they occur in the absence of male relatives.

The socially sanctioned actions of virgins contrast those of the vengeful wives who murder in an attempt to restore domestic order. Both Aeschylus' Clytemnestra and Euripides' Medea remind us that unlimited female autonomy cannot sustain itself, ultimately destroying the very social fabric it seeks to protect. In the final section, Foley turns to another positive model of female authority: the virtuous older mothers who attempt to persuade men to act on behalf of their children, Aethra in Euripides' *Suppliants*, Hecuba in *Hecuba*, and Jocasta in *Phoenissae*. Building on the previous chapters, Foley argues that because women cannot act autonomously to challenge male positions, the art of persuasion comprises a 'critical moral activity' for women. Foley's articulation of the importance of social status for interpreting the actions of tragic women—virgins, wives, and mothers make different ethical choices based on their stages in the female life cycle—makes an essential contribution to the field.

It should be noted that among the examples cited by Foley, the ethical deliberations of female agents are not dramatized, with the notable exception of Medea. Thus we do not witness Clytemnestra agonizing over her decision to kill Agamemnon, in contrast to the lengthy deliberations of Orestes in *Choephoroi*. Euripides does not dwell on Alcestis' decision to sacrifice her life in exchange for her husband's, but presents it as a *fait accompli*. Sophocles also does not portray the decision-making process of Antigone, but only her defiant resolve to carry out her plan. Even a putative scene of deliberation, such as the agon between Clytemnestra and Electra in Euripides' play of the same name, does not result in action, but merely showcases contemporary attitudes toward proper female behavior.

This reservation notwithstanding, *Female Acts* provides a welcome challenge to recent analyses of tragic women that emphasize their status as powerless objects of male exchange. By focusing on women as moral agents capable of ethical intervention, Foley compellingly identifies moments of resistance that potentially critique and even mitigate male patterns of control. Her work is part of a growing trend in the study of women in antiquity that emphasizes, in Linda Gordon's words, resistance over domination. At the same time, Foley's nuanced and evocative readings repeatedly demonstrate the particular ways in which tragedy deploys women, albeit indirectly, as a vehicle for exploring contemporary social, political, and philosophical issues debated by men. Indeed, *Female Acts* suggests that the tragic female, constrained by her dependency, perhaps best incarnates tragedy's central dilemmas—the fragility of the human condition and the limits of human action.

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## TRAGEDY AND RITUAL

S. GÖDDE: *Das Drama der Hikesie: Ritual und Rhetorik in Aischylos' Hiketiden*. Pp. viii + 300. Münster: Aschendorff, 2000. Paper, DM 68. ISBN: 3-402-05414-0.

Susanne Gödde's book on Aeschylus' *Suppliants* is a welcome contribution to a long line of interesting but uneven studies about the connection between ancient Greek ritual and tragedy, going back at least to G. Murray's 'Excursus on the Ritual Forms Preserved in Greek Tragedy' in Jane Harrison's *Themis* (London, 1921), if not to Aristotle's comment about tragedy as a form of *katharsis*. While other studies of this kind, like Murray's, have drawn not always convincing parallels between the texts and

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