

Another unanswerable question is whether news of the Athenian victory at Marathon was communicated to the Persians in an act of betrayal by signalling with a shield. In Herodotean manner, Nevin offers a variety of explanations and commits to none.

While the idea (or ideals) of Marathon naturally invites an Athenian focus, Nevin's approach is even-handed. Persians are given due consideration, and anti-Persian sentiment is called out, even where it comes from Aristophanes, whose crude and unnuanced portrayal of Greece's enemy is unsurprising. 'It is absurd. It is rude. It ridicules the Persians generally through an out-of-control Datis.' The single chapter devoted to the Persians, their culture and leadership, is one of the clearest and most readable introductions to Persian culture available. What appears to interest Nevin more is to expose the reception of the Persians at Marathon as the barbarian aggressor against the righteous Greek heroes. Nevin cites a childhood work of Branwell Bronte, *The History of the Young Men*, which invites comparison between the Greeks at Marathon and a small number of Europeans in Africa facing opposition from a 700-strong indigenous army. In Bronte's work, the heroic ideal of Marathon was transferred to the currently unpopular idea of colonialism. With this example, Nevin not only shows how the classical idea of Marathon has a place in 19th century English literature, but also broaches a theme which is very pertinent to contemporary scholarship.

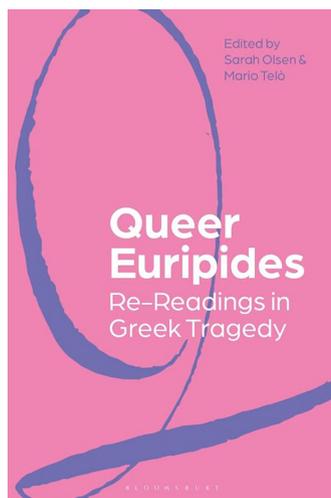
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Queer Euripides. Re-readings in Greek Tragedy

Olsen (S.), Telo (M.) (edd.) Pp. viii+276. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022. Paper, £24.99 (Cased, £75). ISBN: 978-1-350-24961-5

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This fascinating book seeks to reconsider the plays of Euripides (and Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae*) 'through the lens of queerness', as part of the general objective to 'valorize messiness and unruliness instead of restoration and reconstruction' (p.14). 22 scholars contribute to the volume and the variety of their approaches is itself reflective of the heterogeneity of queer reading. They are looking at far more than simply sexual behaviour and orientation: anything which amounts to

transgression of societal, generic, literary and even prosodic norms can find a welcome in the house of queerness—and Euripides is nothing if not a challenger of norms.

There are queer characters—Hippolytus has two chapters devoted to him, and Pentheus' transphobic heteronormativity makes for a compelling final chapter as the gender-bender Dionysus wreaks havoc with his mind and his body. Electra resists the identities expected of her as a woman and rubs this in with her fake pregnancy. Orestes and Pylades are pulled out of the closet in two chapters, while the figuring of Cyclops and Silenus as Zeus and Ganymede in *Cyclops* burlesques the Platonic elevation of pederasty (p. 212). Other characters show queerness in other ways: Medea is a queer woman on the Athenian stage as she is a non-Greek child-killer: she has submitted to societal expectations, having married and borne two sons to a Greek male, but by the end of the play she has exploded these same patriarchal power structures. In *Helen*, Theoclymenus is as a character underdeveloped in the binary system of Greek vs. Barbarian: he is the typical warlike tyrant as opposed to his godlike irenic sister Theonoe, while the Greek Menelaus is a barbarian in Egypt. Euripides however enjoys foiling audience expectations of barbaric tyranny, xenophobia and warlikeness by making Theoclymenus both a tyrant who kills strangers and also a host who helps his guests. *Andromache* is about the queer intimacy of polygynous marriage, with a delicious scene where Hermione (who is 'queerly attached to her natal family') accuses the Trojans of being queer for practising incest and murder (p.150). Even animals can be queer: in *Iphigenia at Aulis* we have a 'genderqueer deer' in the form of a horned doe. Monsters—the serpent of Ares and the Sphinx—in *Phoenissai* represent a 'key element informing theories of alterity' (p.182).

There are also queer plays which push at generic boundaries: *Rhesus* is a 'disobedient tragedy' with its comic elements, its night scene in broad daylight, its cross-species transformation of Dolon: *Trojan Women* is a queer tragedy whose heroines are the 'ordinary if pathetic collateral of war' (p.43) and 'objects rather than subjects', while *Heracidae* is an exercise in kitsch with its queer kinship and its fragmented plot. Sean Gurd sees the queerness of *Alcestis* in terms of its counter-intuitive elevation of failure: Apollo is oddly and happily grateful to his enslaver Admetus, while Alcestis chooses to die. There is queer rejection of 'reproductive futurism' in children being killed in *Trojan Women*, in *Medea*, in *Hecuba*: and in *Phoenissai* Antigone and Menoeceus represent the end of their family lines of Labdacids and Spartoi. Things are often queerly other than what they seem: Helen in the *Helen* was 'image' rather than reality at Troy; Ion has to pretend to be the bastard son of Xuthus, staying in the 'political closet' (p.126). In *Bacchae*, Tiresias and Cadmus cross-dress, the Maenads subvert male norms, and Pentheus' transvestite emergence on stage as a woman shows the totality of Dionysus' control.

Literary queerness is found in the 'non-binary' status (as neither tragic nor comic) of the satyr play *Cyclops*, in the unruly text of *Iphigenia at Aulis*, in the racial muddle which lies at the heart of *Ion*, even (and less persuasively) in the poet's use of antilabe and metrical resolution in *Orestes*. The heavy use of dramatic irony is read as queer 'because it plays with knowledge' (p. 139): this device allows some electric moments of drama such as the sickening mad scene in *Heracles*, the climax to *Alcestis*, the recognition scene in *Helen*, the unpicking of the truth in *Ion*, the humiliation and murder of Pentheus in *Bacchae*. Two metatheatrical scenes show this to devastating effect: where Medea disingenuously persuades Creon and Jason to grant her wishes, and where Electra 'plays at being a mother as if it were a drag performance' (p.190), faking a pregnancy to lure her mother to her death. In both scenes we see a (male) actor playing a (female) actor who is deceiving apparently powerful characters into a position of submission.

Athenian tragedians exploit mythology and Rosa Andujar shows how *Phoenissae* enhances the role of Laius in the Theban

tragedy—a point also made in Euripides' lost *Chrysippus* where Laius was cursed by Pelops for raping his son Chrysippus of Elis. This play resists the 'chrononormative' imperative by bringing together 'multiple generations and family branches which are kept separate elsewhere in the tragic corpus' (p.177), creating a new reality, in which 'Jocasta has access to an old age' (p.178). *Phoenissae* 'upsets the normativity of the tragic form—the *muthos*—by subjecting it to a kitschy, hypertrophic de-formation' (p.3) with its 'queer construction of time, power and genealogy' (p. 13).

All Greek is transliterated and (mostly) well translated. It is surprising that more was not made of the queerness of having all female roles played by male actors, and the urge to find queerness can produce some strained readings—Heracles' club may be just a club (for example) rather than a 'phallic signifier'. The surprise factors of these re-readings may thus not carry universal assent, but will constantly challenge our assumptions and force us to read the text with fresh eyes.

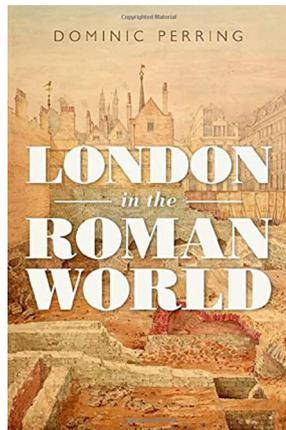
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London in the Roman World

Perring (D.) Pp. xviii + 573, ills. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022. Cased, £40, US\$50. ISBN: 978-0-19-878900-0

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Roman Britain forms an essential part of the Latin and Classics curriculum for students studying the ancient world across age groups. This book presents students and teachers alike with a comprehensive and in-depth overview of the history of London from its foundations to the evacuation of Britain by Roman forces in the fifth century.

Rooting the story of London in the archaeology is a necessary approach given the little literary evidence there is for the city. The focus on archaeology, both historical finds in the city, as well as newer archaeological finds and material culture that is not yet publicly available, makes this account of the city of London through the Roman era far more accessible to students. In particular the use of maps and plans of buildings throughout the text will allow students to better imagine the development of the city through time. It is very easy to draw the conclusion that this book would be most impactful for those schools and students who are based in London due to the recognizability of the locations that are discussed. In turn this will allow students to better engage with their local ancient history in a far more vivid and tangible way.

The approach that Perring takes in his history of Roman Britain is both chronological and thematic, which effectively breaks down the 500-year history of London during the Roman period into much

more manageable and digestible chunks. The thematic approach will undoubtedly allow teachers to lead discussions around key questions about the development of London through this period and will also allow for far more incisive analysis of sources. This makes this particular book a useful piece of scholarship for a classroom. In addition, while the book itself is probably most accessible to those students tackling A Levels, the wider content can be easily distilled and broken down by teachers for younger audiences.

It is undeniable that this book is immensely well researched and detailed; however, this does not take away from its accessibility from a teaching and learning perspective. Facebook can also serve as an effective teaching tool in terms of how the study of London is approached in an academic way. It is possible for teachers to directly point to two examples of how the author has used a wide range of all sources and evidence in order to devise his pieces and come to convincing conclusions within his work. This is helped by the inclusion of diagrams that help to highlight exactly where this evidence has been drawn from and allow the reader to be a more active companion in the historical analysis that is taking place in the book. As a result, not only is this text useful for the knowledge and content it contains but it can also help students develop their historical approaches to sources and essay writing.

The importance of London to Roman Britain cannot be overstated and this book serves as a helpful companion to any teachers and students looking to gain a better understanding of the city at different points in Roman history. As a result of the broad nature of the topic and the time period that is covered there are perhaps one or two limitations in terms of this book as a teaching resource. The main one is that teachers hoping to use this book in order to give students a better idea of daily life in a town in Roman Britain will be left wanting more. Nonetheless this is an excellent book for teachers, schools and students to be engaging with and will make a fine addition to any school library.

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The Hera of Zeus. Intimate Enemy, Ultimate Spouse

Pirenne-Delforge (V.), Pironti (G.) Pp. xxii + 381, b/w & colour ills. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. Cased, £90, US\$120. ISBN: 978-1-108-84103-0.

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As the title suggests, the main focus of this book is on Hera, queen of the Greek gods. However, rather than serve as a character study of her as an individual, Pirenne-Delforge and Pironti focus instead on her relationship dynamics with the other gods, in particular Zeus, her brother-husband and her interactions with mortals. The book also explores Hera's divine aspects and her associated cults.

The structure of the book is broken down into clear chapters and sub-sections. This makes it particularly useful for students