

Professor Fontaine does not follow the route that a reader in books about humour would follow normally to answer this question; instead he lets two of the greatest specialists in oratory in Ancient Rome answer the question, namely Marcus Tullius Cicero, statesman, philosopher and one time Consul of the Roman Republic, and Marcus Fabius Quintilianus, better known as Quintilian, who held the chair of teaching Rhetoric at Rome some 150 years after the death of Cicero.

These two men answer the question of humour in a very different way from the mere point of making an audience laugh for the sake of comedy and entertainment. Their goal is the rhetorical and oratorical use of humour. *How to tell a Joke* is then not a recipe for comedy but for the strategic deployment of wit to disarm opponents in the political or the legal sphere. There is the famous legal saying that I have heard from all over the world: 'If your case is based on the facts, you hammer on the facts; if your case is based on the law, you hammer on the law, and if you have nothing then you must hammer on the table!'

Essentially then this book outlines how you hammer on that table - how to sway the audience and even the judge in your favour by using all the skills of rhetoric and oratory including humour when you have nothing in your favour. Fontaine masterfully introduces us to this by his wonderful translations of *De Oratore* and the *Institutio Oratoria*. His translations make the Latin very accessible to the modern reader who might not have any skill in translation at all. This modern translation also makes the language of Cicero and Quintilian come alive to the reader. Even if you don't particularly find the sayings funny or even passingly amusing, it gives you a glimpse of the Roman sense of humour, barbs, quips and the workings of extraordinary jurists in a court playing to a captive audience. Fontaine says so in his own words: 'Styles of translations vary. Some are literal, other go for the gist. This one goes for the jest ... I've wracked my brains to find equivalent words, names, puns, phrasings, and cultural counterparts to make the jokes as funny in English as they are in Latin.'

Fontaine shows how Cicero thought about humour and how he used it. After the long dialogue in *De Oratore*, Cicero hands down this remark '...those who want to master jokes for public speaking need to be imbued with a certain - almost innate - sense of humour'. It becomes clear to the modern reader that Cicero meant you must have some form of talent to make people laugh. Cicero in his own defence speeches did not follow the rules of using humour as oratory - it was not that Cicero did not know the rules of etiquette, but was rather oblivious towards them: he just frequently overstepped this mark earning him poorer praise than was expected; additionally some severely derogatory insults, wrapped up in his witticisms, could well have been a contributing factor to his murder. If we read this wonderful book and read some of the history of Cicero, we come across a man who was indeed a good lawyer, a good statesman, and even a great philosopher, but we also recognise that very modern trait in Cicero - that he says things at the wrong time. We would say, perhaps, Cicero had no filter!

Whereas, when Fontaine presents us with Quintilian, we immediately recognise the professorial image of the teacher of rhetoric. Although it is clear that Quintilian much admired the style and persona of Cicero, he does not quote him verbatim; instead, he expands on the ideas that Cicero puts forth. Another difference between the two naturally is that Cicero wrote in the form of a dialogue, while Quintilian writes to us in the essay form. Quintilian, just like Cicero, feeds jokes into his essay. What one might in the beginning have thought to be a very studious piece of work on oratory, Quintilian would sprinkle with humour. If you were a reader of this piece of work you might be tempted to just look for the jokes and forget the important lessons about oratory and rhetoric that Quintilian really wants to teach.

Fontaine does go out of his way to make the works of these two men very accessible but he also knows the important lessons that they need to convey about humour. Verily, yes, he does make the language modern, but it loses none of its punch in handling formidable Latin texts. What Fontaine has created here is a way for an ordinary reader to come in contact with an aspect of oratory and rhetoric and then to come away from it feeling smarter if not funnier!

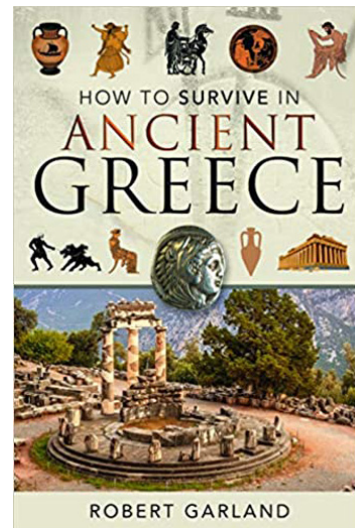
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How to Survive in Ancient Greece

Garland (R.) Pp. 153, Pen and Sword History, 2020. Paper, £14.99. ISBN: 1526754703

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As a certified teacher of Latin and Greek, for 22 years it saddened me that none of the schools at which I worked asked me to teach Greek. Until now! Currently I am teaching an 8th Grade Ancient Greek elective. Thus, *How to Survive in Ancient Greece* provided me with a timely and wryly humorous brush-up of Greek culture as well as the highlights of Ancient Greek history. The conversational tone of the author's voice draws the reader in and retains their attention, unlike the Greek History books of my own

high school days. If I was teaching a Classical Civilisation class or an Ancient History class rather than a CI-focused Greek language elective, I would absolutely use this book as a resource in no small part due to its accessibility and the author's way of approaching the less savoury aspects of Greek life. For example, Garland approaches the treatment of women and enslaved people factually, but

nevertheless presents the facts as something that would be seen as a double standard and not to be tolerated in our own time and society.

The book is divided into sections that usefully reflect the book's title *How to Survive in Ancient Greece*. For example, the section on 'Things You Should Know' includes information on how to get around Athens, how to survive without the Internet, email or Twitter, and the section on health and hygiene gives useful advice on the sort of diseases you can look out for during your sojourn in the Classical city (spoiler alert: you are likely to die young or at least if you don't die young you will probably have to deal with the after-effects of some nasty disease or accident you had earlier in life!). I particularly enjoyed reading the Testimonials section featuring 'interviews' with Greeks from different walks of life and different parts of the Greek world as it allowed the reader to confront that world through different lenses (an Athenian girl, a (male) politician, a victim of crime, a non-Athenian sex worker, a Spartan soldier, to name a few). As I have mentioned in a previous review, it seems like a particularly good time in history to encourage our students to gain empathy for the lives of others through seeing the world from different perspectives.

A reader of *How to Survive in Ancient Greece* will surely wrap up their study of this book by concluding that the theoretical decision to relocate in time and space to Classical Athens is one to weigh up with great consideration.

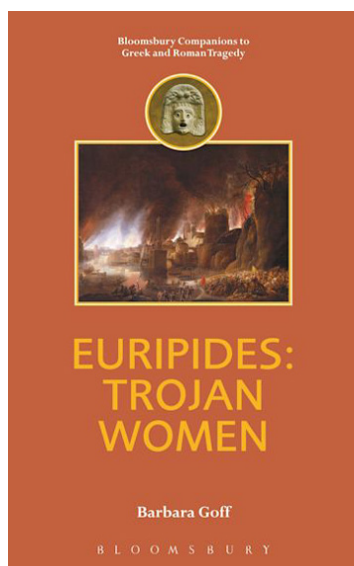
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Euripides: Trojan Women

Goff (B.) Pp. 173. London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc (Bristol Classical Press). 2012 (first published by Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 2009). Paper, £18.99. ISBN: 9780715635452.

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Barbara Goff's *Euripides: Trojan Women* forms part of the Bristol Classical Press Companions to Greek and Roman Tragedy series and presents itself in a similar format to the other books in the collection. This companion is a useful introductory handbook for those looking to develop a deeper initial understanding of the text, particularly for those previously unfamiliar with it.

The book is structured thematically, with sections including 'Contexts' which provide an overview of specific contexts e.g. Athens

in 415 BC and Tragedy in 415 BC, presenting a snapshot of the historical and cultural contexts of when the play was written. 'The Play' provides overviews of the key characters in the play and some deeper analysis of their characterisation, and 'Twentieth-century Receptions' gives details of modern receptions of the *Trojan Women* including well-known adaptations such as Michael Cacoyannis' 1971 film and Suzuki Tadashi's theatrical adaptation as well as some lesser-known productions. The 'Further Reading' section includes signposting to an extensive list of research which could prove useful for pupils undertaking a deeper literature study or wishing to conduct their own research into particular aspects of the play. The volume does feel slightly weighted towards the 'Twentieth-century Receptions' section which makes up the largest section of the book which may or may not be relevant depending on the purpose the reader requires it for.

The short, concise sections make this book particularly useful for pupils to quickly dip in and out of to find a specific piece of information or for a teacher to set as a reading task. More in-depth study of particular characters or themes would require further reading outside the scope of this volume, however, as the information contained within tends to be very brief. The language used throughout is generally appropriate for senior pupils. Some of the deeper analysis may challenge pupils but it is generally pitched at an appropriate level for those in the 16–18 year old age group. There is no knowledge of the Ancient Greek language required and there is a Glossary available for terms which may be unfamiliar to pupils. The 'Contexts' section contains some thought-provoking analysis for discussion and understanding of the text and explores some interesting avenues for deeper discussion with pupils, including feminism, the plight of women in war and the enduring and universal impact of conflict across time and culture.

Overall, this volume is a good starting point for those looking to gain an overview of the key aspects of Euripides' *Trojan Women* and Goff's arguments are coherent and thought-provoking without being overly academic for the non-specialist. For those looking to gain a deeper understanding, the 'Further Reading' section and Bibliography provide a list of extensive resource to aid further study.

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Women and Society in the Roman World. A Sourcebook of Inscriptions from the Roman West

Hemelrijk (E.A.) Pp. xxii +345, ills, maps. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. Cased, £99.99. ISBN: 978-1-107-14245-9.

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Hemelrijk's *Women and Society in the Roman World* is far more than just a sourcebook and serves as a helpful guide for both beginners to the Roman world and inscriptions, as well as for those more familiar with the period. The book opens with a helpful