

navigation. Many of the contributions are extremely interesting in their own right and will provide exciting insights to scholars from diverse fields.

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BOSHER (K.G.) **Greek Theater in Ancient Sicily**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019. Pp. 233, illus. £24.99. 9781108725651.
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At the time of her untimely death in 2013, Kathryn Bosher's doctoral dissertation on Greek theatre in ancient Sicily remained unpublished. In agreement with her husband LaDale Winling, Edith Hall and Clemente Marconi edited the revised manuscript. The work under review is the result of these joint efforts, but it remains Kathryn Bosher's book. As explained in the foreword, the editors intervened as little as possible in the main text, while allowing themselves more freedom in the footnotes. The revision was completed by 2015, and so the bibliography does not include later publications.

The seven chapters trace a continuous history of the theatre in ancient Sicily and Magna Graecia. The chronological framework spans from Late Archaic to Late Hellenistic times. After an introduction which explains the aims of the book (Chapter 1), there follow five thematic chapters discussing: Epicharmus in his sociohistorical context (Chapter 2, but Epicharmus' fragments are discussed throughout the volume); the cults of Demeter and Dionysus and their relevance to the theatre in the west (Chapter 3); the role of politics and propaganda in the autocrats' patronage of theatre (Chapter 4); the evidence from theatrical (both comic and tragic) vases and what they can tell us about the characteristics of dramatic performances in the west (Chapter 5); the stone theatres in Sicily and Magna Graecia, their functions (assembly places also used for performance) and their sociopolitical role (Chapter 6). The book ends with a detailed conclusion that presents an overview of the subjects discussed and furthers their main contentions. It is furnished with two maps and with very good images of the vases and stone theatres discussed.

Bosher rejects an Athenocentric approach to Greek theatre, which ultimately hypostatizes the characteristics of the Athenian theatre as though they were essential to all forms of ancient drama. Instead, she attempts a reading of all the pieces of evidence for the theatre in the west in their sociopolitical and cultural context. The book takes as its starting point the fundamental observation that drama in Sicily was particularly connected to periods of autocratic rule. The main aim is to investigate how the local dramatic culture related to such a sociopolitical environment and how the two aspects influenced one another. The chapters explore their individual subjects thoroughly, offering much in-depth analysis, but all contribute towards addressing this more general question. It is impossible to cover the breadth of the book's topics in this short review, but I would single out the interesting chapters on politics and propaganda (Chapter 4, particularly the discussion of the rhetoric of tyranny and its use by Hiero) and on the theatrical vases (Chapter 5, which, among other things, contains an original interpretation of the so-called 'Chorēgoi vase'). The reconsideration of Demeter's cult in relation to Sicilian drama is also valuable (Chapter 3, contesting the thesis that Sicilian theatre was profoundly connected with the cult of Demeter).

Bosher is able to develop a general argument from the analysis of short literary fragments, offering a reinterpretation of whole tragedies and their local reception (Aeschylus'

Persians), and building on the information of historical and archaeological sources. She systematically aims to counterbalance the tendency to generalize the influence of Athenian theatre, and instead she tries to re-evaluate the contribution of the western tradition. Her suggestions are often bound to be speculative, but the discussion is balanced and informative. Boshier often attempts daring interpretations, especially when discussing literary fragments (see, for example, the treatment of Epicharmus' fr. 99 on pages 47–49). In other cases, a more in-depth analysis would have been desirable (for instance on pages 150–55, where the discussion of the four actors as a typical feature of western productions should have drawn a comparison with the case of *Choephoroi*, *Oedipus at Colonus*, and *Rhesus*). However, Boshier repeatedly presents her interpretations as tentative (both in the introduction and, for instance, at 155), inviting the reader to maintain an equally open mind, as is made advisable by the many complications posed by the evidence. Occasionally the editorial work could have been more accurate, and passages mentioned in the main text are not always provided with a reference (for instance, references should have been given to the *hypothesis* to Aeschylus' *Aetnae* at 89–90 and to Epicharmus' fragments at 104, and at 104 it should also be noted that the comedy *Politai* does not actually exist: see PCG vol. 1, 140). Xenophanes for Xenarchus at 158 might distract the reader.

Boshier's book should be recommended to anybody interested in the ancient theatre. We should be grateful to all those involved for ensuring its publication. Indisputably, this volume deserves a special kind of praise: it is an important book to think with.

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BOWMAN (A.) and CROWTHER (C.) (eds) **The Epigraphy of Ptolemaic Egypt** (Oxford Studies in Ancient Documents). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020. Pp. 28 + 353. £90. 9780198858225.

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This volume collects the papers from a conference at the Centre for the Study of Ancient Documents (Oxford) in April 2016, serving as a companion to the planned Corpus of the Greek inscriptions of Ptolemaic Egypt (the first volume of which appeared in 2021). Although Egyptian Hellenistic epigraphy is not a new subject, going back at least to André Bernand's works, this volume is innovative in that it offers an updated and comprehensive overview of the matter from the perspectives of several outstanding scholars, covering the materiality of the objects as well as their historical and cultural environment.

The introduction by the editors presents the general project and outlines the following contributions, making it clear that the aim is not total completeness, but rather 'to open pathways and to point to possibilities offered by the larger Corpus' (8). The next two contributions address the relevance of bilingual inscriptions to the history of modern scholarship. Jane Masségliia ('Imaging Inscriptions: The Kingston Lacy Obelisk') presents the discovery and travel of the Philae obelisk, the first ever brought to England, its role in Young's and Champollion's deciphering efforts and the recent digital imaging enterprise that enhanced its legibility. Rachel Mairs ('Beyond Rosetta: Multilingual Inscriptions, the Antiquities Trade, and the Decipherment of Egyptian Scripts') discusses some bi-/trilingual inscriptions that had a significant role in decoding the Egyptian scripts and showing how the circumstances of their discovery affected their understanding. Willy Clarysse ('Greek Texts on Egyptian Monuments') turns to the original multicultural environment, focusing