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Over 170 theaters were built in the Greek world during the Hellenistic period. Spectators at these theaters saw contemporary works performed alongside reproductions of classical plays, and they experienced a vast array of styles and formats. The scope of innovation and variation during this period is breathtaking, perhaps even more extensive than during the apex of Athenian drama in the fifth-century BCE. Yet, tragedy after the death of Euripides has never been particularly popular with scholars. It is extremely fragmentary and haphazardly preserved (no complete plays are extant), and it has been deemed inferior since Dionysus’ famous critique in Aristophanes’ *Frogs*. While there has been a recent push to examine and understand later Greek tragedy, the focus has been primarily on the fourth century, leaving most Hellenistic tragedy and satyr drama to languish. Kotlinska-Toma aims to fill this void, collecting and examining a wealth of material not easily accessible or particularly well-known. As a compilation of fragments and translations, and as a general overview, the book is unquestionably valuable, but some elements of its execution prevent it from being a complete success.

In the first chapter, Kotlinska-Toma offers “general observations” on tragedy and satyr drama in the Hellenistic age, including themes, the chorus, and issues of transmission and criticism. The second chapter, which begins rather jarringly with a page of untranslated Greek quotes, provides ancient testimonia for each poet (taken from *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*) followed by a literal translation and a brief biography. Kotlinska-Toma then presents fragments from each author’s plays, ancient testimonia for these plays, and translations of both, followed by a short analysis of the plays’ content, themes, characters, etc. Chapter three has a similar structure, but focuses on “Hellenistic Tragedy with Biblical Themes,” especially Ezekiel’s famous *Exagoge*. The final chapter handles many basics of “The Staging of Hellenistic Tragedies,” but also includes a useful look at various lesser-known theatrical festivals during the Hellenistic era.

The scope of Kotlinska-Toma’s study is broad and the material is endlessly fascinating, but its authority is repeatedly thrown into question by inaccuracies and inadequate citations. The volume’s three content chapters read more like in-depth encyclopedia articles than a scholarly investigation. She repeatedly employs trou-
bling generalizations, such as “We know that...,” “it is generally known that...,” and “scholars are generally of the opinion that...,” and then fails to follow up with footnotes or references. She also frequently names scholars within the text without identifying the work, date, or page number to which she is referring, or she mentions a cup, vase, or inscription without providing bibliographic or catalogue information. Part of the problem with Kotlinska-Toma’s study can perhaps be linked to the fact that (xiv) “The chief reference source and basis for this book has been the 1929 doctoral thesis of the Silesian priest F. Schramm, which is entitled Tragicorum Graecorum hellenisticæ, quæ dicitur, aetatis fragmenta [praeter Ezechielem] eorumque de vita atque poesi testimonia collecta et illustrata.” Using such an outdated and outmoded resource as the book’s “chief reference” probably explains missing citations, and may also be to blame for some of the volume’s factual errors.

A closer look at Kotlinska-Toma’s study of satyr drama (43-48) highlights some of the specific sorts of problems found throughout the volume. She cites only one source on Hellenistic satyr play in the entire section, a nearly seventy-year-old German dissertation by Peter Guggisberg, Das Satyrspiel (1945). Whether or not all of the information printed here comes from this single, dated resource, the resulting discussion is a disservice to the reader and to the scholars who have worked in this area before her. An even more problematic issue in this same section is Kotlinska-Toma’s discussion of Cratinus’ Dionysalexandros. She states (45) that this play “proves that political satire was not totally alien to the fifth-century satyr play.” But Cratinus’ production was not, in fact, a satyr play. It was a comedy with a chorus of satyrs, an important detail that changes the discussion completely. This sort of misrepresentation leaves the reader wondering about the accuracy and legitimacy of the remainder of the volume, particularly when he or she encounters less familiar topics and authors.

Kotlinska-Toma wraps up her book with an informative appendix that lists Hellenistic theaters, their location, approximate construction date, size, and audience capacity. This is fascinating information that probably gives the best sense of the importance of the theater during the Hellenistic age. The index of Hellenistic Tragedians and the index of Historical Figures are also helpful. The lack of an index locorum and a general index, though, is unfortunate, and the bibliography sometimes misses important sources or lists outdated material.

Ultimately, Kotlinska-Toma’s volume is most effective as an overview, collection, and translation of exciting, though not particularly well-known, material. The author provides access to numerous dramatists and many intriguing dramatic fragments. She offers a sense of tragic and satyric themes, and paints a picture of the
theater and theatrical performance. And although she does not offer much new argumentation, most readers will probably encounter material that is new to them. The main problem is that not all of this information is accurate or suitably connected to previous scholarship. Kotlinska-Toma’s monograph could have been one of the most important recent publications on ancient theater, but will function instead as a convenient preliminary resource for those interested in Hellenistic tragedy and satyr drama.

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