

# A New Companion to Greek Tragedy: A Handbook for Those Reading the Plays in Translation

## ANCIENT GREEK DRAMA

This handbook provides students and scholars with a highly readable yet detailed analysis of all surviving Greek tragedies and satyr plays. John Ferguson places each play in its historical, political, and social context—important for both Athenian and modern audiences—and he displays a keen, discriminating critical competence in dealing with the plays as literature.

Ferguson is sensitive to the meter and sound of Greek tragedy, and, with remarkable success, he manages to involve even the Greekless reader in an actual encounter with the Greek as poetry. He examines language and metrics in relation to each tragedian's dramatic purpose, thus elucidating the crucial dimension of technique that other handbooks, mostly the work of philologists, renounce in order to concentrate on structure and plot. The result is perceptive criticism in which the quality of Ferguson's scholarship vouches for what he sees in the plays.

The book is prefaced with a general introduction to ancient Greek theatrical production, and there is a brief biographical sketch of each tragedian. Footnotes are avoided: the object of this handbook is to introduce readers to the plays as dramatic poetry, not to detail who said what about them. There is an extensive bibliography for scholars and a glossary of Greek words to assist the student with the operative moral and stylistic terms of Greek tragedy.

JOHN FERGUSON (1921–1989) was Dean and Director of Studies in Arts at the Open University, Bletchley, Buckinghamshire.

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