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Vergil's Aeneid and Greek Tragedy: Ritual, Empire, and Intertext

Vassiliki Panoussi

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This is the first systematic study of the importance of Greek tragedy as a fundamental "intertext" for Vergil's Aeneid. Vassiliki Panoussi argues that the epic's representation of ritual acts, especially sacrifice, mourning, marriage, and maenadic rites, mobilizes a connection to tragedy. The tragic-ritual model offers a fresh look into the political and cultural function of the Aeneid, expanding our awareness of the poem's scope, particularly in relation to gender, and presenting new readings of celebrated episodes, such as Anchises' games, Amata's maenadic rites, Dido's suicide, and the killing of Turnus. Panoussi offers a new argument for the epic's ideological function beyond pro- and anti-Augustan readings. She interprets the Aeneid as a work that reflects the dynamic nature of Augustan ideology, contributing to the redefinition of civic discourse and national identity. In her rich study, readers will find a unique exploration of the complex relationship between Greek tragedy and Vergil's Aeneid and a stimulating discussion of problems of gender, power, and ideology in ancient Rome.

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