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City of Suppliants: Tragedy and the Athenian Empire

By Angeliki Tzanetou

University of Texas Press, United States, 2013. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 234 x 150 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. After fending off Persia in the fifth century BCE, Athens assumed a leadership position in the Aegean world. Initially it led the Delian League, a military alliance against the Persians, but eventually the league evolved into an empire with Athens in control and exacting tribute from its former allies. Athenians justified this subjection of their allies by emphasizing their fairness and benevolence towards them, which gave Athens the moral right to lead. But Athenians also believed that the strong rule over the weak and that dominating others allowed them to maintain their own freedom. These conflicting views about Athens imperial rule found expression in the theater, and this book probes how the three major playwrights dramatized Athenian imperial ideology. Through close readings of Aeschylus Eumenides, Euripides Children of Heracles, and Sophocles Oedipus at Colonus, as well as other suppliant dramas, Angeliki Tzanetou argues that Athenian tragedy performed an important ideological function by representing Athens as a benevolent and moral ruler that treated foreign suppliants compassionately. She shows how memorable and disenfranchised figures of tragedy, such as Orestes and Oedipus,...



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