GRK 24: Theatre. Euripides’ Bacchae

Instructor: Michael Lurie
Office: 319 Reed Hall
E-mail: Michael.Lurie@Dartmouth.edu
Office Hours: Monday 3:30-4:30pm and by appointment

Teaching Arrangements
Schedule: 2 (MWF 2:10-3:15; x-period: Th 1:20-2:10)
Room: Dartmouth Hall 212

Brief description of the course
The course offers an opportunity to study in detail Euripides’ Bacchae—one of the most famous, and puzzling, plays by Euripides. This is how Karl Reinhardt described the Bacchae in 1958: ‘His last tragedy, the Bacchae, he [sc. Euripides] triumphantly forged from the very impossibility of a solution. In that play he presented the god of the theatre himself as a stranger, an alien on the stage, through whose mask and seductive, sinister quality, reason and unreason and everything human is wrecked. The horrendous revenge of the god of enchantment for the resistance of a tyrannically assertive reason—that of the unhappy Pentheus—a poor reason which succumbs to sexual desire even in that very assertion; the dramatist has withdrawn behind this sanctimonious, all too sanctimoniously dramatized legend—or shall we call it a griphos (a riddle)? People are puzzling over it to this day.’
We will read and discuss the stunning play in the context of Greek literary, cultural, and intellectual history of the 5th century BCE. Attention will also be paid to the reception of the play, and Euripides in general, in modern theatre and thought, from the Renaissance to the 21st century.

Course Objectives
On successful completion of the course, students should be able to:
- translate fluently and accurately from the prescribed texts into clear and appropriate English
- produce problem-oriented, well-argued, well-researched, relevant, and coherent coursework essays on specific aspects of Euripides, Greek tragedy, and Greek intellectual history of the archaic and classical ages
- demonstrate in written work and in class an informed understanding of the most important cultural, intellectual, theological, and literary issues raised by the study of
Euripides’ *Bacchae*, Greek tragedy, and Greek intellectual history as well as of the most important scholarly approaches in the interpretation of Euripides.

**Transferable Skills**

The goals of the course are also to give students opportunities to:
- enhance their ability to think critically and creatively using qualitative information
- enhance their ability to express themselves clearly and concisely by means of persuasive writing
- enhance their ability to express themselves clearly and concisely using the spoken word in both informal discussion and formal presentation
- enhance their research skills
- display and develop important learner behaviors

**Assessment**

Grades will be based on a take-home midterm exam, a three-hour final exam, one paper (ca. 3,500 words), class participation, and several research memos and presentations.

- Class Participation/Preparedness/Attendance 15%
- Research Memos and Presentations 15%
- Midterm 20%
- Final Paper 30%
- Final Examination 20%

**Required Texts**

Please make sure you have the prescribed edition [available for download on Canvas]:


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<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Enter Dionysus: Bliss, Madness, and Destruction</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday:</td>
<td>Intro: What is (Greek) tragedy? From Goat Singers to the Tragic Sense of Life</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday [x-h.]:</td>
<td>Enter Dionysus: Bliss, Madness, and Destruction</td>
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<td>Friday:</td>
<td>No Class</td>
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<th>Week 2</th>
<th>To Dance or Not to Dance? On Militant Puritans, Optimistic Rationalists, and Cynics</th>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday [x-h.]:</td>
<td>Euripides and Greek Intellectual History I: The World in Disarray</td>
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<td>Friday:</td>
<td>Teiresias, Kadmos, and Pentheus: 1st Epeisodion II (248–327)</td>
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<th>Week 3</th>
<th>What is Happiness? On the Difference Between Cleverness and Wisdom</th>
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<tr>
<td>Monday:</td>
<td>No Class [Martin Luther King Jr. Day]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday:</td>
<td>Teiresias, Kadmos, and Pentheus: 1st Epeisodion III (328–369)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday [x-h.]:</td>
<td>On Militant Puritans, Optimistic Rationalists, Cynics, and Laughter, Human and Divine: Making Sense of the 1st Epeisodion</td>
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<td>Friday:</td>
<td>On the Difference between Cleverness and Wisdom: 1st Stasimon (370–433)</td>
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<th>Week 4</th>
<th>On Miracles, Hallucinations, and Tragic Theology</th>
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<td>Monday:</td>
<td>Pentheus and Stranger (1st encounter): <em>Bacch.</em> 434–518 (2nd Epeisodion)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday:</td>
<td>Pentheus and Stranger (2nd encounter): <em>Bacch.</em> 576–659</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday [x-h.]:</td>
<td>God's Cunning Deception: Miracles, Hallucinations, and Tragic Theology</td>
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<td>Friday:</td>
<td>Staged Narrative: <em>Bacch.</em> 660–774 (Messenger Speech I)</td>
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<th>Week 5</th>
<th>Falling into the Hands of a Living God</th>
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<td>Monday:</td>
<td>Staged Narrative: <em>Bacch.</em> 660–774 (Messenger Speech II)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday:</td>
<td>Pentheus and Stranger (3rd encounter I): <em>Bacch.</em> 775–861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday [x-h.]:</td>
<td>Pentheus and Stranger (3rd encounter II): <em>Bacch.</em> 775–861</td>
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**Take-Home Midterm Exam (due on Monday, Week 6, in Class)**

**Week 6**  
**The Loss of Self or: Whom Gods Destroy**

**Monday:** Sweet Revenge I: *Bacch.* 862–911 (3rd Stasimon)  
**Wednesday:** Pentheus and Stranger (3rd encounter III): *Bacch.* 911–976  
**Thursday [x-h.]:** Sweet Revenge II: *Bacch.* 977–1032 (4th Stasimon)  
**Friday:** Theology, Personal Identity, and Transvestism: Making Sense of the Dressing Scene

**Arrange to meet with me individually in Week 6 to review the Midterm and discuss your Final Paper**

**Week 7**  
**Homo Necans: There Will Be Blood**

**Monday:** The Kill: *Bacch.* 1024–1152 (2nd Messenger Speech I)  
**Wednesday:** The Kill: *Bacch.* 1024–1152 (2nd Messenger Speech II)  
**Thursday [x-h.]:** The Kill: *Bacch.* 1024–1152 (2nd Messenger Speech III)  
**Friday:** *Drama and Dromena: Tragedy and Sacrificial Ritual*

**Week 8**  
**Playing the God of Theatre: From Euripides to Charlie Kaufman**

**Monday:** The Mechanics of an Exodos: *Bacch.* 1153–1215  
**Wednesday:** Recognitions: *Bacch.* 1216–1301  
**Thursday [x-h.]:** Meta-theatrical elements in Euripides’ *Bacchae*? From Euripides to Shakespeare and Charlie Kaufman  
**Friday:** **Guest Speaker: Prof. Robert Cioffi (Bard): ‘Epiphany and Meta-theatre’**

**Week 9**  
**Euripides and his Detractors: From Aristophanes to Nietzsche**

**Monday:** *Deus ex machina: Bacch.* 1301–1390  
**Wednesday:** Making Sense of the Exodos: *Bacch.* 1301–1390  
**Thursday [x-h.]:** Euripides and His Detractors: From Aristophanes to Nietzsche  
**Friday:** Presentations of the Final Paper Projects

**Screening and discussion of Suzuki Tadashi’s ‘Dionsyus’**
Week 10  Dionysus Resurrected? On French Avant-Garde, Sexual Liberation, and Noh Theatre

Monday: Euripides and (Post-)Modernity
Wednesday: The Riddle of the Bacchae. Final Discussion

Final paper due on Wednesday, March 8, by midnight

Final Examination: Sunday 12 March 11:30am–2:30pm, Dartmouth 212

Course Policies

Honor Principle

Any work that is not the sole work of the student will be considered plagiarism. To avoid the temptation that arises from last minute panic, students who are having difficulty keeping up should contact me immediately. All work submitted for evaluation in the course must be identified as your own. You should make sure that all assignments have your name, course title, term, my name, and date of submission. All your ideas and quotations should be cited properly in accordance with the MLA or Chicago manual of style or other recognised authority.

Attendance, Participation, and Contact

In most classes interaction and discussion rather than passive listening will be the norm. You are expected to prepare in advance for each meeting, in particular by reading thoroughly the relevant text.

Attendance is of course expected. If an absence is inevitable, please notify me in advance, if possible, or as soon after the missed class as possible. Persistent absence without sufficient justification will be reported to the student's Assistant Dean.

Some students may wish to take part in religious observances that occur during this academic term. If you have a religious observance that conflicts with your participation in the course, please meet with me before the end of the second week of the term to discuss appropriate accommodations.

Messages about the course will be circulated to students by e-mail. It will be assumed that every member of the class can be contacted at their University e-mail address and checks incoming mail regularly.
Coursework: Late Submissions

For late submissions, 5% of the maximum obtainable grade will be deducted for each working day, up to a maximum of five days, after which a grade of 0% is to be recorded. Thus, if a paper which is due in on a Friday and which is to be marked out of 100% is handed in on the following Monday, it will be given a grade 5% less than what it is worth; if it is handed in on the following Thursday, it will be given a grade 20% less than what it is worth. These penalties will always be deducted unless an extension has been agreed with the instructor. This should normally be done in advance of the submission date.

Student Disabilities

Students with disabilities who may need disability-related academic adjustments and services for this course are encouraged to see me privately as early in the term as possible. Students requiring disability-related academic adjustments and services must consult

the Student Accessibility Services office
(205 Collis Student Center, 646-9900,
Student.Accessibility.Services@Dartmouth.edu).

Once SAS has authorized services, students must show the originally signed SAS Services and Consent Form and/or a letter on SAS letterhead to their professor. As a first step, if students have questions about whether they qualify to receive academic adjustments and services, they should contact the SAS office. All inquiries and discussions will remain confidential.

Electronics policy

No electronic devices may be used in class except in those rare instances explicitly authorised by me. Please ensure that your phone is switched off or put on silent at the beginning of class and kept in your bag.
Select Bibliography

A&A = Antike und Abendland
AJP = American Journal of Philology
BICS = Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies
CJ = Classical Journal
CP = Classical Philology
CQ = Classical Quarterly
CR = Classical Review
CW = Classical World
G&R = Greece and Rome
GRBS = Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies
HSCP = Harvard Studies in Classical Philology
ICS = Illinois Classical Studies
JHS = Journal of Hellenic Studies
RhM = Rheinisches Museum
TAPA = Transactions of the American Philological Association

1. Greek Tragedy: General

Introductions and companions


N. Sorkin Rabinowitz, *Greek Tragedy* (Oxford 2008)
E. Hall, *Greek Tragedy: Suffering under the Sun* (Oxford 2010)

S. Goldhill, *Reading Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge 1986)

Companions

P. E. Easterling (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge 1997)
J. Gregory (ed.), *A Companion to Greek Tragedy* (Blackwell 2005)
R. Bushnell (ed.), *A Companion to Tragedy* (Blackwell 2005)
M. McDonald & M. Walton (eds.), *Cambridge Companion to Greek and Roman Theatre* (Cambridge 2007)

Encyclopedia

H. M. Roisman (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Greek Tragedy*, vols. 1-2. (Malden, MA 2014) available on-line: [http://libcat.dartmouth.edu/record=b5959887~S1](http://libcat.dartmouth.edu/record=b5959887~S1)
Collections of essays

E. Segal (ed.), *Oxford Readings in Greek Tragedy* (Oxford 1983)
M. S. Silk (ed.), *Tragedy and the Tragic* (Oxford 1996)
C. Pelling (ed.), *Greek Tragedy and the Historian* (Oxford 1997)
A. Sommerstein et al. (eds.), *Tragedy, Comedy, and the Polis* (Bari 1993)
A. Markantonatos & B. Zimmermann (eds.), *Crisis on Stage. Tragedy and Comedy in Late Fifth-Century Athens* (Berlin/Boston 2011)

Context, performance, theatre

O. Taplin, *Greek Tragedy in Action* (London 1987)
P. Wilson, *The Athenian Institution of the Khoregia: the Chorus, the City, and the Stage* (Cambridge 2000)
B. le Guen, *Les associations de Technites dionysiaques à l’époque hellénistique* (Nancy 2001)
P. Easterling & E. Hall (eds.), *Greek and Roman Actors* (Cambridge 2002)
E. Csapo/M. Miller (eds.), *The Origins of Theater in Ancient Greece and Elsewhere: From Ritual to Drama* (Cambridge 2006)
R. Wyles, *Costume in Greek tragedy* (London 2011)
D. Wiles, *Mask and Performance in Greek Tragedy. From Ancient Festival to Modern Experimentation* (Cambridge 2012)
M. Mueller, *Objects as Actors Props and the Poetics of Performance in Greek Tragedy* (Chicago 2016)
Tragedy and the Polis: The ‘social function’ and ‘civic ideology’ debate


S. Goldhill, ‘Civic ideology and the problem of difference: the politics of Aeschylean tragedy, once again’, *JHS* 120 (2000) 34–56


P. J. Rhodes, ‘Nothing to do with democracy: Athenian drama and the *polis’*, *JHS* 123 (2003) 104–119


Religion, Theology, Ethics


H. Fränkel, ‘Man’s ›Ephemeros‹ nature according to Pindar and Others’, (1931), engl. transl. in *TAPA* 77 (1946) 131–144


E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley/Los Angeles 1951)

J. C. Kamerbeek, ‘Prophecy and Tragedy,’ *Mnemosyne* 18 (1965) 29–40

W. Burkert, ‘Greek tragedy and sacrificial ritual’, *GRBS* 7 (1966) 87–121


P. E. Easterling & J. V. Muir (eds.), *Greek Religion and Society* (Cambridge 1985)

B. Williams, *Shame and Necessity* (Berkeley 1993)
S. Scullion, “‘Nothing to do with Dionysus’: tragedy misconceived as ritual’, *CQ* 52 (2002) 102–137
M. Flower, *The Seer in Ancient Greece* (Berkeley 2009)
H. S. Versnel, *Coping With the Gods: Wayward Readings in Greek Theology* (Leiden 2011)
J. Fletcher, *Performing Oaths in Classical Greek Drama* (Cambridge 2013)
S. Lawrence, *Moral awareness in Greek tragedy* (Oxford 2013)
F. Meinel, *Pollution and Crisis in Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge 2015)

**Dramatic Irony**

Character and characterization

C. Gill, ‘The Question of Character and Personality in Greek Tragedy,’ Poetics Today 7 (1986) 251–273
S. Goldhill, ‘Mind and Madness,’ in his Reading Greek Tragedy (Cambridge 1986) 168–198
C. Pelling (ed.), Characterization and Individuality in Greek Literature (Oxford 1990)
R. B. Rutherford, Greek Tragic Style (Cambridge 2012) 283–322

Chorus

R. B. Rutherford, Greek Tragic Style (Cambridge 2012) 217–282
R. Gagné & M. Govers Hopman (eds.), Choral Mediations in Greek Tragedy (Cambridge 2013)

Women on the Tragic Stage

B. Seidensticker, ‘Women on the Tragic Stage,’ in: B. Goff (ed.), History, Tragedy, Theory: Dialogues on Athenian Drama (Austin, TX 1995)
F. Zeitlin, Playing the Other: Gender and Society in Classical Greek Literature (Chicago 1996)
L. McClure, Spoken like a Woman: Speech and Gender in Athenian Drama (Princeton 1999)
H. Foley, Female Acts in Greek Tragedy (Princeton 2001)


**Messenger Speech**

J. Fischl, *De nuntiis tragicis* (Wien 1910)

L. Bergson, ‘Episches in den ἡθοποιεῖς ἀγγελικαί,’ *RhM* 102 (1959) 9–32

J. Keller, *Struktur und dramatische Funktion des Botenberichtes bei Aischylos und Sophokles* (Tübingen 1959)


M. Dickin, *A Vehicle for Performance: Acting the Messenger in Greek Tragedy* (Lanham, Md. 2009)

**Some other important aspects and studies**


R. Lattimore, *Story Patterns in Greek Tragedy* (Ann Arbor 1964)

J. de Romilly, *Time in Greek Tragedy* (Ithaca 1967)

W. Jens (ed.), *Die Bauformen der griechischen Tragödie* (München 1971)


R. Buxton, *Persuasion in Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge 1982)


W. B. Stanford, *Greek Tragedy and the Emotions* (London 1983)

T. C. W. Stinton, ‘The Scope and Limits of Allusion in Greek Tragedy’, (1986); repr. in his *Collected Papers on Greek Tragedy* (Oxford 1990) 454–492


M. Heath, *The Poetics of Greek Tragedy* (London 1987)


B. Goward, *Telling Tragedy: Narrative Technique in Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides* (Duckworth 1999)

E. M. Harris, D. F. Leão & P.J. Rhodes (eds.), *Law and Drama in Ancient Greece* (London 2010)

E. Allen-Hornblower, *From Agent to Spectator. Witnessing the Aftermath in Ancient Greek Epic and Tragedy* (Berlin et al. 2016)
Metre

A. M. Dale, *The Lyric Metres of Greek Drama* (Cambridge 1968)
*M. L. West, Greek Metre* (Oxford 1982)
—, *Introduction to Greek Metre* (Oxford 1987)

A basic introduction for beginners:

Lost Plays and Fragments

M. Wright, *The Lost Plays of Greek Tragedy*, vol. 1: *Neglected Authors* (London et al. 2016)

2. EURIPIDES’ BACCHAE

Text


Fragments

*Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, vol. 5.1–2: *Euripides*, ed. R. Kannicht (Göttingen 2004)

**Studies on the textual tradition**


**Introduction**


**Scholia**

E. Schwartz, *Scholia in Euripidem* (Berlin 1887–1891)

**Commentaries**

*Euripides, Bacchae*, ed. with intr., transl. & comm. by E. R. Dodds (Oxford 1944, 21960)

**Studies on the text of Euripides**

D. L. Page, *Actors’ Interpolations in Greek Tragedy* (Oxford 1934)

**Concordance. Language**

C. Collard, *Supplement to the Allen & Italie Concordance to Euripides* (Groningen 1971)


A. C. Moorhouse, *The Syntax of Sophocles* (Leiden 1982) [contains much of relevance to Euripides]

Some Significant English Translations of the Bacchae


Introductions and Companions (see also general introductions listed under 1)

G. Murray, *Euripides and his Age* (2nd ed. London 1946, repr.)


Companions


A. Markontatos (ed.), *Brill’s Companion to Euripides* (Leiden, forthcoming)

Comprehensive Analytical Bibliography of Euripidean Scholarship 1970–2000


Collections of articles


E. R. Schwinge (ed.), *Euripides. Wege der Forschung* 89 (Darmstadt 1968)

P. Burian (ed.), *Directions in Euripidean criticism* (Duke UP 1985)
Books and articles on Euripides


W. Nestle, *Euripides. Der Dichter der Griechischen Aufklärung* (Stuttgart 1901)


D. Conacher, *Euripidean Drama* (Toronto 1967)


C. Segal, *Euripides and the Poetics of Sorrow* (Durham/London 1993)

B. Seidensticker, 'Peripeteia and tragic dialectic in Euripidean tragedy', in: M. S. Silk (ed.), *Tragedy and the Tragic, Greek Theatre and Beyond* (Oxford 1996) 377–96


M. Hose, *Euripides als Anthropologe* (München 2009)

**Books and articles on Euripides’ Bacchae**

G. Norwood, *The Riddle of the Bacchae. The Last Stage of Euripides’ Religious Views* (Manchester 1908)


H. Diller, ‘Die *Bakchen* und ihre Stellung im Spätwerk des Euripides’ (1955); repr. in his *Kleine Schriften* (München 1971) 369–387


S. Mills, Euripides: Bacchae, Duckworth Companions (London 2006)
C. Thumiger, Hidden paths: Self and characterization in Greek tragedy; Euripides’ Bacchae (London 2007)
I. de Jong, ‘Euripides, Bacchae 1043-1152 (The Death of Pentheus)', in her Narratology and Classics (Oxford 2014) 197–224

D. Stuttard (ed.), *Looking at Bacchae* (London 2016)


### 3. Greek Religion, Dionysus


**Dionysus**


R. Schlesier (ed.), *A different God? Dionysos and Ancient Polytheism* (Berlin et al. 2011)

A. Bernabé [et al.] (eds.), *Redefining Dionysos* (Berlin et al. 2013)

**Iconography**

—, *Dionysian Imagery in Fifth-Century Athens* (Oxford 1997)
A. Heinemann, *Der Gott des Gelages: Dionysos, Satyrn und Mänaden auf attischem Trinkgeschirr des 5. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.* (Berlin 2016)

4. (Greek) Tragedy and the Tragic. Tragedy and Philosophy

P. Friedländer, *Die griechische Tragödie und das Tragische* (1925-26), repr. in his *Studien zur antiken Literatur und Kunst* (Berlin 1969) 107–182
G. Steiner, *The Death of Tragedy* (New Haven & London 1961)
M. S. Silk (ed.), *Tragedy and the Tragic* (Oxford 1996)
R. Felksi (ed.), *Rethinking Tragedy* (Baltimore 2007)


C. C. Raymond, ‘Nietzsche on tragedy and morality,’ in: D. Came (ed.), *Nietzsche on Art and Life* (Oxford 2014) 57–78


5. RECEPTION(S), TRANSFORMATION(S), AND PERFORMANCE(S)

**General**


M. McDonald, *Ancient Sun, Modern Light: Greek Drama on the Modern Stage* (New York 1992)

A. S. Green, *The Revisionist Stage: American Directors Reinvent the Classics* (New York 1994)


E. Hall, F. Macintosh, A. Wrigley (eds.), *Dionysus Since 69: Greek Tragedy at the Dawn of the Third Millennium* (Oxford 2004)


S. Goldhill, *How to Stage Greek Tragedy Today* (Chicago 2007)

H. Foley, *Reimagining Greek Tragedy on the American Stage* (Berkeley 2012)
Euripides

U. Petersen, Goethe und Euripides. Untersuchungen zur Euripides-Rezeption in der Goethezeit (Heidelberg 1974)
A. N. Michelini, Euripides and the Tragic Tradition (Madison, Wis. 1987)

M. McDonald, Euripides in Cinema: The Heart Made Visible (Philadelphia 1983)

Companion


Euripides’ Bacchae

Books

M. Fusillo, Il dio ibrido: Dioniso e le “Baccanti” nel Novecento (Bologna 2006)
E. Fischer-Lichte, Dionysus Resurrected: Performances of Euripides’ The Bacchae in a Globalizing World (Blackwell 2014)
C. J. P. Friesen, Reading Dionysus. Euripides’ Bacchae and the cultural contestations of Greeks, Jews, Romans, and Christians (Tübingen 2015)
S. Perris, The Gentle, Jealous God: Reading Euripides’ Bacchae in English (London 2016)
O. Leege & T. Poiss (eds.), Moderne Transformationen der Bakchen des Euripides (Berlin, forthcoming)
Articles


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