

Contents

Preface — IX

Introduction: From Tragedy to the Tragic — 1

1. **Tragedy, from Athens to Alexandria — 11**
 - The contexts of Hellenistic tragedy — 11
 - Ptolemaic cultural politics and tragedy — 15
 - Performing, reciting or reading tragedy? — 20
 - Tragedy enters the Library — 25
2. **The Metaclassical Tragic — 31**
 - Tragedy as philosophy and its Hellenistic reworking — 31
 - The impossibility of Aristotelian tragedy — 38
 - Callimachus on (not) writing tragedy — 44
 - Establishing tragedy and the tragic in Alexandria — 52
3. **Alexandrian Tragedy — 63**
 - The star system of the Alexandrian tragedians — 63
 - Rupture and revival of tragic myth — 69
 - Historical tragedy makes a comeback — 77
 - Generic divergences and tragic crossovers — 82
4. **Callimachus Displaces the Tragic — 89**
 - Transcending the tragic in the *Hymns* — 89
 - Tragic fragmentariness in the *Aetia* — 98
 - Hecale*, a mundane tragedy — 105
5. **Redefining the Tragic in the *Idylls* of Theocritus — 115**
 - A messenger speech without a messenger — 115
 - The bucolic world's a stage — 122
 - Simaetha's tragic failures — 131
6. **Tragedy into Epic in Apollonius' *Argonautica* — 141**
 - Distilling Attic tragedy into the *Argonautica* — 141
 - Epic teleologies and tragic modalities — 153
 - An Alexandrian epic on tragic passions — 161

7. In the Metatragic Cosmos of the *Alexandra* — 168

The *Alexandra*, a metatragic play — 168

From the tragedy of Cassandra to ‘becoming Alexandra’ — 176

Tragedy as textual unconscious — 185

8. The Romantic Tragic — 193

Domesticizing tragedy — 193

The tragedy of love — 202

Parthenius, from tragedy to melodrama — 211

Conclusion: Tragic Failures and Hellenistic Challenges — 221

Bibliography — 227

Abbreviations — 227

Editions — 227

Translations — 227

Bibliography — 228

Index — 243