

to us (μυστήρια, *mysteria*, "mysteries"). Before Hellenistic times, the cult of Dionysus was called *teletai* ("mystic rites"); in Hellenistic times, *teletai* or *teletè* ("initiation", literally "making perfect") and *orgia* ("secret rites", "orgies"); and, in imperial times, also *mysteria* ("secret rites", "mysteries" [my translations, based on Liddell & Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford 1994]). For example, the term μύστης, *mystes* or initiate is known in connection with the cult of Dionysus only from the 1st century AD onwards. That is when we can talk about the *mysteria* of Dionysus, says Jaccottet.

Giovanni Lanfranchi's article "Nuove prospettive sulla teologia e sul culto di Inanna/Ištar: la pervasività del modello mesopotamico nel I millennio a. C." (pp. 231–246) steps a few centuries back in time from Graeco-Roman period. Lanfranchi has studied the cult of Ištar that spread in the Near East during the first four centuries of the first millennium BC through the aggressive expansion of the Assyrian empire. Lanfranchi follows in his interpretation the "Finnish School" (Parpola, Lapinkivi) on Ištar as a "cosmic spirit" whose cult expressed a strong denial of material and bodily existence in favour of the spiritual; emasculation being the ritual perfection of this tendency. Lanfranchi connects the Mesopotamian cult with the Mediterranean world through the cult of Cybele. Due to Assyrian cultural influences, Lanfranchi argues, the Anatolian cult of Cybele absorbed the ritual act of emasculation – that did not exist in any Anatolian cult before – into its cultic repertoire.

The research project "Les religions orientales dans le monde gréco-romain" held three seminars in the years 2005–2006, this book being the fruit of the last of the three. The book well fulfils its given aim, the re-evaluation of "oriental religions" both in concept and content. It would be a great favour to the international research community to get the other two seminars published as well in the *Potsdamer Altertumswissenschaftliche Beiträge* that has proved an easily accessible and rather widely distributed publication series in its relatively short period of existence (since 1999).

Ulla Lehtonen

ANGELO MERIANI: *Sulla musica greca antica. Studi e ricerche*. Università degli Studi di Salerno, Quaderni del Dipartimento di Scienze dell'Antichità 28. Alfredo Guida Editori, Napoli 2003. ISBN 88-7188-794-8. 150 pp. EUR 16.30.

Angelo Meriani's *Sulla musica greca antica* is a short collection of his articles on ancient Greek music. It consists of three revised versions of his previously published studies and includes a preface written by Luigi Enrico Rossi. In these chapters Meriani has concentrated on analysing short passages about Greek music instead of dealing with larger themes and thus every little detail is given due attention.

The first chapter treats fr. 124 Wehrli, a paragraph from Σύμμικτα συμποτικά of Aristoxenus quoted by Athenaeus (632a–b), which deals with the "barbarisation" of culture in Posidonia where citizens, Greek in origin, were turning into Etruscans or Romans because they were changing their language and all their customs. Nevertheless, Posidonians were still celebrating one characteristically Greek festival, in which they came together and recalled ancient words and practices and lamented over them. In this passage the speaker (Aristoxenus himself or someone who shares his conservative views on music) compares the

case of Posidonia to the situation of his own day when theatres had become "utterly barbarised" and popular music had "advanced into the extremity of degeneration" and the occasion when he and his companions had gathered together and remembered what music used to be like.

Meriani analyses this short paragraph thoroughly and pays close attention not only to the literary but also to archaeological evidence. He suggests that Aristoxenus composed this work circa 320 BC and so he also dates the degeneration of Posidonian culture mentioned in the text to the fourth century BC, which means that it is not connected with the establishment of the Latin colony of Paestum in 273 BC. Meriani also examines Aristoxenus' conservative attitude toward "new music" and deals with this musical revolution itself which started during the later fifth century BC. After that Meriani concentrates on the festival which is mentioned in this passage and proposes a hypothesis that it may have been the cult of the founder hero of Greek Posidonia to which ritual lament was appropriate. That would mean that in this festival Posidonians were in fact lamenting their founder-hero instead of mourning the degeneration of their Greek customs. Meriani also analyses some epigraphic evidence from which we can see that in the beginning of the third century BC changes in official language can be confirmed but despite that the Posidonians were still using Greek at least in private contexts.

The second chapter leads us to Aristoxenian traces in the *De musica*, a treatise which is dated to the second century AD and falsely attributed to Plutarch. This work by an anonymous author gives us a great deal of valuable information on the history of Greek music and musical theory and includes many quotations and paraphrases mostly from writers of the fourth and the fifth centuries BC whose works are now lost. In this chapter Meriani concentrates on exploring the sources that the author of this text might have used in his quotations from Aristoxenus. He broadly agrees with François Lasserre's hypothesis that the author of the *De musica* did not know Aristoxenus' writings directly but through the intermediary of Dionysius of Halicarnassus (also known as "Dionysius the Musician") who also lived in the second century AD and wrote, according to the *Suda*, a history of music. Meriani examines lexical details, technical musical terms and themes which occur in the *De musica* and thinks that it can be confirmed that there is a lot of Aristoxenian material in the *De musica*, but still leaves open how much is taken directly from Aristoxenus.

The final chapter discusses theory of music and anti-empiricism in Plato's *Republic* (Plat. *resp.* 530b–531d). In this passage of the *Republic* Socrates and Glaucon have a conversation on astronomy and harmonics which they treat as sister sciences. During the discussion the two most important schools on the study of harmonics are mentioned, the Pythagoreans who believed that harmonic science, like everything else in the universe, is based on numerical ratios, and the ἄρμονικοί who sought ways to describe what was detected by the ear and were therefore distinctly empiricists. In this chapter Meriani concentrates on describing the methods which the Pythagoreans and the ἄρμονικοί used in their research on harmonics and Plato's attitude toward these main trends in Greek musical theory. The passage of the *Republic* shows that Plato's approach to harmonics is purely metaphysical and he leaves no space for empiricism. Otherwise his perspective on harmonic science is inspired by the Pythagorean mathematical approach and he criticises the Pythagoreans only for their way of searching numerical rations in heard concords instead of investigating which numbers are concordant and which are not. Plato's hostility to

empiricism is mainly vented against the ἄρμονικοί and he uses mocking expressions when he describes their methods. Meriani points out the interesting fact that Plato, when dealing with the ἄρμονία appropriate for the guardians of his ideal state (Plat. *resp.* 397b–401b), follows Damon's disciplines, which are empirical. However, there is no inconsistency in Plato having two different approaches to music in the *Republic* because they are in different contexts. Plato follows an empirical approach when he discusses what kind of music is suitable for the guardians and a metaphysical approach when he is dealing with disciplines appropriate for the philosopher-leaders of his state.

All in all, while this book does not offer a general introduction to ancient Greek music or its development, it does give comprehensive introductions on some essential topics in this field such as Aristoxenus' conservative views on "new music" and different approaches in ancient Greek harmonic science. For readers who would like more information on the latter, I suggest turning to Andrew Barker's *The Science of Harmonics in Classical Greece*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2007. However, Meriani examines these brief passages on music skilfully and he points out many interesting details in his analysis. I can recommend this book for all who are interested in ancient Greek music and especially for those who are interested in Aristoxenus' and Plato's writings on music.

Kimmo Kovanen

ROBIN MITCHELL-BOYASK: *Plague and the Athenian Imagination. Drama, History and the Cult of Asclepius*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2008. XIV, 209 pp. ISBN 978-0-521-87345-1. GBP 50.

In 430, during the Peloponnesian war, Athens was hit by a devastating plague which killed perhaps a third of the population. Together with other suffering caused, e.g., by the evacuation of the rural population to the city of Athens, the experience of the pestilence must have been a tragedy beyond imagination. Hence, it is a reasonable supposition that a catastrophe of the magnitude of the plague may not have passed Greek drama without leaving any traces, and in this monograph Robin Mitchell-Boyask (M-B) discusses the impact of the plague on Greek drama, especially on tragedy which was at its artistic peak at this very time. Another relevant question in the present study is how the construction of the Asklepieion in 420 on the south slope of the Acropolis, adjacent to the theatre of Dionysus, was reflected in Athenian drama. The third episode of interest to the author is the oligarchic revolution in 411 and its effect on drama.

In the preliminary chapter, the author discusses the attitudes of earlier studies towards the subject "Athenian drama and the plague". As M-B points out, it has already been known that the language of tragedy was highly dependent on the language of Ionian medical writing. On the other hand, in the 1940's and 1950's, the idea of disease symbolism in Greek tragedy was largely dismissed because it was thought to be "too ordinary or common" in the Greek language; e.g., the expression νόσος was considered just an empty expression, a dead metaphor. As M-B interestingly observes, scholars of the earlier 20th century did not react to illness as scholars of today do and the apparent ignoring of the possible concreteness of "disease language" in tragedy in scholarship until the 1970's was partly due to the optimism of that age, caused, e.g., by the introduction of penicillin and vaccination.