

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.

Because of new threatening pandemics, however, I would consider the statement that the scholars of the 1950's and 1960's were less sensitive to the fragility of life through illnesses than we are today dangerously anachronistic.

One might, in fact, argue quite the reverse, namely that after the age of the world wars and atomic bombs, people might have been more responsive to human suffering. At this point, the proper question is, I think, how sensitive were the ancient authors themselves towards killing diseases, and the most likely answer is that this sensibility cannot be measured with modern concepts. The author's critique and discussion of the history of the interpretation of diseases is, however, intelligent and he is quite right in stating that studies in which, e.g., mental illnesses are not considered proper illnesses at all are not relevant today. In general discussion, M-B convinces the reader when he argues that the allusions to diseases and the word νόσος in a tragedy performed on stage actually were something more than "dead metaphors" to an audience who had recently been suffering from deadly epidemics.

The study looks into both linguistic and social aspects of the source material, and therefore language plays an important role. The author begins with two tables in which the Greek tragedies are arranged according to their probable dates and the numbers of mentions of νόσος. These tables show that the number of occurrences of the expression νόσος varies, and although the number is naturally dependent on the plot of the play, it seems that there are high frequency plays which were produced at the time of the plague (*Trachiniae*, *Oedipus Tyrannus* and *Hippolytus* around 430), at the time of the construction of the Asklepieion (*Ion* around 420) and of the oligarchic revolution, (*Philoctetes* and *Orestes* around 411). These tables leave room for speculation (the numbers of words are not very informative as such), but as the author points out, the plays can be divided into those in which νόσος occurs describing a disease and those in which it has been used in metaphorical sense. M-B also discusses the occurrence of the greek word λοιμός, meaning the actual plague, and shows that the word was rarely used in the 5<sup>th</sup> century and that it almost completely disappeared during the time of the plague itself, the only extant occurrence in tragedy being in Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* (with the exception of the expression λοιμός καὶ λῆμος). The author concludes that the word was too ominous and became taboo, so that the more vague term νόσος was used both in tragedy and in the *History* of Thucydides.

In the textual analysis, M-B focusses on three plays (*Hippolytus*, *Oedipus Tyrannus* and the *Trachiniae*) and examines their relation to the plague of Athens. At first sight, the selection of the material might be considered perhaps a little bit too obvious: for example, one would expect a tragedy like Sophocles' *Philoctetes* (produced in 409) to contain a high amount of medical or rather nosological vocabulary, independent of the state of the community where it was performed. At a closer look, however, M-B manages to avoid self-evident points of view as well as to offer a fresh and interesting contribution to the study of Athenian drama and society in general.

In his discussion on *Hippolytus*, produced during the plague, M-B manages to show that there are more allusions to the plague than it seems at first glance. The play is situated in Troezen, a place of refugee for Athenians during the Persian wars, and probably also during the plague, and a place also connected with both the Hippolytus myth and Asclepius. If the reader considers the whole myth of Hippolytus, his later resurrection by Asclepius, which does not happen in the play but is clearly hinted at, there seems to be evidence enough for M-B to suggest that the tragedy was very much indeed involved with the disease raging in

Athens. Looking more deeply, *Hippolytus* is also much concerned with the apotropaic rites to avert catastrophes like famine and disease, especially the rite of scapegoating (φαρμακός) and ephebic initiations which all can be seen as reflections in the dithyrambic performances during the tragedy festivals.

In the chapter that discusses the *Trachiniae*, M-B suggests a new reading of the play, a reading that is based on an acceptance of the dating of the play to the time of the plague. In this light, the *Trachiniae* can actually be seen as a play about the plague and about the ongoing Peloponnesian war. This is most intriguing, because due to the lack of decisive allusions to the external world, theories about the date of the *Trachiniae* vary from 457 to 410. M-B argues that the scene with Strepsiades lying on the couch trying to get philosophical solutions to his financial problems and being eaten by bedbugs in the *Clouds* of Aristophanes can be seen as a parody of the painful death of Heracles in the *Trachiniae*. If this were the case, the dating within the years of the plague, 426 or 425, would be well established. Another important point in M-B's argumentation is the comparison of the description of Heracles' (who can be seen as representing Athens) symptoms caused by the poisonous cloth in the *Trachiniae* with that of the plague symptoms in Thucydides. M-B's argumentation is detailed and graphic to the point of unpleasantness, but as the author himself points out, so was the disease. We are told by Thucydides that one of the terrible symptoms of the plague was the loss of the genitals. In the *Trachiniae*, there is a scene in which the dying Heracles suddenly feels like a "parthenos" and asks his son to take a look under the bedcovers. This is convincing indeed, if we read the passage of the *Trachiniae* in the light of the plague. The author makes a suggestion that Sophocles, who himself was involved with the politics of the city, seems to hint that like Heracles, Athens, too, has been struck by plague because of her pleonexia, wanting to have too much.

In the middle part of the study, before discussing more dramas of Euripides and Sophocles, M-B investigates connections of the cult of Asclepius with drama and the god of theatre, Dionysus, on a more general level. He demonstrates that there were already in the archaic period associations between Dionysus and Asclepius, both on the level of myth and in practice, in the festival life of Athens. In the chapter entitled "uniqueness of the Athenian Asklepieion" (p. 115), M-B discusses the urban location of the shrine (traditionally the temples of Asclepius are situated in rural areas). According to the author, the location further supports the idea that the theatre is there not, as often suggested, for entertainment for those who await their cure but *is* an essential part of the healing process.

In the last chapters of his study, M-B discusses tragedies produced after the construction of the Asklepieion and asks what part the freshly built shrine of the healer god played in drama performances, especially in Euripides' *Heracles* and in Sophocles' *Philoctetes*, in which the Asklepieion has an important part. In these plays, the nosological vocabulary should again, after the plague, be understood more metaphorically, *Philoctetes* particularly reflecting the turmoil of politics in Athens. This strikes me as a strange statement since *Philoctetes* is undeniably also very much about an illness, and since much of its language could be read quite literally as well. This last part of the book is, I think, the least successful on the level of argumentation: is the fact that the Asklepieion stood beside the theatre enough to draw conclusions about its role in the plays, if the conclusions are not solidly supported by the text of the plays? Despite my slight hesitation on this matter, the study shows how many aspects can be considered in the relationship between ancient tragedy

performances and their audience and us, contemporary readers of ancient plays and modern scholarship. In the concluding chapter, the author brings everything together, the tradition of scapegoating, the rites of transmission and ostracism, and, moreover, he does not disappoint the reader who is still waiting for the Aristotelian idea of tragic *κάθαρσις* to be connected to this study.

The main arguments in this well executed study are easy to accept: the introduction of the cult of Asclepius to Athens had surely a lot to do with the atrocious plague epidemic which was reflected in the dramas of the time, too. The collocation of the shrine of Asclepius next to the theatre of Dionysus was not a coincidence, but showed that the idea of the healer god's presence was an essential flavor in dramatic performances in times of *λοιμός* and *λίμος*, terrible escorts of the Peloponnesian War. In the dramas of the late 5<sup>th</sup> century, there seems to be a growing interest in disease imagery as well as in allusions to the cult of Asclepius. This probably has a connection to the plague that killed a great part of the population in Athens between the years 430–426. If Dionysus and Asclepius are compared, they do have a lot of common features and the cult of Asclepius (to which music and dancing always belonged) is well established in a dramatic context. As has long been acknowledged, there is a connection between drama and medicine. M-B successfully demonstrates that the slope of the Athenian Acropolis was a place of therapy for the whole polis: both Dionysus and Asclepius were worshipped there side by side.

*Tiina Purola*

SIMONA MARCHESINI: *Prosopographia Etrusca* II,1 *Studia. Gentium mobilitas*. "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, *Studia Archaeologica* 158, Roma 2007. ISBN 978-88-8265-448-1. 186 pp. EUR 110.

The massive project *Prosopographia Etrusca* introduces its *Studia* series with this study by Simona Marchesini. Looking only at the title of the work, the connection with prosopography remains unclear, but, to be sure, the study concerns archaic onomastics of Southern Etruria, which is naturally basic for prosopographical work in a culture where practically all biographical information is missing.

Marchesini's focus is on the *Vornamengentilizia* appearing in the archaic inscriptions of Southern Etruria; thus, she completes the gap left by H. Rix in *Das etruskische Cognomen*, concentrating on late Etruscan onomastics. Through her study of 65 name forms, the author then approaches the question of ethnic and social mobility in early Etruscan societies. As is well known, the Etruscan usage of individual name gentilicia is connected with families of either unfree origin or immigrants.

The material is very limited, and, as the author is well aware, the criteria for identifying an individual name gentilicium are not unambiguous. The author starts from the maximal corpus of names, and comes to her list by cutting from it all typically Etruscan gentilicium formations such as *-na*, *-ra* etc. (p. 35). This method is acceptable, probably even the only possible, but in a way presumes that the gentilicium formation of old Etruscan families was rather strictly regulated. Some expansion of the material comes from a list of praenomina of non-Etruscan origin and gentilicia with Etruscan formation, but non-Etruscan stem.