

published in 1996: "Comic Stages in Magna Graecia: the Evidence of the Vases", *Theatre Research International* 21: 95–107.) The chapter ends with a short discussion on the *ekkyklema* and the *mechane*.

The titles of Chapters 4 ("The Comic Chorus"), 5 ("Music in Comedy"), 8 ("The Masks of Comedy"), 9 ("Costumes of Old and Middle Comedy"), 10 ("Comedy and Women"), and 11 ("New Comedy") speak for themselves, the subjects being dealt with in a compact and illuminating way.

Chapter 6 ("Acting, from Lyric to Dual Consciousness") concentrates, among other things, on questions related to the number of actors in the plays, casting (doubling and role-splitting), and the use of voice, speech and movement by actors.

In Chapter 7 ("Technique and Style of Acting Comedy"), Hughes introduces an extremely interesting subject on which too little has been written, namely (hand)gestures, poses, and the body language of actors. (There is one study on this subject by Klaus Neiiendam, published in 1992: *The Art of Acting in Antiquity. Iconographical Studies in Classical, Hellenistic and Byzantine Theatre*, Copenhagen). I myself discuss this subject in Chapter 2 of my doctoral dissertation *Tragedy Performances outside Athens in the Late Fifth and the Fourth Centuries BC*, recently published as a revised version of the original e-thesis in the series "Papers and Monographs of the Finnish Institute at Athens", vol. 20).

At the end of the book there is a very useful catalogue of the objects discussed, a glossary of Greek terms, and a short index. There are also plenty of illustrations in the book, mostly photographs of vases and terracotta figurines, but there are also some drawings and photographs of reconstructions by the author himself (e.g. of the *mechane* and some hand gestures used in comedy).

The whole book is carefully edited, I found no typos, and noticed only two minor mistakes. Figures 39 and 40 (referred to on p. 156, illustrated on pp. 138–9) have switched places, and on p. 257 (n. 23), Hughes oddly claims that Philip was killed at Pella rather than Aegae.

Who would I recommend this book to? It is perhaps most useful for theatre makers and students and teachers of theatre history, drama and literature, but certainly classical scholars as well, and perhaps also students and teachers of gender studies (see Chapter 10) would benefit from reading this excellent book.

*Vesa Vahtikari*

NIKOS G. CHARALABOPOULOS: *Platonic Drama and its Ancient Reception*. Cambridge Classical Studies. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge – New York 2012. ISBN 9780521871747. XXI, 331 pp. USD 99.

Over the last few years, "performance" has been discussed in relation to numerous ancient, medieval and post-medieval texts. Within the field of Classics, the study of ancient theatre has been one of the major beneficiaries of this scholarship. Philosophical texts, on the other hand, have not been at the core of these studies, even those with dramatic characteristics such as the dialogues of Plato. This was, of course, only to be expected, as in philosophical texts the content has always been considered more important than the actual performance format of the text. However, in this book, performance has a central role in both of its main themes, the

connection between the dialogues of Plato and staged drama and the reception of the dialogues in the time of Plato.

The first of the four chapters is the largely introductory "Setting the stage", in which Charalabopoulos discusses the Platonic corpus concentrating on the dialogue form, chronology, authenticity, context, and terminology. In the second chapter, "The metatheatre of dialogue", the development of the dialogue form of Plato as a dramatic form is scrutinized. "Performing Plato", the third chapter, looks at the performative aspects of Plato's texts. The last chapter, "Plato's 'theatre': the fragments", focuses on the ancient tradition of interpreting the dialogues of Plato as theatre. In addition, the book includes a brief conclusion, indices, a bibliography, and an appendix in which an inscription found in the gymnasium of the Academy is discussed.

While the examination of all these issues is careful, the book has its weaknesses. The main shortcoming is that the sources are occasionally too sparse to support the arguments convincingly. This is especially evident in the discussion of the more theatrical performances (as opposed to other performance types) of Plato in antiquity. The discussions of individual sources are interesting, but whether the sources allow us to construct long-term performance and reception traditions is debatable.

*Platonic Drama and its Ancient Reception* genuinely improves our understanding of the connection between Plato and drama. It is true that the book can be said to raise as many questions as it answers, but this only adds to its merit. Indeed, the book is likely to inspire future contributions to the field. Recommended.

Kalle Knaapi

*Brill's Companion to Callimachus*. Edited by BENJAMIN ACOSTA-HUGHES – LUIGI LEHNUS – SUSAN STEPHENS. Brill, Leiden – Boston 2011. ISBN 978-9004156739. XVIII, 708 pp. EUR 188, USD 263.

I suspect only very few reviewers of this *Brill's Companion to Callimachus* can resist the temptation to mention fr. 465 Pf., which testifies that our poet asserted that a big book is a big evil (simplified μέγα βιβλίον μέγα κακόν). This statement, probably hinting to some literary feuds of the Hellenistic age, captures certain characteristics of Callimachus' aesthetics: the light is preferred over the heavy. This collection of twenty-seven articles by a number of leading Callimachean scholars is indeed a μέγα βιβλίον, but in its clarity of thought, variety of perspectives and sophistication of presentation the *Companion* agrees thoroughly with Callimachus' programme. In terms of this collection, we may therefore amend the aforementioned dictum to μέγα βιβλίον μέγα καλόν.

Callimachus of Cyrene was not only the most versatile and influential poet of the Hellenistic era, but also an esteemed and prolific scholar. Due to the diversity of his oeuvre and to the sad fact that the majority of his works are either fragmentary or completely lost, a compilation of essays suitable for beginners and specialists alike is not easily made. *Brill's Companion to Callimachus* succeeds well in this and will undoubtedly be the standard work for years to come. Its scope is admirable and the quality of scholarship praiseworthy. However, because of the size of this book, I can only highlight some of its articles.