

Aristoxenus of Tarentum and the Birth of Musicology (Studies in Classics)

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possibility that Josephus' control of his source material was not as complete as the author here suggests (but see 149 n.103).

L. summarizes the results of her work with caution and modesty. Her main conclusion is that Josephus' Herod does not read as a character of tragedy or an object of empathy (30, 195-7). L.'s literary approach opens up interesting perspectives on Herod. While the importance of speeches and of editorial comments is uncontested, the literary significance of short obituaries or death notices is dubious. It is questionable whether 'natural and supernatural phenomena' function as rhetorical devices. For *BJ*, L. offers just one example (the earthquake of 31 BC). In addition to focusing on interruptions, closer attention might have been given to elements of the main narrative. Evidently, it would be beyond the scope of one volume to do a full comparative literary study of Josephus' two accounts of Herod. L. has made a valiant beginning.

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GIBSON (S.) *Aristoxenus of Tarentum and the Birth of Musicology*. (Studies in Classics 9). New York and London: Routledge, 2005. Pp. ix + 264. £45. 9780415970617.

This book makes the claim that Aristoxenus of Tarentum, the rebellious student of Aristotle, was the founder of the science of musicology. Whereas earlier Greek scholars had explored music from the point of view of the relationship of numbers, he turned musical science into 'an investigation of the way in which sound could be arranged and understood as music' (1) and was the first to establish music as an independent subject.

It is to the justification of this claim that this book is dedicated. The Pythagoreans had considered music as part of their cosmological system, based on the relation of numbers. Gibson shows that their approach cannot be simply summarized as *ratio versus sensus*, since the ratios do, in most cases, reflect those of ancient Greek music in practice. Rather, it contrasts to that of the *harmonikoi* who were empiricists but not very systematic. Both approaches are criticized by Aristoxenus, who shows the influence of his training in the Lyceum. It was not so much the effect of Aristotle's discussions of music as his scientific methodology, based on the natural sciences, that can be discerned in Aristoxenus' writing. Particularly important was the idea of subject limitation (one subject cannot be explained by the principles of another) and the need to set out from that subject's first principles (the axiomatic method) both described in the *Posterior Analytics*. It is on the basis of this that Aristoxenus goes beyond his predecessors in establishing harmonic science as an independent discipline.

One problem is that the extant *Harmonics* of Aristoxenus is not a unified and complete work. G. sees the first book as a draft, and the second and third as the revision of that draft, which in itself contains *Principles* (Book 2) and *Elements* (Book 3). This she demonstrates by showing that the same plan is used in Books 1 and 2, while Book 3 continues beyond the point where the parallelism between Books 1 and 2 ceases. G. does not address the question of why Book 1 was included in the transmitted text. One reason may be precisely that much material in Book 1 perceived as interesting or valuable in the eyes of his successors is not taken up again in Book 2.

Having established the independence of music as a discipline in the extensive introductory sections in the *Harmonics*, Aristoxenus showed what its divisions were. Among these are composition (Aristoxenus' own text on this is not extant) and rhythm, of which a fragment survives. Aristoxenus appears to have been the first to separate rhythm from metrics – i.e. to look at rhythm within music as theoretically independent of the metrical structure of the poetry that is sung to that music. The fragment of his *Rhythmics* must be supplemented with later authors' references to, or presumed dependence on, other parts of the treatise. G. may overplay her hand here in attempting to reconstruct the plan of the whole text, which she considers to be parallel to that of the *Harmonics*, especially in its Peripatetic methodology. This parallelism goes so far as seeing in the *Rhythmics* evidence for the same process of revision as is alleged for the *Harmonics*.

Aristoxenus wrote several other works on music which did not survive antiquity. The *Harmonics*, however, was always his most influential work. It did not succeed in displacing the Pythagorean approach, but was rather referred to as the main rival theory. G. traces the Pythagorean reaction to Aristoxenus, starting from Pseudo-Euclid's *Sectio canonis*, which may have been a contemporary response to Aristoxenus' rejection of the numerical representation of intervals. This trend culminates in Boethius' *De institutione musica*, which established music as a branch of mathematics, on the Pythagorean lines, and criticized Aristoxenus' methodology and conclusions, hence setting the mould for later mediaeval and Renaissance music theory. However, many writers of music after Aristoxenus, while adopting the Pythagorean line as a whole, absorbed some of Aristoxenus' theories. This is especially evident in definitions and classifications of harmonics, melody, rhythm and metre, and in the mechanics of the perception of sound. G. goes through the ancient Greek and Latin treatises systematically, topic by topic, showing the borrowings from Aristoxenus.

G. underpins her arguments with extensive quotations from Greek, usually translated into English in the endnotes (it is a pity that the Greek and English cannot be displayed on the same page). At the very end of her book she makes a claim for a similarity in the modern construction of musical theory, but denies that

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