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Several decades ago scholars dismissed the metaphorical aspects of disease in drama. The word nosos, they maintained with little evidence, was too much a part of everyday language to have any metaphorical significance. The Greeks, like us, tended to call bad things sick. They erred, I believe, in making sweeping assumptions about poetic language in its historical situation, and in not considering how their own historical conditions might affect the way they read Greek texts. I do not think that we can assume that a culture lacking immunization shots and anaesthetic, or a city that had lost 1/4

With these associations in mind, I suggest that the placement of the Asklepieion immediately above the Theater of Dionysus is not an accident. Apollo and his healer son are at times interchangeable and through

not necessarily Aristotelean, tradition. The plot: while awaiting the return of Heracles from his 12 labors, his family is being persecuted by the tyrant Lycus, who has taken advantage of Thebes' political instability. The hero returns in the nick of time, having just fetched Cerberus from Hades, and kills Lycus. He enters the house

status in Greek

when besieging Heracles, is a type of disease.

strife during these years increasingly spread like a disease through Athens, the dramatic poets drew on other established associations between the body and the body politic to develop an extended metaphor of disease in society. By examining this disease, the city could have a chance of a cure. The theater could bring civic tensions to a new intensity, and the nosos in the Theater of Dionysus could purify the polis of its nosos.

An Athenian sitting in the Theater of Dionysus watched dramas not just as an individual but as part of a collective, and the pattern of seating in wedges according to tribe and social status reinforced the collective sense. Scholarly consideration of what Aristotle meant by catharsis has continually focused on the emotional reactions of individuals as individuals, not as members of a political or social whole. The ritual and the medical, as well as the political, do in fact overlap in the language of Greek drama, as we have seen in this study, and thus drama acts as a form of social medicine, a pharmakon for the polis. In the pharmacy of the Theater, Asclepius is never far away. G.S. Kirk, JERaven, M. Schofield, The presocratic philosoph-4(nu)10(al)5(l)-4(y)] TJB1 (0 0 1 256.61 5 0 1 205.13 551.00864

indication of the commonreputation of each. Also, in that comedy Dionysus descends to Hades out of a "hunger" for Euripides.

[9] On the dating of these aspects of the City Dionysia see the correction of Pickard-Cambridge's doubts by Goold and Lewis, 64-67.

[10] On the semantics of seating arrangements in the Theater of Dionysus, see Winkler, especially 37-42, in Winkler and Zeitlin. .

[11] See Maass' seating plan, 141-44, which follows Fiechter's work. Maas 79 notes that the practice of Prohedria dates from archaic times. See also Pickard -Cambridge 1946, 19-21.

[12] See Maass 44, 133, and Aleshire 83 n.5.

[13] Maass (18) notes that the office of the occupants probably changed over the course of time, especially during the