The ancient science of harmonics investigates the arrangements of pitched sounds which form the basis of musical melody, and the principles which govern them. It was the most important branch of Greek musical theory, studied by philosophers, mathematicians and astronomers as well as by musical specialists. This book examines its development during the period when its central ideas and rival schools of thought were established, laying the foundations for the speculations of later antiquity, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. It concentrates particularly on the theorists’ methods and purposes and the controversies that their various approaches to the subject provoked. It also seeks to locate the discipline within the broader cultural environment of the period; and it investigates, sometimes with surprising results, the ways in which the theorists’ work draws on and in some cases influences that of philosophers and other intellectuals.

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THE SCIENCE OF HARMONICS IN CLASSICAL GREECE

ANDREW BARKER
O dear white children, casual as birds,
Playing among the ruined languages,
So small beside their large confusing words,
So gay against the greater silences . . .

W. H. Auden, *Hymn to Saint Cecilia*
Contents

List of figures ix
Preface xi

PART I  PRELIMINARIES

Introduction 3

1  Beginnings, and the problem of measurement 19

PART II  EMPIRICAL HARMONICS

2  Empirical harmonics before Aristoxenus 33

3  The early empiricists in their cultural and intellectual contexts 68

4  Interlude on Aristotle’s account of a science and its methods 105

5  Aristoxenus: the composition of the Elementa harmonica 113

6  Aristoxenus: concepts and methods in Elementa harmonica Book 1 136

7  Elementa harmonica Books II–III: the science reconsidered 165

8  Elementa harmonica Book III and its missing sequel 197

9  Contexts and purposes of Aristoxenus’ harmonics 229

PART III  MATHEMATICAL HARMONICS

10  Pythagorean harmonics in the fifth century: Philolaus 263
Contents

11 Developments in Pythagorean harmonics: Archytas 287
12 Plato 308
13 Aristotle on the harmonic sciences 328
14 Systematising mathematical harmonics: the Sectio canonis 364
15 Quantification under attack: Theophrastus’ critique 411

Postscript: The later centuries 437

Bibliography 450
Index of proper names 461
General index 469
Figures

1 The central octave page 13
2 The Greater Perfect System 14
3 Disjunction and conjunction 15
4 The Lesser Perfect System 16
5 The Unchanging Perfect System 17
6 Modulation through a perfect fourth 220
7 Modulation through a semitone 221
8 The harmonia of Philolaus 266
9 The ‘third note’ in Philolaus’ harmonia 276
10 Sectio canonis proposition 19 396
11 Sectio canonis proposition 20 402
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