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Sommario/riassunto

This volume explores the relationships between masterworks of Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes and critical events of Athenian history, by bringing together internationally distinguished scholars with expertise on different aspects of ancient theatre. These specialists study how tragic and comic plays composed in late fifth century BCE mirror the acute political and social crisis unfolding in Athens in the wake of the military catastrophe in 413 BCE and the oligarchic revolution in 411 BCE. With events of such magnitude the late fifth century held the potential for vast and fast cultural and intellectual change. In times of severe emergency humans gain a more conscious understanding of their historically shaped presence; this realization often has a welcome effect of offering new perspectives to tackle future challenges. Over twenty academic experts believe that the Attic theatre showed increased responsiveness to the pressing social and political issues of the day to the benefit of the polis. By regularly promoting examples of public-spirited and capable figures of authority, Greek drama provided the people of Athens with a civic understanding of their own good.
