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Ancient Models for the New Musicians

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Abstract

On the symbolic role assumed by mythical musicians (esp. Marsyas, Olympus, Orpheus, Thamyris) in the debate on music in the second half of the 5th century BC, with particular attention to them in the fragments of New Musicians (Melanipp. *PMG* 758 and 766, Tim. *PMG* 791, 221-224, Telest. *PMG* 805 and 806). For Timotheus and the other New Musicians, the appeals to these ancient 'colleagues' were a way to construct distant and authoritative models for their way of making music by projecting back onto them key-features of their style, namely *poikilia*, inventiveness and virtuosity.

Keywords

New Music -- musical myths -- Linus -- Olympus -- Orpheus -- Marsyas -- Thamyras --
Melanippides of Melos -- Telestes of Selinous -- Timotheus of Miletus

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As is well known, in the second half of the 5th century BC Athens experiences a marked change in musical taste: the compositions which meet the favour of the larger audience in theatres are those characterized by a complex and virtuoso style. At the basis of this style — the so-called New Music — lies a new conception of *mousike*, which has been explored in recent years by E. Csapo¹. Here I am going to focus on a particular aspect of this musical ideology, namely the relationship with musical tradition.

It is hardly a mere chance that in the second half of the 5th century musical historiography takes the first steps²: the discontinuity with the past claimed by the New Musicians (cf. Tim. *PMG*796) and condemned by their critics (cf. *e.g.* Ar. *Nu.* 961-978, Pherecr. fr. 155 K.-A., Plat. *Leg.* 700a-701b, Heracl. Pont. fr. 157 Wehrli) entails the need to define musical tradition. This is done by both the ones and the others, from different perspectives and, obviously, with different results. Critics of the New Music contrast the ‘perverted’ new songs of contemporary composers with the good music of the past, simple, noble and ethically oriented. The bulwark of this tradition is recognized by them in (an idealized image of) Sparta, Crete, and sometimes Egypt³, but also in earlier Athens, namely in the city of those Athenians who fought the Persian Wars⁴. On the other side, the New Musicians are “also driven to invent a tradition of their own, in which ritual Dionysiac music is particularly prominent, as are appeals to founding figures like Orpheus, Olympos, or the Korybants”⁵, and also Linus, Marsyas and Thamyras.

Three of these mythical musicians became a favourite iconographic subject in vase-paintings in the last third of the 5th century, as has been shown by A. Heinemann (2013): they

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¹ See esp. Csapo 2004 and 2011. On New Music see also D’Angour 2006 and, more recently, the articles from the conference *The Revolution of the New Music* (Oxford, Jesus College, 28-30 July 2017) published in this journal (*GRMS*6.2 and 7.1).

² Let us think of Glaucus of Rhegium and Hellanicus of Lesbos; cf. Franklin 2010; Barker 2014.

³ Cf. *e.g.* Plat. *Leg.* 660b; for other passages and discussion see Gostoli 1988 and Csapo 2004, 241–4.

⁴ Cf. *e.g.* Ar. *Nu.* 961-978 and Plat. *Leg.* 700a-701b.

⁵ Csapo 2011, 129.

1 are Marsyas, Orpheus and Thamyris⁶. These figures are represented by painters even before
2 then, but by that time their iconography undergoes an interesting development, which seems
3 to reflect the changes in contemporary musical culture. Let us follow this trend.
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7 From the sixties of the century, the Thracian citharodes Orpheus and Thamyris appear
8 with some frequency on Greek vases⁷; on the contrary, the Phrygian aulete Marsyas is not
9 attested in vase-paintings before the last third of the century, but around the middle of the
10 century is the subject of the famous sculptural group by Miron dedicated on the Athenian
11 Akropolis and representing the satyr with Athena⁸. Shortly before, Marsyas appears, together
12 with Orpheus, Thamyris and Olympus, in the famous Polygnotus' painting of the *Nekya*,
13 realized around 470/460 BC for the Lesche of the Knidians in Delphi. According to Pausanias'
14 description (10.30.6-9) of this lost piece of art,
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30 ἀποβλέψαντι δὲ αὐθις ἐς τὰ κάτω τῆς γραφῆς, ἔστιν ἐφεξῆς μετὰ τὸν Πάτροκλον
31 οἷα ἐπὶ λόφου τινὸς Ὀρφεὺς καθεζόμενος, ἐφάπτεται δὲ καὶ τῆ ἀριστερᾷ κιθάρας,
32 τῆ δὲ ἐτέρᾳ χειρὶ ἰτέας ψαύει· κλώνες εἰσιν ὧν ψαύει, προσανακέκλιται δὲ τῷ
33 δένδρῳ. τὸ δὲ ἄλλος ἔοικεν εἶναι τῆς Περσεφόνης, ἔνθα αἴγειροι καὶ ἰτέαι δόξῃ τῆ
34 Ὀμήρου πεφύκασιν· Ἑλληνικὸν δὲ τὸ σχῆμά ἐστι τῷ Ὀρφεῖ, καὶ οὔτε ἡ ἐσθῆς οὔτε
35 ἐπίθημά ἐστιν ἐπὶ τῆ κεφαλῇ Θράκιον [...]. Θαμύριδι δὲ ἐγγὺς καθεζομένῳ τοῦ
36 Πελίου διεφθαρμένοι αἱ ὄψεις καὶ ταπεινὸν ἐς ἅπαν σχῆμά ἐστι καὶ ἡ κόμη πολλή
37 μὲν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς, πολλή δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ ἐν τοῖς γενείοις· λύρα δὲ ἔρριπται πρὸς
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52 ⁶ As far as Linus and Olympus are concerned, there is no trace of a similar interest on behalf of Attic vase-
53 painters in the last third of the 5th century, with the exception of one depiction of Olympus on a
54 Panathenaic amphora (on which see below). On Linus in Greek art, see Boardman 1992; on Olympus, see
55 Weis 1994, esp. 43f. and van Keer 2008, 45-50.

56 ⁷ Orpheus: Gareizou 1994, 99-101; Bundrick 2005, 121-126. Thamyris: Nercessian 1994; Bundrick 2005, 126-
57 131; Sarti 2010/2011. On these mythical figures see Portulas 2000, esp. 295-298 (Thamyris); Bernabé
58 2002; Iannucci 2009; Ercoles 2009 (Orpheus), all with further bibliography.

59 ⁸ Cf. Weis 1992, 373 (nos. 43-46), 376. See also Boardman 1956, 18-20; Sarti 1992, esp. 101-103; Castaldo
60 2000, 34-37; Bundrick 2005, 131-139; Heinemann 2013, 294-300.

1 τοῖς ποσί, κατεαγότες αὐτῆς οἱ πῆχεις καὶ αἱ χορδαὶ κατερρωγυῖαι. ὑπὲρ τούτου
2 ἐστὶν ἐπὶ πέτρας καθεζόμενος Μαρσύας, καὶ Ὀλυμπος παρ' αὐτὸν παιδὸς ἐστὶν
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5 ὠραίου καὶ ἀλεῖν διδασκομένου σχῆμα ἔχων.
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10 Turning our gaze again to the lower part of the picture we see, next after Patroclus,
11 Orpheus sitting on what seems to be a sort of hill; he grasps with his left hand a
12 kithara, and with his right he touches a willow. It is the branches that he touches,
13 and he is leaning against the tree. The grove seems to be that of Persephone, where
14 grow, as Homer thought, black poplars and willows. The appearance of Orpheus is
15 Greek, and neither his garb nor his head-gear is Thracian [...]. Thamyris is sitting
16 near Pelias. He has lost the sight of his eyes; his attitude is one of utter dejection;
17 his hair and beard are long; at his feet lies thrown a lyre with its horns and strings
18 broken. Above him is Marsyas, sitting on a rock, and by his side is Olympus, with
19 the appearance of a boy in the bloom of youth learning to play the aulos. (Transl.
20 by W.H. Jones, with few adjustments)
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40 The close association of Marsyas, Orpheus and Thamyris in this painting is probably due
41 to their common destiny of violent death, which could be part of Greek mythological tradition
42 already in the first half of the 5th century⁹. As for Olympus, nothing is known about the
43 circumstances of his death; his closeness to Marsyas in the depiction and the way he is
44 represented make it clear that his presence is justified by the mythical tradition according to
45 which he was disciple or *eromenos* of Marsyas¹⁰.
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57 ⁹ Cf. Stansbury-O'Donnell 1990, 225f. and Beschi 1991, 40.

58 ¹⁰ For literary sources on Olympus see Campbell 1988, 272-285 and Gentili-Prato 2002, 1-9 (for Olympus as
59 disciple or *eromenos* of Marsyas see Plat. *Symp.* 215c [test. 2 Gent.-Pr.] and *Min.* 318b [test. 13 Campb.]),
60 with Barker 2011; see also Weis 1994, 43f. and van Keer 2008.
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1 The theme of the unfortunate destiny of Thamyris is depicted also on a red-figure hydria
2 from *ca.* 430 BC (Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, G 291), sharing many iconographic traits with
3
4 Polygnotos' painting: the musician appears seated on a rock after the contest with the Muses,
5
6 blind, caught while throwing away his instrument¹¹. The contest itself is the subject of other
7
8 four vase-paintings realized between the sixties and the thirties of the 5th century BC:
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10 Thamyris, generally seated, plays his instrument among the Muses. It is likely that these
11
12 scenes are reminiscent of Sophocles' *Thamyras*, probably staged in the sixties of the 5th
13
14 century. As it seems from the scanty remains, the tragedy was centred on the musical contest
15
16 and the defeat of the Thracian citharode as a consequence of his 'hybristic' competitive
17
18 ambition. This aspect was associated with Thamyris' ability as a performer and with the
19
20 power of his music, as we can infer from the following words of an unknown character of the
21
22 play (fr. 245 Radt²):
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32 μουσομανεῖ δ' ἔλήφθην

33 ἀνάγκᾳ, ποτὶ δ' εἶραν

34 ἔρχομαι ἔκ τε λύρας

35 ἔκ τε νόμων, οὓς Θαμύρας

36 περὶ ἄλλα μουσοποιεῖ

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46 And I was seized by an urge to be mad for music, and went to the place of
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48 assembly, an urge inspired by the lyre and by the *nomoi* [*i.e.* 'melodic conventions'
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50 or traditional melodic lines] with which Thamyras makes music supremely.
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54 (Transl. by H. Lloyd-Jones, with adjustments).
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61 ¹¹ Cf. Bundrick 2005, 127; Sarti 2010/2011, 222.
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1 The emphasis on the music ability is the main feature of the representations of Thamyris
2 on the vase-paintings from the last three decades of the 5th century, when the theme of the
3
4 unfortunate destiny after the defeat appears to have been neglected¹². A similar development
5
6 involves Orpheus' depictions: the murder of the citharode by the Thracian women is figured
7
8 by Athenian vase-painters especially from 490/480 to 430/420 BC, when another kind of
9
10 scene gets more prominence: Orpheus playing among the most savage and *amousoi* people,
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12 the Thracians, who listen to his music completely captured by it¹³.
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17 As far as Marsyas is concerned, his appearance on vase-paintings dates from the last
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19 third of the 5th century, when the Kadmos and the Pothos Painters depict him as seated and
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21 playing either the aulos or a stringed instrument¹⁴, while Apollo and other deities stand
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23 nearby. The agonal element is not prominent in these scenes: "in various instances the
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25 onlooking god is depicted without his own instrument, suggesting more of an audition than an
26
27 actual contest; only the tripod column figuring on a few vessels of the series may hint at an
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29 agonistic setting. Explicit references to the satyr's eventual demise do not occur before the
30
31 turn of the century"¹⁵. Moreover, Marsyas is sometimes depicted while playing a stringed
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33 instrument, what seems to point to the irrelevance of the kind of instrument played by the
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35 satyr: the crucial point of these representations is not the opposition between lyre and aulos,
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37 but the display of the performer's musical *techné*. Perhaps, it is possible to explain along these
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46 ¹² A first example of this trend is the Attic red-figure krater from Spina (Ferrara, National Museum 3033 – ca.
47 420 BC), where Thamyris is represented as a standing, professional citharode playing a large concert
48 kithara (see Bundrick 2005, 130f.; Menichetti 2007; Sarti 2010/2011, 222-224, 227 no. B.3, 235 fig. 4). The
49 iconographic structure of this painting is quite complex, merging together traits of previous representations
50 of Thamyris and other characteristic of vase-paintings from the last third of the century (see Bundrick 2005,
51 130f.; Sarti 2010/2011, 223f.); in the latter, however, the musician is generally portrayed as seated.

52 ¹³ See Gareizou 1994, 100. The theme of Orpheus enchanting Thracians with his cithara/lyre is documented
53 from the sixties of the 5th century, but it is in the last fourth of the century that it seems to oust the theme of
54 Orpheus' murder.
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56 ¹⁴ Marsyas playing a lyre is a mythical variant generally thought to derive from Melanippides' *Marsyas*,
57 probably a dithyramb. The hypothesis was firstly advanced by Boardman (1956) and has been favourably
58 considered by many scholars. Though, it is worth noting that it rests on highly conjectural basis and that
59 both Melanippides and the vase-painters could depend on a common mythical tradition (for a fuller
60 discussion, see my forthcoming edition of Melanippides, comm. on fr. 2.).

61 ¹⁵ Heinemann 2013, 295.
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1 lines also the only representation of Olympus in 5th-century Attic pottery, that has not been
2 taken into account by Heinemann (2013)¹⁶. In the Panathenaic amphora preserved in Naples
3 (Museo Nazionale, 81401 [H 3235]; circle of Meidias; 420-400 BC)¹⁷, the mythical aulete is
4 portrayed as a young man, seated with a lyre in his hands, beside a bearded Marsyas holding a
5 double aulos; around them are the Muses Thaleia, Kalliope and Urania, a satyr (ΤΥΡΒΑΣ), a
6 nude youth and a goose (or a swan). According to Weis (1994, 43), “the lyre can be a love-gift,
7 a symbol re-enforced by the presence of the bird and, perhaps, Urania at bottom left”. Indeed,
8 it is plausible to see in this scene a reference to the tradition of Olympus as disciple or
9 *eromenos* of Marsyas (see above n. 10). However, the association of Olympus with the lyre
10 instead of the double aulos seems to suggest that the crucial point of the narrative is the
11 musical skill itself of the performer, regardless of the musical instrument. The Panathenaic
12 nature of the vase could account for the presence of the lyre and the aulos in the scene, since
13 the Panathenaic contests involved both wind- and string-instruments.
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32 Be that as it may, though the interpretation of the above scene involving Olympus is
33 uncertain, the representations of Marsyas, Orpheus and Thamyris on Attic vases in the last
34 three decades of the 5th century betray a general and consistent trend. The vase-painters do
35 not appear to have been any more interested in their cruel destiny, but in their musical skills:
36 they are depicted while performing in front of a public of gods (as it is the case with Thamyris
37 and Marsyas, playing and singing in front of Apollo and the Muses) or Thracians (as it is the
38 case with Orpheus), who are delighted and enchanted by their music¹⁸. As Heinemann pointed
39 out, the tendencies observed in these representations “correspond to what is known from
40 written sources about changes in the contemporary culture of *mousike*. These developments,
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55 ¹⁶ See, however, Heinemann 2016, 306 (only on Marsyas’s iconography).

56 ¹⁷ *ARV*² 1316,1, with *Add.*² 362; cf. Weis 1994, 39 nr. 3, with further bibliography.

57 ¹⁸ Cf. Schmidt 2001, 295. The theme of Orpheus enchanting Thracians with his cithara/lyre is documented
58 from the sixties of the 5th century; the scenes with Thamyris and Marsyas playing in front of Apollo and the
59 Muses come from the three last decades of the same century. For bibliographical references on such
60 iconography see above nn. 20f.
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namely a growing professionalization of musicians (especially pipers) and its flipside, a newly defined culture of competent spectatorship, may have their beginnings earlier in the century, but fully come to the fore in its second half as concomitants of the so-called New Music”¹⁹.

The testimony of vase-paintings presents us, so to speak, the point of view of the audience and testifies to the musical taste of contemporary Athens. The mythical musicians are quintessential virtuoso performers playing in front of their public, virtually including not only gods, Muses, or Thracians, but also Athenian symposiasts, since these scenes were generally painted on sympotic vessels: looking at them, the symposiasts were “turned into metaspectators of the musicals feats by the undisputed masters of *mousike*”²⁰.

A different perspective is offered by the appeals to these mythical figures by the New Musicians. In the scanty remains of their poems, there are five references: Melanipp. *PMG* 758 (Marsyas), 766 (Linus), Tim. *PMG* 791,221-224 (Orpheus), Telest. *PMG* 805 (Marsyas), 806 (Olympus). Among these passages, the most instructive is the one from Timotheus’ *Persae*: in the *sphragis* of this citharodic *nomos*, the composer outlines a brief history of Greek citharody (vv. 221-236) from Orpheus to Timotheus himself, passing through Terpander.

πρῶτος ποικιλόμουσος²¹ Ὀρ-

φεὺς <χέλ>υν ἐτέκνωσεν

υἶος Καλλιόπα<ς ~ –

– σ > Πιερίαθεν·

19 Heinemann 2013, 299f.

20 Heinemann 2013, 300.

21 This is the form transmitted by *P. Berol.* 9875 (MP³ 1537; *LDAB* 4123) and retained by D.L. Page and D.A. Campbell, but corrected into ποικιλόμουσον by U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, who referred the adjective to the following <χέλ>υν (v. 222). Wilamowitz correction has been accepted by many editors (E. Diehl, C. Del Grande, J.M. Edmonds, T.H. Janssen). In both the cases, the substance of the argument does not change: Orpheus’ music was featured by *poikilia*.

Τέρπανδρος δ' ἐπὶ τῶιδε κα-

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τηῦξε²² μοῦσαν ἐν ὠιδαῖς·

Λέσβος δ' Αἰολία ν<ιν> Ἄν-

τίσσαι γείνατο κλεινόν·

νῦν δὲ Τιμόθεος μέτροις

ῥυθμοῖς τ' ἑνδεκακρουμάτοις

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κίθαριν ἔξανατέλλει,

θησαυρὸν πολύυμνον οἴ-

ξας Μουσᾶν θαλαμευτόν·

Μίλητος δὲ πόλις νιν ἄ

θρέψασ' ἄ δωδεκατειχέος

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λαοῦ πρωτέος ἐξ Ἀχαιῶν.

Orpheus, whose muse was intricate, Calliope's son [...], from Pieria, was the first to beget the tortoise-shell lyre. After him, Terpander reared the muse to fuller bloom with his songs: Aeolian Lesbos bore him at Antissa as a glory. Now Timotheus brings to new life the kithara with eleven-stringed metres and rhythms, opening the Muses' chambered treasury of many hymns. The city of Miletus, home of a twelve-walled people, first of the Achaeans, nurtured him.

²² κατηῦξε is Aron' correction of the transmitted κατευξε (for the metrical question, cf. Ercoles 2017b, 150 n. 66). Alternatively, I have suggested κα<τέ>τευξε: see Ercoles 2010, 122-128, with the discussion of different proposals, to which a further possibility can be added now (κά<ρ>τ' ἠῦξε proposed by Borsoni Ciccolungo 2018).

1 At vv. 221-224, Orpheus is portrayed in a telling way: he is not only the first citharode, but
2 also the first promoter of an intricate musical style. The adjective ποικιλόμουσος (v. 221)
3 clearly points to the debate on New Musicians's style in classical Athens²³, and shows that
4 Timotheus aims to present the ancient musician as a forerunner of his own elaborate music.
5 To put it another way, innovation is presented as a feature of Greek music from its very
6 beginnings, so that the melodic and rhythmical changes introduced by Timotheus are integral
7 part of this history. In this perspective, innovating is not synonymous with betraying musical
8 tradition, but, on the contrary, with pursuing it and enhancing its expressive power with new
9 resources.
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22 Another interesting passage comes from Telestes' *Asclepios* (PMG 806), where the
23 Phrygian aulos-player Olympus is remembered as the inventor of the Lydian mode:
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28 ἡ Φρύγα καλλιπνῶν αὐλῶν ἱερῶν βασιλῆα,
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30 Λυδὸν ὃς ἄρμοσε πρῶτος
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32 Δωρίδος ἀντίπαλον μούσας νόμον αἰολομόρφοις
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34 πνεύματος εὔπτερον αὔραν ἀμφιπλέκων καλάμοις²⁴.
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40 or the Phrygian king of the fair-breathing holy pipes, who was the first to tune the
41 Lydian strain, rival of the Dorian muse, weaving about the quivering reeds the fair-
42 winged gust of his breath. (Transl. by D.A. Campbell)
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50 The introduction of this mode seems to have been credited to Olympus also by Melanippides
51 in a fragment *sine ipsissimis verbis* (9 in my forthcoming edition = test. 5 Campbell): if my
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57 ²³ On musical *poikilia* see Barker 1995 and Leven 2013.

58 ²⁴ The Greek text of v. 3 is uncertain: the ms. A of Athenaeus, who quotes Telestes' fragment, presents
59 †νομοαἰολον ὄρφναι†. *Exempli gratia*, I have printed above the correction proposed by U. von Wilamowitz-
60 Moellendorff (*ap. Kaibel* 1890, 361), accepted by D.A. Campbell in his Loeb edition.
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1 interpretation of [Plut.] *Mus.* 15.1136b-c is right²⁵, the dithyrambographer reported that
2 Olympus had invented the *harmonia* while composing the *epikedeion* for Python killed by
3 Apollo.
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7 All in all, Melanippides and Telestes present the mythical aulete as an innovator,
8 therefore as a composer of ‘new’ music. Since the context of the above fragments is lost, it is
9 unclear whether the two dithyrambographers suggested in some way an explicit parallel
10 between Olympus’ and their own innovations. In any case, the choice of the myth and the
11 focus on the invention of a new mode are *per se* meaningful.
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20 Possibly, an analogous implication was behind Melanippides’ narration of Linus’ story
21 (*PMG* 766 = fr. 11), but nothing is known about this poem apart from its subject: the
22 exegetical scholium to *Il.* 18.570c¹ Erbse only says that ἡ [...] περὶ τὸν Λίνον ἱστορία καὶ παρὰ
23 Φιλοχόρῳ ἐν τῇ ιθ’ (*FGrHist* 328 F 207) καὶ παρὰ Μελανιππίδῃ. If the close association
24 between the poet and the historian implies that both reported the same story, it would be
25 possible to add some detail about Melanippides’ poem, since the scholium goes on reporting
26 Philochorus’ narration. The Attidographer told that Linus was killed by Apollo, for he was the
27 first to ret the flax and to use it for the chords of a lyre (ὁ δὲ Φιλόχορος ὑπ’ Ἀπόλλωνός φησιν
28 αὐτὸν ἀναιρεθῆναι, ὅτι τὸν λίνον καταλύσας πρῶτος χορδαῖς ἐχρήσατο εἰς τὰ ὄργανα): again,
29 the story of a musical invention!
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44 Some final comment deserves the myth of Marsyas recounted by Melanippides (*PMG*
45 758) and Telestes (*PMG* 805a-c), who seem to have been the New Musicians more interested
46 in mythical *mousikoi*. According to Athenaeus of Naukratis (14.616e-617), the first poet
47 recounted the myth in his *Marsyas* according to the widespread version, in order to show his
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56 ²⁵ Cf. Ercoles 2017a. The passage reads as follows: “Ὀλυμπον γὰρ πρῶτον Ἀριστόξενος ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ περὶ
57 μουσικῆς (fr. 80 Wehrli) ἐπὶ τῷ Πύθωνί φησιν ἐπικήδειον ἀύλησαι Λυδιστί. εἰσὶν δ’ οἱ Μελανιππίδην
58 τούτου τοῦ μέλους ἄρξαι φασίν. The implausible attribution of the invention to Melanippides is probably
59 due to the compiler’s misunderstanding of his source, a mistake analogous to other cases in the treatise
60 (1136d and 1136e): in the light of these, it is more reasonable to think of Melanippides as the source of the
61 story concerning the invention of the *epikedeion* than as its inventor.
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own rejection of the aulos, while the latter, doubting this mythical story, ‘took up arms against Melanippides’ (616f τῷ Μελανιππίδῃ ἀντικορυσσόμενος) to defend the art of aulos playing in his *Argos*. As P. Leven (2010) has pointed out, there are strong reasons for doubting the historicity of such a debate between the two composers of dithyrambs (a genre generally performed to aulos music in classical Athens!): the historical context provided by Athenaeus does not appear a credible reflection of the contemporary aesthetics and strategies of the poets and their works. On the contrary, it is possible to show that the author of *Deipnosophists* – or, as I believe, his source in this section – “follows the structure of Aristotle’s discussion of *aulos* playing in Book 8 of the *Politics* and illustrates the Aristotelian argument by poetic examples, which he reads in a historicist manner (as authors expressing their own opinions in the first-person and taking positions on contemporary issues). The statement that, rather than analysing or interpreting fragments, Athenaeus strings them together is not original of course; much more important, however, is the claim that there is an argumentative structure, and an ideological bias, behind an apparently loose stringing-together of quotations”²⁶. Therefore, we need to extract from the fragments themselves all the informations about the treatment of this myth by Melanippides and Telestes.

In both the cases, the lines of the poems quoted by Athenaeus do not concern Marsyas’ musical activity and do not help us to understand in which terms the poets represented the ancient aulos player. In Telestes’ fragments from *Argos*, however, the implications of the mythical account are clear enough: he calls the aulos a ‘clever instrument’ (*PMG* 805a,1f. σοφόν ... / ... ὄργανον) and says that the traditional story about its rejection by Athena ‘idly flew to Greece, told by idly-talking Muse-followers, a tale unsuited to the choral dance, an invidious reproach brought among mortals against a clever skill’ (805b)²⁷, where the ‘clever

²⁶ Leven 2010, 44. For a different view, favourable to the historicity of Athenaeus’ account, see now Fongoni 2016, with further bibliography.

²⁷ Transl. by D.A. Campbell.

1 skill' (v. 3 σοφᾶς ... τέχνας) is auletic art. The version of the myth that Telestes follows (or
2 invents?) does not include any more the episode of Athena rejecting the aulos: the 'clever'
3 goddess (805a,1 σοφάν) gives as a gift to Dionysos the 'clever instrument' together with the
4 'clever skill' of playing it (cf. 805c). It follows that, in this account, it was the god to give the
5 aulos to the satyr Marsyas, who then became a skillful performer. The myth is thus explicitly
6 intended by Telestes to serve as a defence and a celebration of the aulos, the most
7 representative instrument of New Music. Marsyas is not any more the focus of the story in the
8 *Argos*, as he apparently was in Melanippides' *Marsyas*, but is only a single tessera of a complex
9 mosaic: the myth as it is presented (or shaped) by Telestes. In this case, the musical polemic
10 becomes a polemic on myth, as the authorial voice itself clearly states.
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24 The fragments examined so far, though scanty and generally brief, nonetheless allow us
25 to appreciate the symbolic role that mythical musicians may have played in the debate on
26 music in the second half of the 5th century. For Timotheus and the other New Musicians, the
27 appeals to these figures were a way to construct distant and authoritative models for their own
28 way of making music by projecting back onto those ancient colleagues key-features of their
29 style, namely *poikilia*, inventiveness and virtuosity²⁸. As seen in the previous part of this work,
30 an echo of the involvement of Marsyas, Orpheus and Thamyras in this musical debate can be
31 found in the new iconographies of these figures appearing on Attic vessels by the last third of
32 the fifth century, when they begin to be portrayed as virtuoso performers who enchant their
33 audience.
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59 ²⁸ For an antithetical interpretation of the mythical musicians as representants of an old, noble music style see
60 *e.g.* Heracl. Pont. fr. 157 Wehrli.
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As is well known, in the second half of the 5th century BC Athens experiences a marked change in musical taste: the compositions which meet the favour of the larger audience in theatres are those characterized by a complex and virtuoso style. At the basis of this style — the so-called New Music — lies a new conception of *mousike*, which has been explored in recent years by E. Csapo¹. Here I am going to focus on a particular aspect of this musical ideology, namely the relationship with musical tradition.

It is hardly a mere chance that in the second half of the 5th century musical historiography takes the first steps²: the discontinuity with the past claimed by the New Musicians (cf. Tim. *PMG* 796) and condemned by their critics (cf. *e.g.* Ar. *Nu.* 961-978, Pherecr. fr. 155 K.-A., Plat. *Leg.* 700a-701b, Heracl. Pont. fr. 157 Wehrli) entails the need to define musical tradition. This is done by both the ones and the others, from different perspectives and, obviously, with different results. Critics of the New Music contrast the ‘perverted’ new songs of contemporary composers with the good music of the past, simple, noble and ethically oriented. The bulwark of this tradition is recognized by them in (an idealized image of) Sparta, Crete, and sometimes Egypt³, but also in earlier Athens, namely in the city of those Athenians who fought the Persian Wars⁴. On the other side, the New Musicians are “also driven to invent a tradition of their own, in which ritual Dionysiac music is particularly prominent, as are appeals to founding figures like Orpheus, Olympos, or the Korybants”⁵, and also Linus, Marsyas and Thamyris.

Three of these mythical musicians became a favourite iconographic subject in vase-paintings in the last third of the 5th century, as has been shown by A. Heinemann (2013): they are Marsyas, Orpheus

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¹ See esp. Csapo 2004 and 2011. On New Music see also D’Angour 2006 and, more recently, the articles from the conference *The Revolution of the New Music* (Oxford, Jesus College, 28-30 July 2017) published in this journal (*GRMS* 6.2 and 7.1).

² Let us think of Glaucus of Rhegium and Hellanicus of Lesbos; cf. Franklin 2010; Barker 2014.

³ Cf. *e.g.* Plat. *Leg.* 660b; for other passages and discussion see Gostoli 1988 and Csapo 2004, 241–4.

⁴ Cf. *e.g.* Ar. *Nu.* 961-978 and Plat. *Leg.* 700a-701b.

⁵ Csapo 2011, 129.

1 and Thamyris⁶. These figures are represented by painters even before then, but by that time their
2 iconography undergoes an interesting development, which seems to reflect the changes in contemporary
3 musical culture. Let us follow this trend.
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7 From the sixties of the century, the Thracian citharodes Orpheus and Thamyris appear with some
8 frequency on Greek vases⁷; on the contrary, the Phrygian aulete Marsyas is not attested in vase-paintings
9 before the last third of the century, but around the middle of the century is the subject of the famous
10 sculptural group by Miron dedicated on the Athenian Akropolis and representing the satyr with Athena⁸.
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12 Shortly before, Marsyas appears, together with Orpheus, Thamyris and Olympus, in the famous
13 Polygnotus' painting of the *Nekya*, realized around 470/460 BC for the Lesche of the Knidians in Delphi.
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15 According to Pausanias' description (10.30.6-9) of this lost piece of art,
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29 ἀποβλέψαντι δὲ αὐθις ἐς τὰ κάτω τῆς γραφῆς, ἔστιν ἐφεξῆς μετὰ τὸν Πάτροκλον οἶα ἐπὶ λόφου
30 τινὸς Ὀρφεὺς καθεζόμενος, ἐφάπτεται δὲ καὶ τῆ ἀριστερᾷ κιθάρας, τῆ δὲ ἐτέρᾳ χειρὶ ἰτέας ψαύει·
31 κλώνές εἰσιν ὧν ψαύει, προσανακέκλιται δὲ τῷ δένδρῳ. τὸ δὲ ἄλσος ἔοικεν εἶναι τῆς Περσεφόνης,
32 ἔνθα αἴγειροι καὶ ἰτέαι δόξῃ τῆ Ὀμήρου πεφύκασιν· Ἑλληνικὸν δὲ τὸ σχῆμά ἐστι τῷ Ὀρφεῖ, καὶ
33 οὔτε ἡ ἐσθῆς οὔτε ἐπίθημά ἐστιν ἐπὶ τῆ κεφαλῇ Θράκιον [...]. Θαμύριδι δὲ ἐγγὺς καθεζομένῳ τοῦ
34 Πελίου διεφθαρμέναι αἱ ὄψεις καὶ ταπεινὸν ἐς ἅπαν σχῆμά ἐστι καὶ ἡ κόμη πολλὴ μὲν ἐπὶ τῆς
35 κεφαλῆς, πολλὴ δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ ἐν τοῖς γενείοις· λύρα δὲ ἔρριπται πρὸς τοῖς ποσὶ, κατεαγότες αὐτῆς οἱ
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53 ⁶ As far as Linus and Olympus are concerned, there is no trace of a similar interest on behalf of Attic vase-painters in the
54 last third of the 5th century, with the exception of one depiction of Olympus on a Panathenaic amphora (on which see
55 below). On Linus in Greek art, see Boardman 1992; on Olympus, see Weis 1994, esp. 43f. and van Keer 2008, 45-50.

56 ⁷ Orpheus: Gareizou 1994, 99-101; Bundrick 2005, 121-126. Thamyris: Necessian 1994; Bundrick 2005, 126-131; Sarti 2010/2011.
57 On these mythical figures see Portulas 2000, esp. 295-298 (Thamyris); Bernabé 2002; Iannucci 2009; Ercoles 2009
58 (Orpheus), all with further bibliography.

59 ⁸ Cf. Weis 1992, 373 (nos. 43-46), 376. See also Boardman 1956, 18-20; Sarti 1992, esp. 101-103; Castaldo 2000, 34-37; Bundrick
60 2005, 131-139; Heinemann 2013, 294-300.
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1 πῆγεις καὶ αἱ χορδαὶ κατερρωγυῖαι. ὑπὲρ τούτου ἐστὶν ἐπὶ πέτρας καθεζόμενος Μαρσύας, καὶ
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3 Ὀλυμπος παρ' αὐτὸν παιδὸς ἐστὶν ὠραίου καὶ ἀυλεῖν διδασκομένου σχῆμα ἔχων.
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8 Turning our gaze again to the lower part of the picture we see, next after Patroclus, Orpheus
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10 sitting on what seems to be a sort of hill; he grasps with his left hand a kithara, and with his
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12 right he touches a willow. It is the branches that he touches, and he is leaning against the
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14 tree. The grove seems to be that of Persephone, where grow, as Homer thought, black
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16 poplars and willows. The appearance of Orpheus is Greek, and neither his garb nor his head-
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18 gear is Thracian [...]. Thamyris is sitting near Pelias. He has lost the sight of his eyes; his
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20 attitude is one of utter dejection; his hair and beard are long; at his feet lies thrown a lyre
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22 with its horns and strings broken. Above him is Marsyas, sitting on a rock, and by his side is
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24 Olympus, with the appearance of a boy in the bloom of youth learning to play the aulos.
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31 (Transl. by W.H. Jones, with few adjustments)
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38 The close association of Marsyas, Orpheus and Thamyris in this painting is probably due to their
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40 common destiny of violent death, which could be part of Greek mythological tradition already in the first
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42 half of the 5th century⁹. As for Olympus, nothing is known about the circumstances of his death; his
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44 closeness to Marsyas in the depiction and the way he is represented make it clear that his presence is
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46 justified by the mythical tradition according to which he was disciple or *eromenos* of Marsyas¹⁰.
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51 The theme of the unfortunate destiny of Thamyris is depicted also on a red-figure hydria from *ca.*
52
53 430 BC (Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, G 291), sharing many iconographic traits with Polygnotos' painting:
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57 ⁹ Cf. Stansbury-O'Donnell 1990, 225f. and Beschi 1991, 40.

58 ¹⁰ For literary sources on Olympus see Campbell 1988, 272-285 and Gentili-Prato 2002, 1-9 (for Olympus as disciple or
59 *eromenos* of Marsyas see Plat. *Symp.* 215c [test. 2 Gent.-Pr.] and *Min.* 318b [test. 13 Campb.]), with Barker 2011; see also
60 Weis 1994, 43f. and van Keer 2008.
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1 the musician appears seated on a rock after the contest with the Muses, blind, caught while throwing
2 away his instrument¹¹. The contest itself is the subject of other four vase-paintings realized between the
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4
5 sixties and the thirties of the 5th century BC: Thamyris, generally seated, plays his instrument among
6
7 the Muses. It is likely that these scenes are reminiscent of Sophocles' *Thamyras*, probably staged in the
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9 sixties of the 5th century. As it seems from the scanty remains, the tragedy was centred on the musical
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11 contest and the defeat of the Thracian citharode as a consequence of his 'hybristic' competitive ambition.
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13 This aspect was associated with Thamyris' ability as a performer and with the power of his music, as we
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15
16 can infer from the following words of an unknown character of the play (fr. 245 Radt²):
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24 μουσομανεῖ δ' ἐλήφθην

25 ἀνάγκη, ποτὶ δ' εἶραν

26 ἔρχομαι ἔκ τε λύρας

27 ἔκ τε νόμων, οὓς Θαμύρας

28 περιάλλα μουσοποιεῖ

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40 And I was seized by an urge to be mad for music, and went to the place of assembly, an urge
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42 inspired by the lyre and by the *nomoi* [*i.e.* 'melodic conventions' or traditional melodic lines]
43
44 with which Thamyras makes music supremely. (Transl. by H. Lloyd-Jones, with
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46 adjustments).
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54 The emphasis on the music ability is the main feature of the representations of Thamyris on the
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56 vase-paintings from the last three decades of the 5th century, when the theme of the unfortunate destiny
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61 ¹¹ Cf. Bundrick 2005, 127; Sarti 2010/2011, 222.
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1 after the defeat appears to have been neglected¹². A similar development involves Orpheus' depictions:
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3 the murder of the citharode by the Thracian women is figured by Athenian vase-painters especially from
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5 490/480 to 430/420 BC, when another kind of scene gets more prominence: Orpheus playing among the
6
7 most savage and *amousoi* people, the Thracians, who listen to his music completely captured by it¹³.
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10 As far as Marsyas is concerned, his appearance on vase-paintings dates from the last third of the
11
12 5th century, when the Kadmos and the Pothos Painters depict him as seated and playing either the aulos
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14 or a stringed instrument¹⁴, while Apollo and other deities stand nearby. The agonal element is not
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16 prominent in these scenes: "in various instances the onlooking god is depicted without his own
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18 instrument, suggesting more of an audition than an actual contest; only the tripod column figuring on a
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20 few vessels of the series may hint at an agonistic setting. Explicit references to the satyr's eventual demise
21
22 do not occur before the turn of the century"¹⁵. Moreover, Marsyas is sometimes depicted while playing a
23
24 stringed instrument, what seems to point to the irrelevance of the kind of instrument played by the satyr:
25
26 the crucial point of these representations is not the opposition between lyre and aulos, but the display of
27
28 the performer's musical *techné*. Perhaps, it is possible to explain along these lines also the only
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30 representation of Olympus in 5th-century Attic pottery, that has not been taken into account by
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32 Heinemann (2013)¹⁶. In the Panathenaic amphora preserved in Naples (Museo Nazionale, 81401 [H 3235];
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45 ¹² A first example of this trend is the Attic red-figure krater from Spina (Ferrara, National Museum 3033 – ca. 420 BC),
46 where Thamyras is represented as a standing, professional citharode playing a large concert kithara (see Bunderick 2005,
47 130f.; Menichetti 2007; Sarti 2010/2011, 222-224, 227 no. B.3, 235 fig. 4). The iconographic structure of this painting is quite
48 complex, merging together traits of previous representations of Thamyras and other characteristic of vase-paintings from
49 the last third of the century (see Bunderick 2005, 130f.; Sarti 2010/2011, 223f.); in the latter, however, the musician is
50 generally portrayed as seated.

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52 ¹³ See Gareizou 1994, 100. The theme of Orpheus enchanting Thracians with his cithara/lyre is documented from the sixties
53 of the 5th century, but it is in the last fourth of the century that it seems to oust the theme of Orpheus' murder.

54 ¹⁴ Marsyas playing a lyre is a mythical variant generally thought to derive from Melanippides' *Marsyas*, probably a
55 dithyramb. The hypothesis was firstly advanced by Boardman (1956) and has been favourably considered by many
56 scholars. Though, it is worth noting that it rests on highly conjectural basis and that both Melanippides and the vase-
57 painters could depend on a common mythical tradition (for a fuller discussion, see my forthcoming edition of
58 Melanippides, comm. on fr. 2.).

59 ¹⁵ Heinemann 2013, 295.

60 ¹⁶ See, however, Heinemann 2016, 306 (only on Marsyas's iconography).
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1 circle of Meidias; 420-400 BC)¹⁷, the mythical aulete is portrayed as a young man, seated with a lyre in his
2 hands, beside a bearded Marsyas holding a double aulos; around them are the Muses Thaleia, Kalliope
3 and Urania, a satyr (ΤΥΡΒΑΣ), a nude youth and a goose (or a swan). According to Weis (1994, 43), “the
4 lyre can be a love-gift, a symbol re-enforced by the presence of the bird and, perhaps, Urania at bottom
5 left”. Indeed, it is plausible to see in this scene a reference to the tradition of Olympus as disciple or
6 *eromenos* of Marsyas (see above n. 10). However, the association of Olympus with the lyre instead of the
7 double aulos seems to suggest that the crucial point of the narrative is the musical skill itself of the
8 performer, regardless of the musical instrument. The Panathenaic nature of the vase could account for
9 the presence of the lyre and the aulos in the scene, since the Panathenaic contests involved both wind-
10 and string-instruments.

11 Be that as it may, though the interpretation of the above scene involving Olympus is uncertain, the
12 representations of Marsyas, Orpheus and Thamyris on Attic vases in the last three decades of the 5th
13 century betray a general and consistent trend. The vase-painters do not appear to have been any more
14 interested in their cruel destiny, but in their musical skills: they are depicted while performing in front of
15 a public of gods (as it is the case with Thamyris and Marsyas, playing and singing in front of Apollo and
16 the Muses) or Thracians (as it is the case with Orpheus), who are delighted and enchanted by their
17 music¹⁸. As Heinemann pointed out, the tendencies observed in these representations “correspond to
18 what is known from written sources about changes in the contemporary culture of *mousike*. These
19 developments, namely a growing professionalization of musicians (especially pipers) and its flipside, a
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21 ¹⁷ ARV² 1316,1, with *Add.*² 362; cf. Weis 1994, 39 nr. 3, with further bibliography.

22 ¹⁸ Cf. Schmidt 2001, 295. The theme of Orpheus enchanting Thracians with his cithara/lyre is documented from the sixties
23 of the 5th century; the scenes with Thamyris and Marsyas playing in front of Apollo and the Muses come from the three
24 last decades of the same century. For bibliographical references on such iconography see above nn. 20f.

1 newly defined culture of competent spectatorship, may have their beginnings earlier in the century, but
2 fully come to the fore in its second half as concomitants of the so-called New Music”¹⁹.
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5 The testimony of vase-paintings presents us, so to speak, the point of view of the audience and
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7 testifies to the musical taste of contemporary Athens. The mythical musicians are quintessential virtuoso
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9 performers playing in front of their public, virtually including not only gods, Muses, or Thracians, but
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11 also Athenian symposiasts, since these scenes were generally painted on sympotic vessels: looking at
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13 them, the symposiasts were “turned into metaspectators of the musicals feats by the undisputed masters
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15 of *mousike*”²⁰.
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21 A different perspective is offered by the appeals to these mythical figures by the New Musicians. In
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23 the scanty remains of their poems, there are five references: Melanipp. *PMG* 758 (Marsyas), 766 (Linus),
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25 Tim. *PMG* 791,221-224 (Orpheus), Telest. *PMG* 805 (Marsyas), 806 (Olympus). Among these passages, the
26
27 most instructive is the one from Timotheus’ *Persae*: in the *sphragis* of this citharodic *nomos*, the
28
29 composer outlines a brief history of Greek citharody (vv. 221-236) from Orpheus to Timotheus himself,
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31 passing through Terpander.
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40 πρῶτος ποικιλόμουσος²¹ Ὀρ-

41 φεύς <χέλ>υν ἐτέκνωσεν

42 υἱὸς Καλλιόπας ~ -

43 - > Πιερίαθεν·

44 Τέρπανδρος δ’ ἐπὶ τῶιδε κα-

225

55 ¹⁹ Heinemann 2013, 299f.

56 ²⁰ Heinemann 2013, 300.

57 ²¹ This is the form transmitted by *P. Berol.* 9875 (*MP*³ 1537; *LDAB* 4123) and retained by D.L. Page and D.A. Campbell, but
58 corrected into ποικιλόμουσον by U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, who referred the adjective to the following <χέλ>υν (v.
59 222). Wilamowitz correction has been accepted by many editors (E. Diehl, C. Del Grande, J.M. Edmonds, T.H. Janssen).
60 In both the cases, the substance of the argument does not change: Orpheus’ music was featured by *poikilia*.
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τηῦξε²² μοῦσαν ἐν ᾠδαίς·

Λέσβος δ' Αἰολία ν<ιν> Ἄν-

τίσσαι γείνατο κλεινόν·

νῦν δὲ Τιμόθεος μέτροις

ῥυθμοῖς τ' ἑνδεκακρουμάτοις

230

κίθαριν ἐξανατέλλει,

θησαυρόν πολύυμνον οἴ-

ξας Μουσᾶν θαλαμειτόν·

Μίλητος δὲ πόλις νιν ἄ

θρέψασ' ἄδυωδεκατειχέος

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λαοῦ πρωτέος ἐξ Ἀχαιῶν.

Orpheus, whose muse was intricate, Calliope's son [...], from Pieria, was the first to beget the tortoise-shell lyre. After him, Terpander reared the muse to fuller bloom with his songs: Aeolian Lesbos bore him at Antissa as a glory. Now Timotheus brings to new life the kithara with eleven-stringed metres and rhythms, opening the Muses' chambered treasury of many hymns. The city of Miletus, home of a twelve-walled people, first of the Achaeans, nurtured him.

At vv. 221-224, Orpheus is portrayed in a telling way: he is not only the first citharode, but also the first promoter of an intricate musical style. The adjective ποικιλόμουσος (v. 221) clearly points to the debate on

²² κατηῦξε is Aron' correction of the transmitted κατεῦξε (for the metrical question, cf. Ercoles 2017b, 150 n. 66). Alternatively, I have suggested κα<τέ>τεῦξε: see Ercoles 2010, 122-128, with the discussion of different proposals, to which a further possibility can be added now (κά<ρ>τ' ηῦξε proposed by Borsoni Ciccolungo 2018).

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New Musicians's style in classical Athens²³, and shows that Timotheus aims to present the ancient musician as a forerunner of his own elaborate music. To put it another way, innovation is presented as a feature of Greek music from its very beginnings, so that the melodic and rhythmical changes introduced by Timotheus are integral part of this history. In this perspective, innovating is not synonymous with betraying musical tradition, but, on the contrary, with pursuing it and enhancing its expressive power with new resources.

Another interesting passage comes from Telestes' *Asclepios* (PMG 806), where the Phrygian aulos-player Olympus is remembered as the inventor of the Lydian mode:

ἢ Φρύγα καλλιπνόνων αὐλῶν ἱερῶν βασιλῆα,
Λυδὸν ὃς ἄρμοσε πρῶτος
Δωρίδος ἀντίπαλον μούσας νόμον αἰολομόρφοις
πνεύματος εὐπτερον αὐραν ἀμφιπλέκων καλάμοις²⁴.

or the Phrygian king of the fair-breathing holy pipes, who was the first to tune the Lydian strain, rival of the Dorian muse, weaving about the quivering reeds the fair-winged gust of his breath. (Transl. by D.A. Campbell)

The introduction of this mode seems to have been credited to Olympus also by Melanippides in a fragment *sine ipsissimis verbis* (9 in my forthcoming edition = test. 5 Campbell): if my interpretation of

²³ On musical *poikilia* see Barker 1995 and Leven 2013.

²⁴ The Greek text of v. 3 is uncertain: the ms. A of Athenaeus, who quotes Telestes' fragment, presents †νομοαἰολον ὀρφναι†. *Exempli gratia*, I have printed above the correction proposed by U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (*ap. Kaibel* 1890, 361), accepted by D.A. Campbell in his Loeb edition.

1 [Plut.] *Mus.* 15.1136b-c is right²⁵, the dithyrambographer reported that Olympus had invented the
2 *harmonia* while composing the *epikedeion* for Python killed by Apollo.
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5 All in all, Melanippides and Telestes present the mythical aulete as an innovator, therefore as a
6 composer of ‘new’ music. Since the context of the above fragments is lost, it is unclear whether the two
7 dithyrambographers suggested in some way an explicit parallel between Olympus’ and their own
8 innovations. In any case, the choice of the myth and the focus on the invention of a new mode are *per se*
9 meaningful.
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12 Possibly, an analogous implication was behind Melanippides’ narration of Linus’ story (*PMG* 766 =
13 fr. 11), but nothing is known about this poem apart from its subject: the exegetical scholium to *Il.* 18.570c¹
14 Erbse only says that ἡ [...] περὶ τὸν Λίνον ἱστορία καὶ παρὰ Φιλοχόρῳ ἐν τῇ 1θ’ (*FGrHist* 328 F 207) καὶ παρὰ
15 Μελανιππίδῃ. If the close association between the poet and the historian implies that both reported the
16 same story, it would be possible to add some detail about Melanippides’ poem, since the scholium goes
17 on reporting Philochorus’ narration. The Attidographer told that Linus was killed by Apollo, for he was
18 the first to ret the flax and to use it for the chords of a lyre (ὁ δὲ Φιλόχορος ὑπ’ Ἀπόλλωνός φησιν αὐτὸν
19 ἀναιρεθῆναι, ὅτι τὸν λίνον καταλύσας πρῶτος χορδαῖς ἐχρήσατο εἰς τὰ ὄργανα): again, the story of a musical
20 invention!
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43 Some final comment deserves the myth of Marsyas recounted by Melanippides (*PMG* 758) and
44 Telestes (*PMG* 805a-c), who seem to have been the New Musicians more interested in mythical *mousikoi*.
45 According to Athenaeus of Naukratis (14.616e-617), the first poet recounted the myth in his *Marsyas*
46 according to the widespread version, in order to show his own rejection of the aulos, while the latter,
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56 ²⁵ Cf. Ercoles 2017a. The passage reads as follows: Ὀλυμπον γὰρ πρῶτον Ἀριστόξενος ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ περὶ μουσικῆς (fr. 80
57 Wehrli) ἐπὶ τῷ Πύθωνί φησιν ἐπικήδειον αὐλήσαι Λυδιστί. εἰσὶν δ’ οἱ Μελανιππίδην τούτου τοῦ μέλους ἄρξαι φασίν. The
58 implausible attribution of the invention to Melanippides is probably due to the compiler’s misunderstanding of his
59 source, a mistake analogous to other cases in the treatise (1136d and 1136e): in the light of these, it is more reasonable to
60 think of Melanippides as the source of the story concerning the invention of the *epikedeion* than as its inventor.
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doubting this mythical story, ‘took up arms against Melanippides’ (616f τῷ Μελανιπίδῃ ἀντικορυσσόμενος) to defend the art of aulos playing in his *Argos*. As P. Leven (2010) has pointed out, there are strong reasons for doubting the historicity of such a debate between the two composers of dithyrambs (a genre generally performed to aulos music in classical Athens!): the historical context provided by Athenaeus does not appear a credible reflection of the contemporary aesthetics and strategies of the poets and their works. On the contrary, it is possible to show that the author of *Deipnosophists* – or, as I believe, his source in this section – “follows the structure of Aristotle’s discussion of aulos playing in Book 8 of the *Politics* and illustrates the Aristotelian argument by poetic examples, which he reads in a historicist manner (as authors expressing their own opinions in the first-person and taking positions on contemporary issues). The statement that, rather than analysing or interpreting fragments, Athenaeus strings them together is not original of course; much more important, however, is the claim that there is an argumentative structure, and an ideological bias, behind an apparently loose stringing-together of quotations”²⁶. Therefore, we need to extract from the fragments themselves all the informations about the treatment of this myth by Melanippides and Telestes.

In both the cases, the lines of the poems quoted by Athenaeus do not concern Marsyas’ musical activity and do not help us to understand in which terms the poets represented the ancient aulos player. In Telestes’ fragments from *Argos*, however, the implications of the mythical account are clear enough: he calls the aulos a ‘clever instrument’ (*PMG* 805a,1f. σοφόν ... / ... ὄργανον) and says that the traditional story about its rejection by Athena ‘idly flew to Greece, told by idly-talking Muse-followers, a tale unsuited to the choral dance, an invidious reproach brought among mortals against a clever skill’ (805b)²⁷, where the ‘clever skill’ (v. 3 σοφᾶς ... τέχνας) is auletic art. The version of the myth that Telestes

²⁶ Leven 2010, 44. For a different view, favourable to the historicity of Athenaeus’ account, see now Fongoni 2016, with further bibliography.

²⁷ Transl. by D.A. Campbell.

1 follows (or invents?) does not include any more the episode of Athena rejecting the aulos: the 'clever'
2 goddess (805a,1 σοφόν) gives as a gift to Dionysos the 'clever instrument' together with the 'clever skill' of
3 playing it (cf. 805c). It follows that, in this account, it was the god to give the aulos to the satyr Marsyas,
4 who then became a skillful performer. The myth is thus explicitly intended by Telestes to serve as a
5 defence and a celebration of the aulos, the most representative instrument of New Music. Marsyas is not
6 any more the focus of the story in the *Argos*, as he apparently was in Melanippides' *Marsyas*, but is only a
7 single tessera of a complex mosaic: the myth as it is presented (or shaped) by Telestes. In this case, the
8 musical polemic becomes a polemic on myth, as the authorial voice itself clearly states.
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21 The fragments examined so far, though scanty and generally brief, nonetheless allow us to
22 appreciate the symbolic role that mythical musicians may have played in the debate on music in the
23 second half of the 5th century. For Timotheus and the other New Musicians, the appeals to these figures
24 were a way to construct distant and authoritative models for their own way of making music by projecting
25 back onto those ancient colleagues key-features of their style, namely *poikilia*, inventiveness and
26 virtuosity²⁸. As seen in the previous part of this work, an echo of the involvement of Marsyas, Orpheus and
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The fragments examined so far, though scanty and generally brief, nonetheless allow us to appreciate the symbolic role that mythical musicians may have played in the debate on music in the second half of the 5th century. For Timotheus and the other New Musicians, the appeals to these figures were a way to construct distant and authoritative models for their own way of making music by projecting back onto those ancient colleagues key-features of their style, namely *poikilia*, inventiveness and virtuosity²⁸. As seen in the previous part of this work, an echo of the involvement of Marsyas, Orpheus and Thamyris in this musical debate can be found in the new iconographies of these figures appearing on Attic vessels by the last third of the fifth century, when they begin to be portrayed as virtuoso performers who enchant their audience.

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²⁸ For an antithetical interpretation of the mythical musicians as representants of an old, noble music style see *e.g.* Heracl. Pont. fr. 157 Wehrli.

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