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TRADITIONAL MUSIC · UNESCO

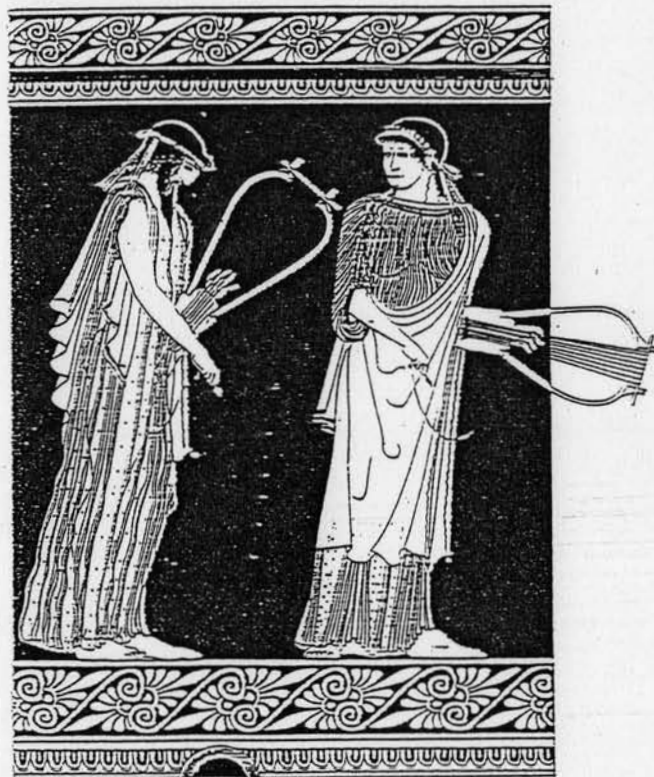
Study Group for Musical Iconography

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3rd Meeting

Thessaloniki-May, 21st-25th 1990

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3<sup>η</sup> ΣΥΝΑΝΤΗΣΗ ΜΟΥΣΙΚΗΣ ΕΙΚΟΝΟΓΡΑΦΙΑΣ

ΤΜΗΜΑ ΜΟΥΣΙΚΩΝ ΣΠΟΥΔΩΝ

ΣΧΟΛΗ ΚΑΛΩΝ ΤΕΧΝΩΝ

ΑΡΙΣΤΟΤΕΛΕΙΟ ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΗΣ

**"The Spirit of Greek Music in Ancient Art"**

**" Η αντίληψη για τη μουσική στις εικαστικές τέχνες τις αρχαιότητας"**

**ABSTRACTS**

**CHAIRMAN  
ORGANIZING COMMITTEE**

**Tilman Seebass  
Demetrios Themelis  
Demetrios Yannou  
Alexandra Goulaki Voutira**

**This meeting has been made possible by the financial and administrative support of the Aristoteles University of Thessaloniki, the administrative support of Duke University and the financial support of the Municipality of Thessaloniki, the Ministry of Macedonia and Thrace and the Ministry of Culture.**

## Polyphony in ancient greek vase-painting

Demetrios Themelis

On the occasion of two new findings of ancient greek music in two voice structure -one of these especially is written in musical symbols as melody with accompaniment and demonstrates the first two voice document among the preserved relics of ancient greek music to be found- the question about the existence of polyphonic music in greek antiquity, an object of continuing controversy between the investigators of ancient music, is reexamined.

Next to a lot of musical terms that denote simultaneity and which are found in greek theoretical treatises of music, along with other related written documents, there is a great many variety of representations of musical performance that ancient greek vase-painting offers, especially illuminating for the existence of polyphony. These show the frequent coexistence of more than one musical instruments, many times in combination with song and dance:

The improvisatory polyphonic structures that present themselves in present-day folk music practice, both in the greek and in the larger balcanic and mediterranean area, makes possible the existence of analogous polyphonic structures in greek antiquity too, where next to a kind of art-music that was connected with a relevant notation, there should have been also folk music, because as it is known the ancient greek civilisation consisted of several social strata.

## The Iconography of Musical Ensembles: The Harmonic Questions

Jon Solomon

Because none of the dozen extant ancient Greek treatises on music theory clearly discuss what modern Western musicologists have termed "harmony" or polyphony, and, similarly, because none of the notations in the forty-plus fragments of ancient Greek music clearly reveal "harmony" or polyphony, and because it is reasonably well established that Western polyphony begins only with the Organum of the later medieval period, it has always been assumed that the ancient Greeks had no polyphony or "harmony" either.

This paper will examine this assumption through an examination of ancient Greek visual depictions of musical ensembles. Most of these are preserved on fifth-century Athenian red-figured vase paintings. The iconography here is variegated and not always conclusive. A hydria painted by Phintias [ARV 23,7,323 = Mun. Mus. Ant. Kleinkunst #2421] depicts two lyre players apparently in a pedagogical relationship, while a kylix painted by the Brygos Painter [ARV 372,32,366F = Würzburg, M.V. Wagner Museum L 479] illustrates a symposium scene in which a barbitos player (with two symposiasts intervening) faces an aulete. Both seem to be playing simultaneously, but because they face each other perhaps they belong to two different parties confronting each other. An unattributed bell crater [Met. 25.7866] depicts three satyrs simultaneously playing citharas, but they seem to be playing different notes. Also intriguing is the Attic painting depicting an aulete, harpist, and lyre-player juxtaposed. A black-figure kantharos [Met. 63,11,4] from the late sixth century depicts a banquet scene in which banqueters hold both an aulos and a six-stringed lyre.

These and several other paintings will be examined in light of not only the aforementioned assumption but also the surviving ancient Greek music theoretical treatises. There the question of *paraphonia* and parallel terms will be reexamined. Since the Greeks discuss *homophonia* and *paraphonia*, and since large portions of their treatises treat interval relationships, they must have regularly heard polyphony. Whether it was part of their musical practice brings up other problems. Would polyphony have been recorded in notation? Is the occasional use of polyphony paralleled in modern ethnomusicological studies?

## The Apulian Xylophone: Instrument, Attribute, Ritual Object?

Lucia Lepore

On Apulian red figure pottery of the 2nd half of the fourth century b.C., an object frequently appears which is similar to the shape of a ladder, but is now considered, after Max Wegner's suggestion, as a musical instrument.

However, we are still uncertain about the typology, the use, and the ancient name of this object.

The lack of archeological evidence (perhaps with the exception of the "Chalcophone" of the Iron Age) and the absence of literary sources makes each attempt of a reconstruction of the history and the making of the instrument tentative.

Therefore our study will be essentially a reading and an exegesis of the most important scenes in which the instrument is depicted.

I shall try to improve the typology of the xylophone, and I shall also try, by iconographic analysis, to establish a better foundation for the claim that the instrument surely existed, be it as an attribute of a god or a heroine, or as an object for ritual offerings in cults and particularly funerals.

**Which historical circumstances led to the Orpheus picture by the Orpheus painter?**

**Some thoughts on images of the power of music**

Tilman Seebass

There is considerable literature on the famous vase painting in the Berlin collection. It shows Orpheus sitting on a hill and playing the lyra, while four Thracians surround him, three of them in a trance-like state of listening. I believe that the picture became among modern scholars so famous, because it has no close relatives. One has tried to establish a connection to Polygnotos; but this did not seem to have helped much in concrete terms. Even outside of the Greek art of antiquity, this Orpheus picture is a very isolated case and belongs, in fact, to the most powerful music pictures ever created.

I shall try to attempt an explanation of the significance of this work by reflecting on what music topics Greek painters were interested in, and by studying the pictures with related topics in the preceding and succeeding decades. I will try to make, on one hand, a connection to philosophical sources of the time, and on the other to some other paintings on redfigured vases and white lekythoi. The result is not very surprising, but very rewarding nevertheless. I believe the uniqueness of the vase is here, as elsewhere, the product of the kairos of circumstances and the ingenuous sensibility and creativeness of an individual artist.

## Women playing music

Alexandra Goulaki-Voutira

In the second half of the 5th cent. B.C. women playing musical instruments and reciting from books are a common subject on red-figured vases. These scenes are usually set inside Athenian houses and they are related to the subject of culture and education among women, which has not yet been thoroughly investigated, mainly because of the silence of our written sources in this respect. But although the information that has come down to us through literary tradition does not illuminate this aspect of Athenian society, the representations on vases are much more eloquent and provide certain elements which help produce an image of the cultural life of upper class women in this period. A detailed iconographic analysis of a number of such scenes helps us gain an insight into certain problems connected with recitation of poetry and the performance of music in classical Greece.

## *Mousike techne* and *Thanatos*: The image of Music on funeral lekythoi

Luigi Beschi

Music seems to play a small role in the Greek funerary rites and ideology. The *threnos* was often deprived of instrumental accompaniment. The *elegos* was a song without lyra playing and with the *epikedion* it used to be accompanied by the mourning sound of the *auloi*. Consequently the mourning for a death caused a break and a lack of music (Eurip. *Alk.* 430; *Iph.Taur.* 142). Music, nevertheless, seems to be largely "performed" in Greek funerary iconography, particularly in Attic imagery. Musical instruments are testified in the equipment of the graves. Sometimes the grave-reliefs shows images of Music and are integrated on the pediments by Sirens, i.e. "the after-world Muses". Musical connections are, above all, particularly displayed with many different typologies in a group of white-ground funerary lekythoi. The analysis of about 50 items (between 460 and 420 B.C.) allows to point out some "types" of representations where the playing of an instrument (lyre, cylinder-kithara, barbiton and, rarely, auloi, harp, tympanon) is directly connected with the dead. We go from the "not-yet-dead" alluding scenes (either actual or mythological) to the numerous representations of a musical "performance" related to the "visit to the tomb". By the grave-stele, the sitting or standing dead is playing music or keeping the characterizing instrument. Sometimes the musical instrument seems to be offered to the memory of the dead, sometimes it is represented as a gift or a symbol on the monument, sometimes it is hanging in the background.

The traditional interpretation suggests that these images are a projection into the afterworld life: Music as a relief of the afterworld loneliness. But the musical scenes of the lekythoi are to be understood on a larger cultural scale and referred to other different "types" of representations of the dead (i.e. as a warrior, an athlete, a hunter, a dignified citizen . . .). In the imaginary and ideological frame of the lekythoi the musical characterizing seems to be directed more to the past than to the after-life of the dead; surely it is not a picture of his profession but a lively recall to his *paideia* that implies, by law, a long diligent devotion to the music and poetry. Finally, the musician's image seems to be a connection with the young age of the dead, as a status symbol, a regret for his early dying, a celebration of his *areté* in the cultural context of the *polis*.



**Ecstasy and music in the figurative arts of *Magna Graecia* :**  
**An evaluation of the ancient sources in the light of modern evidence**

Febo Guizzi and Nico Staiti

In vase paintings of *Magna Graecia* the ecstatic experience, which represents the culmination of choreutical and processional rites, is generally depicted in a stereotypical fashion. One of the most common patterns -- perpetuated also in Roman reliefs of the Imperial age -- shows one or more Maenads playing the tambourine, with an arched body, one foot raised as in a dance step, the head thrown back, and the stretched arms holding and playing the instrument. Exactly the same position of tambourine playing can be observed until today during the therapeutical carnivals of the *tarantismo* and in the processional rites of traditional carnivals in Southern Italy. Thus, the musical ecstasy depicted on the vases can be directly related to and even identified with contemporary practice in folk music at the occasion of ecstatic or "Dionysiac" rites.

A similar comparison has been undertaken by scholars for the musical instruments depicted on vases and those used today. In our paper we will deal particularly with their symbolic function: one can successfully confront the ancient literary and visual sources with actual oral tradition in Southern Italy. The instruments involved are tambourines, clappers, sistra, single and double oboes, clarinets, and recorders. This also pertains to the figurative decorations painted on the skins and frames of the drums and carved on the wooden surfaces of bagpipes, clappers, pipes, etc. They often show images of Orphic or Dionysiac scenes strikingly similar to those seen on vases.

## Pythagoras Acoustics: 'ūd and maqām Languages

Jean-Claude C. Chabrier

Two aspects of Pythagorean acoustics are well known: The division of the string and the use of the cycle of fifths for the calculation of musical intervals and degrees.

The Greek method of dividing the string has been the basis for the calculation of the the main intervals from the octave to the major second. Islam began to use the same method of string division, adding empirical longitudinal divisions between the Pythagorean degrees in order to calculate neutral degrees. A more recent method consisted of using the Pythagorean diminished 5th, 4th, and 3rd for the calculation of the neutral 3rd and 2nd. These neutral degrees are rather high and can be confused with harmonic neighboring degrees (though they are Pythagorean), like the major 3rd or the half-tone (confusing  $5/4$  and  $10/9$  with  $8192/6561$  and  $65536/59049$ ). If both systems are measured with Holder's or Chrysanthos' units, these degrees seem to have the same value.

Recent middle-Eastern scales are using twenty four theoretical fingering degrees per octave; they are either Pythagorean or quarter-tones. The cycle of fifths could have been one of the determining theories of such a chromaticism. So now, we find four degrees, sometimes even five, along a major tone, e.g. Comma, Limma, Apotomé, diminished 3rd, and major 2nd or full tone.

There are differences of temperaments between quarter-tone scales and Pythagorean scales. A transposing fingerboard has been designed by the author in order to identify intervals or degrees for whatever temperament. Crosses are replaced by segments which are two commas long. For instance, the same segment (*segâh*) receives and identifies both neutral thirds, the quarter-tone receives one of seven quarter-tones, the Pythagorean a diminished fourth. The system maintains fixed names of degrees but allows flexibility when it comes to identification. Also, since the fingerboard uses a JCC code, it remains independent of changes of scales.

## Music at the Pompei Dionysos: Palestinian Sources

Joachim Braun

The Dionysiaca (*Nonnos*), which represent a focus in the Hellenistic-Judaea-Christian controversy of the Greek-Roman Near East, was never discussed on the basis of local Palestinian pictorial evidence. The value of this evidence for musicology is that it illuminates the place of music in the Dionysian cult and Jewish liturgy. It is this aspect which provoked ancient writers to draw parallels between the Dionysian and Jewish ceremony.

The Dionysian Triumph is of special interest because of its Near-Eastern origin and its musical elaborateness. While written sources of this topos go back to the 3rd c. BC (Kallixeinos of Rhodes, Alexandria), pictorial evidence appears in the first half of the 2nd c. AD (North African and Antiochian mosaics, Roman sarcophagus-reliefs).

Three pictorial sources from Roman Palestine are known: The Sheikh Zoueda mosaic pavement from Gaza (Ismailia Historical Museum); the recently discovered Sepphoris (Galilee) mosaic pavement (Israel Museum, Jerusalem), and a lead coffin fragment (not published, unknown provenance, Ecole Biblique, Jerusalem). All three belong to one typological group - "Dionysos sitting in a chariot drawn by centaurs" (Fr. Matz) playing musical instruments.

The depicted musical instruments and activities of the thiasos are of rare richness and diversity, surpassing most art works of this topos. In several cases local artistic and musical traits are apparent.

Archaeological, iconological and musicological analysis allow us to pose the following questions:

1. What is the correct chronology of the three artifacts in question,
2. What is the position of this material within the corpus of African-Roman pictorial evidence, and
3. To what extent does this material reflect characteristics of the local musical culture?"

**Τμήμα Μουσικών Σπουδών του Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλονίκης,  
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DURHAM, NC 27708, USA**

ICTM                    **Study Group for Musical Iconography**  
   **Program**

Monday, May 21

Evening 20.30                    Meet at the hotel. Departure for dinner.

Thursday, May 22

8.45                                Departure from the hotel by taxi for the  
   conference hall.

9.00                                Opening speeches

Session 1 (Chairman T. Seebass)

10.00                                D. THEMELIS. Polyphony in Ancient Greek Vase-  
   painting

11.00                                J. SOLOMON. The Iconography of Musical  
   Ensembles and the Harmonic Question

Session 2 (Chairman T. Seebass)

15.30                                J. KAIMAKIS. The Greek Aulos

16.45                                L. LEPORE. The Apulian Xylophone: Instrument,  
   Attribute, Ritual Object?

19.30                                Concert in the Conference Hall

20.30                                Reception at the University Library

Wednesday, May 23

Session 3 (Chairman D. Themelis)

9.00                                M. SCHMIDT. New Pictorial Sources for the  
   Iconography of Orpheus and Amphion on Vase  
   Paintings of Magna Graecia: Remarks about the  
   Characterization of the Effect of Music

10.15                                T. SEEBASS. Which Historical Circumstances  
   Led to the Orpheus Picture by the Orpheus  
   Painter? Some Thoughts on Images of the Power  
   of Music

11.30                                A. GOULAKI-VOUTIRA. Women Playing Music

- Session 4 (Chairman A. Goulaki-Voutira)
- 15.30 L. BESCHI. Mousiki Techni and Thanatos: The Image of Music on Funeral Lekythoi
- 16.45 L. KAHIL. About Artemis' Musicians
- 18.15 Guided Visit to the Exhibition from Reconstructed Ancient Instruments by G. Polyzos
- Thursday, May 24 Excursion to Vergina
- 9.00 Departure from the Hotel
- Afternoon Visit to the Archaeological Museum for those who are interested
- c. 17.00-19.00
- Friday, May 25 Session 5 (Chairman D. Yannou)
- 9.00 N. STAITI-F. GUIZZI. The Theme of Musical Ecstasy in Greek Art
- 10.15 J.C.C. CHABRIER. Pythagoras Accustics: oud and magam Languages
- 11.30 Conclusions
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Sessions 1.2.3.4.5. in the Conference Hall of the University Library

The hotel-rooms are booked until the morning of Saturday, May 26. Participants leaving on Friday should inform the reception.

Lunch will be served for the participants at the Actor's Philoxenia Restaurant (Angelaki street 14).