

Aspects of Roman Dance Culture

Religious Cults, Theatrical Entertainments,
Metaphorical Appropriations

Edited by Karin Schlapbach

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Introduction

Dance at Rome – Roman Dance

KARIN SCHLAPBACH

Salva res est, saltat senex.
Servius, in *Aen.* 8.110

Dance at Rome

When we think of dance in Graeco-Roman antiquity, most of us think probably first of the Greeks. Dance was omnipresent in the ancient Greek world, and this perception is sustained and amplified by the modern poetic and philosophical imagination. In his famous poem *Die Götter Griechenlands* from 1788, Friedrich Schiller gives the beautiful dances around the altar their due: “Beautifully entwined soulful dances / circled around the resplendent altar” (“Schön geschlungne seelenvolle Tänze / Kreisten um den prangenden Altar”, lines 93–94); roughly a century later, Friedrich Nietzsche idealised the exuberant dances of Dionysos, and Paul Valéry gave his thoughts on dance the form of a “Socratic dialogue” between three philosophers and a dancer with Greek names (*L’Âme et la danse*, 1921). To a whole generation of critics the dances by Loie Fuller seemed to resuscitate the Tanagra figurines or the dancers depicted on ancient Greek vases, and Edward Steichen’s famous photographs immortalised Isadora Duncan dancing among the ruins of ancient Greek temples. It is to a great extent a Greek universe that unfolds in the modern imagination around ancient dance.¹

¹ Accordingly, a vast majority of chapters in Fiona Macintosh’s edited volume *The Ancient Dancer in the Modern World* (2010) address the reception of ancient Greek dance; see also Fitzgerald 2019 (elucidating Egyptian, Minoan, and Mycenaean in addition to Greek aesthetic inspirations); Dorf 2021 and 2018; Shay 2017; Fabbri 2009; Caron 2006. Emmanuel 1896 documents attempts at reconstructing ancient Greek dance based on vase images and cinematographic animation; on the possibilities and limits of such an approach, see Smith 2010; Naerebout 1997, 209–253. In his book on Loie Fuller from 1904, Roger Marx writes, “par elle l’orchestrique des anciens Hellènes nous est rendue” (Marx 1904, 7). On Steichen’s photographs of Isadora Duncan, see Marenzi 2018; on

Scholarship on ancient dance has followed the same pattern.² The Greek chorus, this crucial element of literary and musical culture in the archaic and classical epochs and beyond, has elicited the interest of countless scholars especially since German Idealism.³ In addition to aesthetic questions, groundbreaking studies since the 1970s addressed the social function of Greek choruses, and the last twenty years saw a new wave of studies on the chorus.⁴ More recently, the Greek solo dancer of the archaic and classical age has also come into the focus of research on ancient dance.⁵ By contrast, Roman dance has been far less prominent. Studies are few and far between, and only in recent years is there a surge in interest in Roman dance, and particularly in imperial pantomime, originally a Greek genre which ascended to great popularity under the Roman emperors.⁶

Turning to the history of modern ballet from the eighteenth century onward, however, it is interesting to note that practitioners – dancers, choreographers, and impresarios alike – mostly looked to imperial pantomime for inspiration in their endeavour to create dances that were able to tell stories.⁷ The tragic chorus, by contrast, elicited mixed responses and was often eliminated in modern tragedies inspired by ancient ones, as well as in stagings of ancient tragedies.⁸ The discovery of Pompeii in the eighteenth century fueled a craze for novels set in post-classical, Roman antiquity, inaugurated by Edward Bulwer-Lytton's *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1834) and continuing for decades, and the fin-de-siècle fascination with spectacular entertainments found a

Duncan's study of ancient Greek images of dancers, see Duncan 1927, 79. Even in fascist Italy, it was Greek dance that appealed to the contemporary imagination, as Fiona Macintosh (Oxford) showed in a talk delivered on 15 Jan 2021: "Reconstructing Greek Dance with Fascist Ideology"; see also Taddeo 2017, 184 n. 40, 189–225. Unless stated otherwise, translations are mine.

2 Monographs on Greek dance include Emmanuel 1896; Séchan 1930; Lawler 1964a and 1964b; Prudhommeau 1965; Lonsdale 1993; Naerebout 1997. Despite its broader title, Weege 1926 focuses largely on Greek dance. Article-length overviews on "ancient dance" also routinely limit themselves to Greek dance, under which pantomime is subsumed: see, e. g., Zarifi 2007.

3 See Goldhill 2013; Billings 2013.

4 See Calame 1977; Mullen 1982; Henrichs 1994–1995; Ceccarelli 1998; Bierl 2001; Wilson 2003; David 2006; Perusino/Colantonio 2007; Athanassaki/Bowie 2011; Kowalzig 2011; Kurke 2012; Kowalzig/Wilson 2013; Billings/Budelmann/Macintosh 2013; Gagné/Hopman 2013; Calame 2017; Gianvittorio 2017; Steiner 2021.

5 Olsen 2020.

6 On Roman dance, see Wille 1967, 187–202; Garelli-François 1995; Giannotta 2004; Fless/Moede 2007; Alonso Fernández 2011, 2013, 2015, 2016a, 2016b, 2017, 2020; Naerebout 2009; Curtis 2017, 1–19; on pantomime, see below pp. 20–21. New companions on dance in the (broadly conceived) ancient world are currently being prepared: Alonso Fernández/Olsen (forthcoming); Briand, in progress.

7 Hall 2008; Lada-Richards 2010; Fenböck 2021.

8 Corneille's *Œdipe* for instance, though heavily influenced by both Seneca and Sophocles, features no chorus. For the practice of omitting the chorus in stagings of Greek tragedies, common in the 19th century, see Hall/Macintosh 2005, 197. The reception of the ancient chorus in opera is a different matter; see Savage 2013. On new solutions for staging the chorus since the 2000s, see Papa-lexiou 2013.

welcome mirror in the imaginary decadence of ancient Rome, now illustrated by Pompeian frescoes of dancing figures.⁹ Female dancers feature repeatedly as protagonists of these novels, several of which include a reference to a mysterious ancient epitaph containing the laconic words *saltavit et placuit*, “she danced and pleased.” These Latin words were a more or less mediated reminiscence of an actual epitaph on a young slave named Septentrio, found in Antibes and made notorious among French readers interested in the past by Michelet’s incisive if brief discussion in his *Histoire de France* (CIL 12, 188, datable in the third century CE):

D M
PVERI SEPTENTRI
ONIS ANNOR XII QVI
ANTIPOLI IN THEATRO
BIDVO SALTAVIT ET PLA
CVIT.

To the manes of Septentrio, the boy of 12 years who, in the theatre in Antipolis, danced on two days and pleased.

Michelet’s musings on the boy’s premature death, not mourned by family members, anticipated the sense of loss that permeated a lot of the popular literature that aimed to revive antiquity and thrived on isolated glimpses of the ancient world as preserved in archeological remains, reducing an already sparse evidence to even tinier fragments and leaving ample space to the modern imagination: “Je ne connais rien de plus tragique que cette inscription dans sa brièveté, rien qui fasse mieux sentir la dureté du monde romain ...”, Michelet wrote.¹⁰ The unexpected fortune of this young Roman dancer as a source of inspiration for nineteenth century novelists may serve as a healthy reminder that classical Greece has not always eclipsed subsequent ancient dance cultures in the modern perception. It is an invitation to look harder for Roman dance and the impact it made on Roman literature and material culture, and to ask how it may enrich our understanding of the Roman world.

More recent discussions of epitaphs and honorary inscriptions on Roman dancers have shown that some of them both enjoyed fame and riches and were very much loved by their families and peers. On a funerary altar dedicated by the impresario Calpodius, the pantomime Theocritus Pylades is honoured “on account of his merits” by the band of musicians and dancers to which he belonged, the *grex Romanus* (CIL 5, 5889, from Lodi, second century CE), and an even younger boy than Septentrio, named Celadio, is mourned in an inscription from Petelia by the troupe of the panto-

9 Ducrey 2013 discusses the pioneering role of popular novels set in antiquity in the revival of ancient dance at the turn of the 20th century.

10 Michelet 1833, 96. See the excellent discussion by Ducrey 1996, 162–196.

mime Ionicus, his father, who endured “everlasting grief” (first century CE; see Graf in this volume).¹¹ The freedwoman dancer Licinia Eucharis is also commemorated by her father.¹² Michelet was certainly right to note the “hardship of the Roman world” in one regard, namely the high mortality of children and adolescents: Licinia Eucharis died at fourteen. But it would be mistaken to think that only individuals of the lowest social standing and deprived of agency and social networks were professional dancers.

Nor would a Roman citizen dance only if drunk or mad, as Cicero famously suggests at one point: “No one dances who is sober, except perhaps if the person is crazy, not in private nor at a decent and respectable dinner-party” (*Nemo enim fere saltat sobrius, nisi forte insanit, neque in solitudine neque in convivio moderato atque honesto, Pro Murena* 6.13), a passage which is routinely adduced to show that the Romans did not think highly of dancing.¹³ In reality Cicero attempts to assuage his client, Murena, from the charge of being a dancer leveled at him by Cato, whose austere morals were notorious. Cicero scolds Cato for using an “insult from the street” (*maledictum ex trivio*) and puts the charge into perspective by pointing out that dance (*saltatio*) is the “final accompaniment” (*comes ... extrema*) of banquets and amusements and the “last” (or “slightest”?) addition to all vices (*omnium vitiorum ... postremum*) – a mere accessory to depraved habits of which there is no trace in Murena.¹⁴ The problem of dancing, then, is one of shady contexts and disreputable practitioners, and for “dancer” to work as an insult, a whole set of additional parameters have to be in place. The passage offers by no means the wholesale dismissal of dancing that is often attributed to it, and its rhetorical exaggeration should not be taken absolutely.

A similar oscillation between positive and negative judgements can be observed in connection with Sempronia, a woman of Catiline’s entourage whom Sallust describes in characteristically ambivalent terms: she was beautiful and learned and could “play the lyre and dance more elegantly than was necessary for an honest woman” (*psallere et saltare elegantius quam necesse est probae*), but did not heed decency (*Catil.* 25). The

11 See Cadario 2009 for Theocritus Pylades; Lazzarini 2004 for Celadion; more generally on the epigraphical record, Tedeschi 2017; Caldelli 2005; Strasser 2004; Leppin 1992.

12 CLE 55 = CIL 6, 10096. See Alonso Fernández 2015, 322–330; on female dancers in the imperial period, see further Webb 1997; Starks 2008.

13 See, e.g., Lawler/Spawforth in the most recent edition of the *The Oxford companion to classical civilization* (2014), a perfect example of the perpetuation of this stereotype. RE and Dagr both argue that Roman hostility towards dance should not be taken at face value, but they dedicate the bulk of the entries, “Tanzkunst” and “*saltatio*” respectively, to Greek dance, reflecting the amount of extant information, rather than ancient reality.

14 “Cato calls Murena a dancer. It is an insult of a strong accuser when it is uttered with truth but of a defaming detractor when it is wrong. Hence, since you have this authority of yours, you should not, Marcus Cato, pick up an insult from the street corner or from some slanderous calumny, nor call a consul of the Roman people a dancer, but consider with what additional vices someone needs to be affected in order to be truly accused of this. No one dances who is sober (etc.).” See Alonso Fernández 2011, 479–481 and 2020, 177–180; Naerebout 2009, 149–150; Curtis 2017, 9.

passage is not lost on the dialogue characters in Macrobius' *Saturnalia*, written over four centuries later, who comment on various types of extravagance (*lascivia*) among their Roman ancestors, which they themselves claim to have "emended" (*sat.* 3.14.3). Broaching the subject of dance, Rufius says: "I'll pass over the fact that married women considered dancing not dishonourable; rather, even the honest among them applied themselves to dancing, albeit not to the point of perfecting the art. In fact, what did Sallust say? 'to play the lyre and dance more elegantly than was necessary for an honest woman'. So even he does not reproach Sempronia because she knew how to dance, but only because she knew how to dance really well" (*sat.* 3.14.5). But despite the somewhat ostentatiously raised eyebrows, the discussion of dance in this symposiac dialogue set at the twilight of pagan culture acknowledges that many respectable Romans of old enjoyed dancing, including, for instance, Appius Claudius, triumphator of 143 BCE (*sat.* 3.14.14).

A lot depended on circumstances and measure. Dissolute dancing during dinner parties was not a respectable pastime for Roman citizens, and Cicero himself uses this charge elsewhere (*In Pisonem* 22; *Pro Deiotaro* 26; *In Verrem* 2.3,23). What is often overlooked, though, is that similar dismissals can also be found in Greek sources, as Edith Hall showed in her 2010 article "The missing exemplary male dancer."¹⁵ In Homer, dance is repeatedly associated with non-Greeks (the Trojans, the Phaeacians), and Priam uses the word "dancer" as a slur no less than the Romans do: at the end of the *Iliad*, he calls his own sons – the ones who have not died like Hector – "liars and dancers" (ψεύσται τ' ὀρχησται τε, *Iliad* 24.261). The most amusing instance of indecorous dancing from the Greek world is probably Herodotus' anecdote of Hippocleides, who displeased his prospective father-in-law by dancing upside down on a table (when underwear, it must be noted, was not part of the costume). "You danced away (ἀπορχήσασαο) your marriage", cried the father of the bride; to make things worse, Hippocleides famously replied that he did not care (οὐ φροντὶς Ἴπποκλείδη, 6.29).¹⁶ In short, dance is a social practice that is regulated and subject to policing not just at Rome, but probably in every culture, including ancient Greece. Plato was well aware of the potentially subversive power of choral dancing, and dedicated substantial parts his *Laws* to the topic.¹⁷

Roman philosophers did not ignore dance either, although we do not know of any Roman philosopher who enjoyed dancing himself, unlike Socrates, who allegedly liked to dance – at least if we believe his own words in Xenophon's *Symposium*, which are, as often, undercut by irony.¹⁸ But when it suited their purpose, they would mention dance

15 Hall 2010. The point was also made by Naerebout 2009, 149 n. 14.

16 See also Athenaeus 14, 628cd, where this negative example illustrates the idea attributed to Damon of Oa that dance is a transparent expression of one's character, and for a recent discussion, Olsen 2020, 180–188.

17 See Peponi 2013; Prauscello 2014; Folch 2015. Religious festivals and dancing as a backdrop of Plato's later philosophy are discussed by O'Meara 2017, 125–134.

18 Xen. *symp.* 2.16; see Huss 1999; Hall 2010, 149–150; Olsen 2020, 161–163.

and build it into their arguments. In one of his dialogues Cicero, for instance, has Cato (of all people!) refer to dance in order to elucidate the Stoic concept of wisdom (*De finibus* 3.24): like acting or dancing, Cato argues, wisdom does not aim at producing an outcome but is fulfilled in the practice itself. The argument is prepared by a more general comparison between life and the stage, especially popular among the Stoics:

For just as an actor or a dancer is given not just any but a certain particular role or movement (*histrioni actio, saltatori motus non quivis sed certus quidam est datus*), so life has to be lived in a certain way, not in just any way; and this way we call appropriate and suitable. For we do not think that wisdom is similar to seamanship or medicine but rather to the acting and dancing which I just mentioned, in such a way that its end – that is, the exercise of the art – lies in itself and is not sought outside (*ut in ipsa insit, non foris petatur extremum, id est artis effectio*).

The underlying distinction between the theoretical, practical, and producing arts is Aristotelian (*Nicomachean Ethics* 6.4, 1140a). But as far as we can see, Aristotle does not adduce dance as an example of a “practical” art. We find this example only in Roman authors (Cicero and Quintilian¹⁹). While we do not know for sure whether they were the first to use it or whether it appeared in Hellenistic sources, they would not have adopted it if it did not make immediate sense to their audience. Down to late antiquity, the specific expressive possibilities of dance caught the attention of philosophers, above all Augustine, who returned to the physical language of pantomime on various occasions and analysed it with great subtlety.²⁰

Priests, *matronae*, boys and girls

If even Cato can adduce dance as a matter of course in a philosophical dialogue by Cicero, it may be fair to conclude that dance permeated all walks of life in ancient Rome. One of the areas in which dancing features prominently is Roman religion. The most famous male Roman dancers are probably the *Salii*, a college of priests, whose very name according to Varro points to dancing: *Salii ab salitando, quod facere in comitiis in sacris quotannis et solent et debent* (*De lingua latina* 5.85).²¹ They performed a dance called *tripudium*, as did the Arval Brethren (see Prescendi in this volume).²² Interest-

19 *Inst.* 2.18.1–5.

20 See Schlapbach 2018, 58–59, 66–69, 93, 144–148.

21 Similarly, *Ov. fast.* 3.387; *Porph. Hor. carm.* 1.36.12. Cf. *Livy* 1.20.4, on Numa: “He likewise chose twelve *Salii* for Mars Gradivus and gave them the distinction of the embroidered tunic and over the tunic a bronze breastplate and divine shields, which are called *ancilia*, and he bade them to carry them through the City and to proceed performing songs along with the three steps (*tripudiis*) of a stately dance (*saltatu*)” (see Prescendi in this volume, at n. 27).

22 Granino Cecere 2014; Alonso Fernández 2016a; Patzelt 2018, 179–186.

ingly, there seems to have been a debate in antiquity as to their name and origin. Various authors transmit versions of a minority view according to which the Salian priesthood took its name from a Greek – an Arcadian or Samothracian called Salios or Saïos – who brought the dance to Rome.²³ The endeavor to trace Roman religious institutions back to Greek roots was as common in antiquity as it is unfounded in the case of the Salii. But it is illustrative of the fact that the Romans tried to make sense of their own cultural and religious practices by relating them to similar practices of their neighbours. This is probably why Samothrace and Mantinea were singled out as possible places of origin of the Salians: the former is known for its cult of Magna Mater, and in the latter a festival in honour of Persephone and Kore was celebrated, the Koragia. Dancing very likely played an important role in both of them.²⁴ Despite these erudite but speculative associations, the perception of the Salii as an ancient and noble Roman institution formed by King Numa prevailed, although the connection with Numa must likewise be understood as a later fiction.²⁵

Dancers featured prominently in the *pompa circensis*, which is described in some detail in Dionysius of Halicarnassus' *Roman Antiquities*. The procession to the circus (as well as that to the theatre) was led by *ludiones*, "dancers", a word which was at the same time interpreted as *Lydioi*, i. e. Lydians who according to an ancient tradition settled on the Italian peninsula and became the Etruscans.²⁶ Their appearance, though apparently not their dance, resembled that of the Salii: they wore short tunics, helmets, swords, and bucklers. It is interesting to note that single *ludiones*, depicted in a static pose and recognisable by their attributes, continued to be represented on coins and reliefs as an iconographic shorthand of the *pompa circensis* or the *ludi* at large throughout the early imperial period.²⁷ The *ludiones* were followed by the *contendants*, and after those more dancers followed, arranged in three age groups and representing the Roman people at large. These bands of dancers, who performed a war dance in the fashion of the Greek *pyrrhiche*, introduced a playful element, as especially the young boys and youths were not warriors but posed as such. This ambiguous, liminal character of the dancing is further reinforced when on their heels followed choruses representing satyrs and Silens

23 Festus p. 438, 27–439, 10 Lindsay; Serv. *Aen.* 2.325; 8.285, 663; Isid. *orig.* 18.50 (relying on Varro); Plut. *Numa* 13.4 (on which see Buszard 2011). See Schlapbach (forthcoming).

24 On Samothracian influences on Roman religion, see Popkin 2015.

25 Bremmer 1993, 165. See Alonso Fernández 2016b, 312–313, on the Salian dance as befitting a Roman *vir*.

26 Dion. Hal. *Ant.* 2.71.4; Val. Max. 2.4.4.

27 See Latham 2016, 31–35, 156–157; Tagliafico 1994; Dupont 1993; Jannot 1992. Fless/Moede 2007, 256 note the relative absence of iconographic representations of dancers in action as part of processions; see also Fless 2004. In addition to the idiosyncrasies of iconographic conventions, this might also be an instance of the fact that what everybody knows does not have to be shown, i. e. that *ludiones* dance. Another example are the Muses, who are depicted as dancing in literature but not in the figurative arts (see Schlapbach 2018, 255).

aping and mocking the preceding dancers, a specifically Roman element, as Dionysius notes.²⁸

Energetic and exuberant dancing is also associated with the Galloi, the self-castrating worshippers of Magna Mater from Asia Minor, who are attested in Rome starting from the end of the second century BCE (see Curtis in this volume).²⁹ The pageant in honour of the Great Mother during her festival, the *ludi Megalenses* which took place in April, is memorably described by Lucretius (2.600–660). Not a neutral witness on religious matters, Lucretius' portrayal foregrounds the excessive and ecstatic nature of the cult, dwelling on the dances of an "armed band", whom he refers to as Curetes and who "leap up rhythmically, joyful with blood, shaking their awful crests with the nodding of their heads" (*ludunt in numerumque exultant sanguine laeti / terrificas capitum quatientes numine cristas*, 2.631–632).³⁰ The cult of Magna Mater, though firmly integrated into the Roman religious landscape, retained its foreign flavour, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus writes that in fact Roman citizens would assist but were not allowed to perform the rituals themselves (2.19.4). Some kind of participation of the public, and indeed of women, must nevertheless have characterised the cult. Discussing the elevated style of tragedy, Horace offers as a comparison the image of a *matrona* exceptionally given over to dancing: "as a married woman who is prompted to dance on holidays chastely mingles a bit with the impudent satyrs" (*ars* 232–233). A scholiast under the name of Ps.-Acro comments matter-of-factly that married women (*matronae*) danced during the festival of Magna Mater: "there are in fact certain cults, in which married women dance, such as during the sacrifices for the Mother of the Gods."³¹

Dancing *matronae* can also be assumed for the cult of Bona Dea, although the evidence for dancing as a component of the nocturnal ritual reserved for women is somewhat thin. One of the main sources, Plutarch's *Life of Caesar* 9–10, recounts how a male intruder – Clodius, the secret lover of Caesar's wife Pompeia, who dressed as a female harper (*psaltria*) for the occasion – is eventually discovered when he does not accept the invitation of a woman to play, or dance, with him: the word is *paizein*, which means more often "to dance" than "to play an instrument."³²

28 Dion. Hal. *Ant.* 7.72.5–11, based on Fabius Pictor (who apparently did not mention the *ludiones*). According to Bernstein 2007, 228–229, the representation of the people at large is also a specifically Roman element.

29 Iulius Obsequens 44a mentions them for the year 101 BCE; Val. Max. 7.7.6 for 77 BCE. See Dubosson-Sbriglione 2018, 140–143 and 283–284.

30 The Curetes were often associated with the Corybantes, followers of the Magna Mater (Strab. 10.3.12).

31 *ars* 232–233: *ut festis matrona moveri iussa diebus / intererit Satyris paululum pudibunda protervis*; Ps.-Acro ad loc.: *sunt enim quaedam sacra, in quibus saltant matronae, sicut in sacrificiis Matris deum*. On the participation of women in the cult of the Mother goddess, see Borgeaud 1996, 165. Alonso Fernández 2011, 224 n. 402 suggests that the scholion might refer to the cult of Bona Dea.

32 LSJ s. v. 2) dance; 4) play on a musical instrument; dance and sing. Plu. *Caes.* 9.4: "And the most important rites are celebrated by night, when merrymaking is added to the nocturnal festival and a lot of music is played as well." 10.2: "as he (sc. Clodius dressed as a *psaltria*) was prowling in the

On other occasions, mature women may have joined maidens in their dances. Horace's Ode 2.12, which celebrates the poet's mistress Licymnia, portrays her as dancing in honour of Diana on the occasion of the latter's festival, not without hinting, via *litotes*, at a tension between Licymnia (a typical name for a *hetaera*) and the maidens who danced for the chaste goddess (lines 17–20):

*quam nec ferre pedem dedecuit choris
nec certare ioco nec dare bracchia
ludentem nitidis virginibus sacro
Dianae celebris die.*

For her it brought no disgrace to bring her foot in the choruses, nor to compete in fun nor to give her arms as she played with the radiant maidens on the sacred day of Diana's crowded worship. (Trans. Curtis 2017, 115)³³

Festus reports that on March 1, the *Salii* were accompanied by girls, the *Saliae virgines*, who performed the sacrifice and perhaps also the dances with the priests. By the late Republic they were hired (*conducticias*) for the occasion of the ritual, but they may originally have been aristocratic maidens with priestly functions.³⁴ For the year 207, Livy mentions a chorus of twenty-seven girls, who performed a dance on the forum to avert danger.³⁵ Augustus' secular games of the year 17 BCE featured a mixed chorus composed of 27 boys and 27 girls (*virgines lectas puerosque castos*) who performed Horace's *carmen saeculare* – certainly with reference to the ritual of 207 BCE.³⁶ The inscription of the Severan secular games also mentions girls (and boys, if the integration of the line is correct) performing a song (line 235):

*pueri et puel]LAE PALLIOLATAE CVM DISCRIMINALIBVS, MANIBVS CONNEXIS,
CA[rm]EN C[ecinerunt nove compositum*

boys and girls, adorned with mantles and hair-pins, having joined their hands sang a newly composed song.

large house and trying to avoid the lights, an attendant of Aurelia came upon him and asked him to dance (*παίζειν*), as one woman would another, and when he refused, she dragged him forward and asked who he was, and where from." The incident is mentioned also at Cic. *Sest.* 116; *har. resp.* 4–5 and 37. Mastrocinque 2014 emphasises the overlap between the cult of Bona Dea and Dionysism, which might point to the inclusion of dancing.

- 33 The metapoetic overtones Licymnia's name, which used to be interpreted as a pseudonym for Maecenas' wife Terentia, are discussed by Harrison 2017, 148–149; Curtis 2017, 118–119.
- 34 Festus p. 439, 18–22 Lindsay; cf. CIL 6, 2177, an epitaph on a young woman called *praesula*. See Alonso Fernández 2011, 268; Glinister 2011, 112–113.
- 35 27.37.14: *in foro pompa constitit, et per manus reste data virgines sonum vocis pulsu pedum modulantes incesserunt*; 31.12.8. See Prescendi and Curtis in this volume; Curtis 2021.
- 36 See Schnegg 2020, 247–264; Curtis 2017, 149–158; Habinek 2005, 150–157. The quote is line 6 of the *Carmen saeculare*.

The words that interest us are *manibus conexis*, a seemingly unspectacular detail but in antiquity an unambiguous shorthand for dancing (see Bellia in this volume).³⁷

The examples of dancing in Roman culture adduced so far belong to religious contexts. Servius mentions dancing in Roman religion as a matter of course, rooted in the body and sanctioned by ancient custom. He writes that “our ancestors did not want any part of our body not to feel *religio*; in fact, song pertains to the spirit, and dance pertains to the mobility of the body” (*sane ut in religionibus saltaretur, haec ratio est, quod nullam maiores nostri partem corporis esse voluerunt, quae non sentiret religionem: nam cantus ad animum, saltatio ad mobilitatem pertinet corporis*, Serv. Ecl. 5.73).³⁸ On this view, religious practice derives from primeval biological conditions, and among them is physical movement. The most basic property of the living body is that it moves and is mobile. The newborn, in order to take her first breath, must move, and once dead, the body is distinguished by its irrevocable immobility and rigidity. Movement in turn encompasses and characterises the entire living body. By anchoring dance in this simple experiential fact, Servius suggests that there is a strong connection between physical movement, sensation, and religious practice, a view that finds support in cross-cultural studies of religion.³⁹ The idea that there should be “no part of our body not to feel *religio*” implies that the attention, care, and observation that characterise *religio* are ideally felt in and through the body, and dance is their physical expression.⁴⁰

Servius distinguishes furthermore between dance as part of religious practice and dance as an art or a skill, characterising the former precisely in opposition to the latter. Commenting on Virgil’s first *Georgic* 1.347–350 (“And let no one apply the sickle to the ripe ears before adorning his temples with plaited oak branches and performing disordered dance movements for Ceres and singing songs”), Servius notes: “disordered movements’, that is, a dance connected to religion and not coming from any art whatsoever” (*motus incompósitos id est saltationem aptam religioni, nec ex ulla arte uenientem*). Servius’ distinction, which associates cultic dancing with the spontaneous, untutored physical expression of reverence, seems rather modern and clashes with the abovementioned accounts of ritual dances consisting of regular patterns of movement that could be learned and brought to perfection. Rather than indicating a clear-cut dichotomy

37 See Schnegg 2020, 324 and 389. Bärbel Schnegg drew my attention to an ingenious conjecture made by Giovanni Battista Pighi, who integrated a mere three letters in line 260, *VAV*, as *antr] uau]erunt* – “they danced” (see Schnegg 2020, 330 and 392; the subject is *matronae*).

38 See Alonso Fernández 2011, 184; Wille 1967, 187 assumes that Servius’ source is Varro. The line in Vergil is *saltantis Satyros imitabitur Alpheisiboeus*.

39 See, e. g., Corrigan 2008 and 2017; Brandstetter 2016; Binder 2019; Schlapbach 2021.

40 On Roman dance as an intensified form of prayer, see Patzelt 2018, 178–213; Klinghardt 2011; Hahn 2007, 236–237.

between art and religion, Servius' comment points to a sliding scale of skilfulness that characterised dances according to different occasions, functions, and practitioners.⁴¹

Spectacle culture: practices and interpretations

According to our own standards, some of the dances mentioned so far may have resembled processions rather than dances, for instance the chorus of twenty-seven girls mentioned by Livy for the year 207. A strong emphasis on rhythmical movement, a sense of harmony, and a musical accompaniment – key criteria for a definition of dance in antiquity – could also characterise processions. But apart from the fact that it is easy to adduce comparative evidence for group dances characterised by linear or one-directional movement, what matters is that from an emic perspective, only a minimal alteration and formalisation of habitual physical behaviour seems to be required for dance to be recognizable as such, especially if the movements are also perceived as harmonious and graceful (as in the case of the boys and girls), or energetic and skilful (as in the case of the Salians).⁴² We may assume that dance movements were based on conventional styles, and that especially in cultic contexts transmitted patterns were carefully preserved and reiterated, especially if only select groups executed the dances. What is more, the spaces and the occasions on which dances were performed contributed also to the distinctness of dance movements.⁴³

In addition to eminently cultic contexts, there are of course the theatres, the dinner parties, the private entertainments, where dances were generally performed by professionals. The primary connection between theatrical entertainments and religious occasions and practices can be seen in Livy's account, which is probably based on Varro, of how public spectacles (*ludi scaenici*) began in Rome. In the year 364 BCE a plague persisted and required ritual actions. The Romans first resorted to a *lectisternium*, a ritual meal offered to the gods, and getting no respite, they brought in dancers, *ludiones*, from Etruria (Livy 7.2).⁴⁴ Their dances had a precise function, namely to end a public health crisis brought upon the city by the gods, and they succeeded in reestablishing an equilibrium with the gods and bringing well-being to the community. At the same time this moment marked the official beginning of a Roman tradition of dancing for entertainment. The Etruscan dancers were soon imitated by Roman youths, and Livy's account, which is in certain respects influenced by Greek ideas about the ori-

41 The idea of spontaneous, inexpert dancing among rustics recurs in Tibullus 1.7.38; 2.1.55–56. See Schlapbach 2021.

42 Contemporary Greek folk dances often follow linear patterns and involve holding hands. See Raftis 1987.

43 On the space of dance, see Curtis (forthcoming).

44 Cf. Valerius Maximus 2.4.4. See Jory 1981, 152–156; Oakley 1998, 40–72; Feldherr 1998, 178–187; Graf 2007, 57–60; Manuwald 2011, 30–34; on the *ludiones*, see above p. 15.

gin of drama in improvised performances, details the subsequent stages until the first performance of a play in Latin, composed by Livius Andronicus and based on Greek models, in the year 240 BCE on the occasion of the *ludi Romani*.⁴⁵ In this development, ritual and entertainment remain connected, if less closely than in Greece: tragedies and comedies were performed during the main festivals, as well as upon the dedication of temples or at funerals.⁴⁶ Both genres comprised dances: tragedies in the choral parts, which feature a great variety of metres, comedies often in or near the finale (see below Gianvittorio and Moore, respectively).

Other dramatic forms which were thriving in the fervent theatre culture of Magna Graecia and made their way to the city of Rome also featured dances.⁴⁷ Among them is the mime, a popular and ubiquitous genre based on improvisation, which was integrated into the festival dedicated to Flora and from the first century BCE onward became part of the spectacles performed at theatres, usually as a complement to tragedies in the form of an entracte (*interludium*, *embolium*) or an epilogue (*exodium*) featuring dances.⁴⁸ The somewhat obscure *ludus talarium* presumably also belongs here: perhaps a type of spectacle performed with a cloak reaching to the ankle (*talus*), Cicero adds it as the last item to a list of “occupations unworthy of the free man”, which culminates in “perfumers, dancers, and the whole *ludus talarium*” (*unguentarios, saltatores, totumque ludum talarium*, *off.* 1.150).⁴⁹ If the interpretation of the name is correct, it would suggest a prominent role for the long flowing robe of the performer, an aspect which was exploited to great effect in other dance genres too, especially pantomime.⁵⁰

The solo dance of the pantomime artist, simply called “dance” in Latin and Greek (*saltatio*, ὄρχησις), became the most prominent dance genre from the latter part of the first century BCE onward. Although the traditional date of its “beginning” in Rome transmitted by Jerome, 22 BCE, should not be taken absolutely, the genre enjoyed the enthusiasm and support of Augustus and Maecenas and thrived thanks to the accomplished skill of two performers, Bathyllus of Alexandria and the famous Pylades of Cilicia, who reorganised the musical accompaniment and authored a treatise on the genre.⁵¹ Tacitus informs us that around that time Augustus adopted pantomime into the *ludi Augustales*, apparently influenced by Maecenas’ crush on Bathyllus (*ann.* 1.54.2:

45 Cf. Cic. *Brut.* 72; Gell. 17.21.42–43; Cassiod. *Chron.* p. 120 Mommsen. On parallels between Livy’s and Greek accounts, see Oakley 1998, 47; 54–55.

46 In particular the *ludi Romani* (*ludi magni*), *ludi plebei*, *ludi Apollinares* and *ludi Megalenses* (dedicated to the Great Mother); see Bernstein 2007; Rehm 2007, 192–199.

47 For an overview of theatre culture on the Italian peninsula, see Griffith 2007, 26–33.

48 This can be deduced from Cic. *fam.* 9.16.7; Plin. *hist. nat.* 7.158; Festus p. 438 Lindsay.

49 See Garelli 2007, 104–105; Garelli-François 2000.

50 See, e.g., Fronto, *De orationibus* 4 (p. 154, 14–20 van den Hout); Wyles 2008.

51 Hier. *chron.* 165,5–8 Helm; cf. Athen. 1, 20d. See Jory 1981, 1996, 1998 and 2008; Molloy 1996, 40–79; Easterling 1997; Lada-Richards 2003a, 2003b, 2004, 2007; Garelli 2006, 2007; Vesterinen 2007; Webb 2008; Hall/Wyles 2008; Schlapbach 2009, 2018; Hall 2013; Wiseman 2014; Tedeschi 2019; Viccei 2019. Roman attestations of pantomime before the 20s BCE include Var. *Men.* 513 (see

indulserat ei ludicro Augustus, dum Maecenati obtemperat effuso in amorem Bathylli).⁵² Pantomime dancers were acclaimed for the “clarity” of their choreographic body language, which enabled them to portray entire myths by concentrating on crucial moments of the narrative, and by impersonating different characters in quick succession. While they were accompanied by a singer or a chorus, it was their eloquent dance that drew the attention of the audience.⁵³

Other occasions for dancing in the public space were provided by the *pompa funebris*, which had of course a religious dimension but was not tied to the festival calendar. In his chapter on the *pompa*, Dionysius of Halicarnassus writes: “And also at the funerals of illustrious men I have seen, along with the other processions and leading on the bier, the choruses of satyr-dancers performing the *sikinnis*, especially at the funerals of the rich” (*Roman Antiquities* 7.72.12). The *sikinnis* of the satyrs was a particularly vigorous dance, and it is easy to imagine that it was meant to emphasise vitality in the face of death. There may have been an Etruscan influence on this practice, considering the famous depictions of dance scenes in Etruscan tombs, for instance the Tomb of the Triclinium at Tarquinia, but the evidence remains scant.⁵⁴

In private houses, the shrines containing the household gods (*lararia*) typically featured dancing Lares holding a drinking vessel in one hand, “a genuine Roman invention.”⁵⁵ The dancing may be related to the *Compitalia*, the popular festival at the “crossroads” for the *lares publici*, which took place in the streets after the agricultural cycle was completed (*finita agricultura*: schol. Pers. 4.28) and involved drinking generous amounts of wine and the performance of bawdy lines, the *fescennini versus*. But the dancing may also be interpreted as an affirmation of vitality and joy, perhaps in a carnevalesque reversal, given that the household Lares seem to have been associated with the spirits of the deceased.⁵⁶

Inside the house, dinner parties were privileged occasions for professional dancers to perform (see Alonso Fernández in this volume). Pliny the Younger informs us in a letter that Ummidia Quadratilla, a wealthy *matrona*, housed her own pantomime troupe, whom she “treasured more profusely than befits a leading woman” (*fovebatque effusius quam principi feminae convenit*) and whom she liked to watch in order to relax (*ep.* 7.24.4–5). Pliny’s moral judgement, like that of Sallust on Sempronia, does not

Garelli 2007, 105); Flower 2014, 380 assumes pantomime performances as far back as in the fourth century BCE.

52 Leppin 1996 argues that the year 23/22 is a *terminus ante quem* for this innovation.

53 On narrative dance in antiquity, see Gianvittorio-Ungar/Schlapbach 2021.

54 See Gouy 2019; Shapiro 2004; Wiseman 1988, 3–7; Andresen 1961, 244–245. In late antiquity, Christians performed dances on the feast days of martyrs; see Andresen 1961, 248–251; MacMullen 1997, 103–104.

55 Kaufmann-Heinimann 2007, 198.

56 As the visual record suggests; see Flower 2017, 46–75 (who, despite its title, does not expand on the dance of the *lares*); Rüpke 2018, 250; Latham 2016, 35 (with n. 84); Giannotta 2004, 342.

aim at the fact itself of Ummidia's pastime, but at her exceeding emotional investment. Depending on the financial means of the host, during dinner parties dancers would compete for the attention of the guests with acrobats, jesters, solo singers or troupes of "Homeristae". Like in Xenophon's *Symposium*, acrobatics, pure dance, and representational dance feature together in Petronius' *Cena Trimalchionis*, drawing attention to the singularly wide range of expressive possibilities of the human body in motion. But while in Xenophon acrobatic feats, a ballet showing Graces and nymphs, and a pantomimic dance with a plot are neatly distinguished (2.7–14, 7.5, and 9.2–7, respectively), in Petronius' *Cena* it is precisely the overlap of these ostensibly different types of bodily performance that seems to be of interest. In this highly sophisticated literary banquet, the entire dinner is framed as a pantomime show, the host himself being the soloist surrounded by the chorus of his waiter-performers (31). Their dances repeatedly draw attention to the arbitrary meaning and, consequently, the need for interpretation of the entire spectacle the guests are witnessing with growing unease, for instance when four dancers introduce Trimalchio's play on the word *Carpe* – both the vocative of a personal name and the imperative of the verb "to carve" – an ambiguity which is choregraphically performed by the slave Carpus both responding to the vocative of his name and executing the imperative as he expertly cuts the meat (36), or when a dancing slave boy tumbles onto Trimalchio and is freed by the latter, so that no one may say that he was injured by a slave (53). In both instances, the performance possesses multiple and variable meanings, and the dance scenes illustrate precisely the uncertain boundaries between skilfully executed practical actions, acrobatic feats, pure dances, representations, and symbolic interpretations.⁵⁷

Dancing belongs to the refined and elegant environments associated with courtship and amorous encounters. In his *Amores* 2.4, Ovid exalts the diverse qualities of young women, all of whom attract the poet. There is the *puella* who walks elegantly or seductively (*molliter incedit*, line 23), as it were embodying with her soft steps the rhythm of the elegy; the one who sings beautifully or plays the lyre with skilful hands (*doctas ... manus*, 28), and the one who "pleases through her gestures as she moves her arms in the rhythm and turns her tender flank with seductive skill" (*illa placet gestu numerosaque brachia ducit / et tenerum molli torquet ab arte latus*, 29–30). The self-referential dimension of the passage is highlighted with the playful allusion to the elegiac topos of the *docta puella*, the cultivated and musical young woman who mirrors the poetry itself, a topos whose boundaries are stretched by the inclusion of the art of seduction through the dancing body among the skills of the young woman.⁵⁸

Dance oscillates here between literal meanings and metapoetic connotations. This kind of semantic enrichment is frequent, both in poetry and in prose, and the versa-

57 See Schlapbach, in progress.

58 See Alonso Fernández 2015, 307–309.

tility of dance vocabulary is indicative of the fundamental importance of dance as a cultural practice in ancient Rome. The dancer is a point of reference, a cultural icon to reckon with in a multitude of different contexts, whether as a symbol for a poetic genre, as in love elegy, or as an inspirational figure for the lyric poet, a comparison for the orator, or a mirror image of the ruler (see below the contributions by Schlapbach, Rocconi, Curtis, respectively).

Roman dance

This preliminary discussion has shown that the study of Roman dance is intimately tied to the questions of what is Roman in the first place, or rather of how the Romans adopted and integrated cultural practices of their neighbours. The enquiry into Roman dance is complicated in particular by the successive integration and amalgamation of Greek culture into the Roman horizon, as Frits Naerebout noted in 2009.⁵⁹ This was not a uniform process, and various intermediaries also played a role, above all the Etruscans, as the *ludiones* mentioned by Livy and Dionysius of Halicarnassus suggest (see above). As we saw, the Romans themselves, obviously interested in knowing the origin of their own practices, alternately foreground foreign influences on their dance culture or stress indigenous elements.

In the imperial period, the appropriation and assimilation of Greek practices is most evident in the ubiquitous success of pantomime, which originally came from the Greek East but by the second century was called the “Italian style of dancing”, as Athenaeus writes in his *Deipnosophistae* (20e).⁶⁰ Athenaeus’ passage is interesting in that it acknowledges Rome, the Capital, as the ‘epitome’ of the inhabited world (20b), and pantomime as its universal language, so to speak.⁶¹ It might not be out of place to compare the global success of musicians such as Bob Marley, Jimi Hendrix, or Freddie Mercury who, coming from geographically and/or socially ‘marginal’ places, made their music known worldwide, fashioning themselves at once as culturally hybrid figures and as mainstream artists who, at least in the case of Freddie Mercury, knew to avail themselves of the symbols of imperial power.⁶²

A similar amalgamation of older Greek and contemporary Roman imperial elements can be witnessed in the ancient theoretical discourse on dance, for instance

59 2009, 146–147; see also Hunt 2008. Very much to the point is Lauren Curtis who writes that “the chorus is a space that can express Greco-Roman cultural blending” (2017, 18).

60 Something similar can be observed in relation to Roman processions, which may well have influenced Hellenistic ones and became part of a “Mediterranean *koine* of spectacle” (Latham 2016, 12–13).

61 See Schlapbach 2020b.

62 The name of the band, Queen, is only the most obvious move in this direction, the mixing of disparate cultural references, as for instance in the song *Bohemian Rhapsody*, another.

when Plutarch presents a theory of the components of dance which probably originated in the Peripatos but seems informed by contemporary practices (*Quaestiones convivales* 9.15). Down to the dance imagery of the Neoplatonic philosophers, the influence of imperial pantomime is palpable, for instance when Plotinus offers a variation on the topos of the dance of the heavenly bodies, a conventional image of order and harmony, by describing the solo dancer's mastery and control over the different parts of his body (4.4.33).⁶³

What should not be doubted, then, is that the Romans, like the Greeks, did have a very rich and multifaceted dance culture. A typical set of passages selected with the aim to show how much less important dance was for the Romans than for the Greeks includes not only Cicero's *Pro Murena* discussed above, but also Scipio Aemilianus' indignation at the dance lessons of the children of aristocrats (*Macr. sat.* 3.14.6–7) or Nepos' observation that Romans might find it strange to read that Greek statesmen, such as Epaminondas, were praised for their skilful dancing (*praef.* 1; *Epam.* 1.1–2).⁶⁴ But just as with Septentrio's epitaph, whose apparent desolation can be counterbalanced with others expressing grief and affection for a deceased young dancer, the stern moralism of a Scipio Aemilianus (if historically accurate) suggests that dancing was in fact part of the curriculum of well-to-do Romans, and Nepos makes it clear that he is concerned only with the *summi viri* (*praef.* 1).⁶⁵

The complexity of Roman attitudes to cultural innovations has largely been acknowledged in relation to other cultural domains and pursuits, including philosophy, rhetoric, mythology, and indeed literature as a whole – all of them profoundly shaped by outside influences, and in particular by the Greeks.⁶⁶ Occasionally, Roman reticence towards eminently Greek cultural practices translated into decisions to ban them, sometimes even driving away the practitioners. In 161 BCE a senatorial edict exiled philosophers and rhetoricians, and in 92 BCE a censorial edict expressed disapproval specifically of “Latin rhetoricians” (Suetonius, *De grammaticis et rhetoribus* 25.1–2; cf. Cicero, *De oratore* 3.93). None of this stopped the overall process of appropriation, and today no one would deny that both philosophy and rhetoric are fundamental aspects of Roman culture. When it comes to Roman dance, however, there is room for further enquiry.

63 Webb 2008, 91; Sheppard 2017; on Plutarch, see Schlapbach 2018, 25–73.

64 See, for instance, Poignault 2013, 8–9.

65 It should be noted furthermore that Scipio Aemilianus' ethics and values are Greek-inspired: see Barlow 2018.

66 See, for instance, Vesperini 2017 for philosophy; Stroup 2007 for rhetoric; Newby 2016 for mythology, and Feeney 2016 for literature.

The present volume

This introduction has touched upon the main areas and questions that are addressed in this volume: dance and religion, dance in spectacle culture, and dance as a concept and a metaphor. These three areas correspond to three sections in the book – “Religion”, “Spectacle culture”, “Discourses” – accommodating fourteen chapters, most of which were first presented at a conference which took place at the University of Fribourg in June 2019.⁶⁷ As the above discussion has shown, these sections do not represent mutually exclusive categories, but rather a provisional grid for organising the material. Dances in religious contexts often have a public, spectacular dimension (the exception of the Arvales confirms the rule); conversely, the theatre, as part of the festivals for the gods, is embedded into sacred space and time, and metaphorical connotations of dance are exploited in many different contexts, reflecting back on and enriching the understanding of dance as a practice.⁶⁸ The contributions draw on literary texts, inscriptions, documentary papyri, and the visual record in order to elucidate various aspects of Roman dance, including its contexts, functions, practitioners, and appreciations.

The first section, on dance and religion, assembles five chapters which explore the uses and functions of dancing in an eclectic set of religious contexts ranging from the seventh century BCE to the fourth century CE. Angela Bellia (“Between Magna Graecia and Rome: Towards an Archaeological Approach to Dance Performance in Cults”) examines images of female figures holding each other by their hands found in various parts of the Italian peninsula down to the second century CE, and argues that these “chain dancers” may be related to the cult of the *Matres* or *Matronae*, Celtic goddesses of fertility, and to the cycle of death and rebirth. Drawing also on epigraphic dedications on the artifacts she studied, Bellia interprets the dance scenes as visual commemorations of ritual practices and situates them within their local sacred landscapes. Francesca Prescendi (“Trois pas vers les dieux: Le *tripudium* entre danse et divination”) sheds new light on the notion of the *tripudium*, addressing the curious fact that this word refers both to a dance and to a divinatory practice involving chickens eating grains. She argues that the two practices designated by the same word might be connected if one posits an archaic divinatory ritual consisting in the observation of chickens, and she corroborates this hypothesis by examining the divinatory rituals performed by the Salians, as well as the symbolism of their dance and their mythic origin. Fritz Graf (“Ritual Dances in the Imperial Epoch: What Epigraphy Can Teach

67 Two papers delivered at the conference could not be included in the present volume: Marie-Hélène Delavaud-Roux, “Aspects grecs de la danse à Rome”, and Henriette Harich-Schwarzbauer, “Das Übrige mögen die Dichter singen: Tanz in der lateinischen Dichtung der Spätantike”, whereas two chapters were added (by Timothy J. Moore and Karin Schlapbach, respectively). For a conference report, see Schlapbach 2020a.

68 On the Arvales dancing without an audience, see Prescendi in this volume.

about Dancing”) taps into the rich epigraphic evidence on dance and dancers from the Greek cities of the Roman empire, focusing on dancing in mystery cults and dancing as part of the civic religious tradition. Inscriptions honouring sponsors and dancers crop up after the first Mithridatic war and especially during the Augustan period; they illustrate the endeavour to revive traditional dance rituals and to construe a cultural continuity with the archaic age. Innovation is palpable in the fact that the main form of dance is solo rather than choral, betraying the influence of contemporary pantomime. René Bloch (“‘Tänze, die keine Tänze waren’: Widersprüchliches über den Tanz bei Philon von Alexandrien”) turns to Philo’s meandering views on dance in its cosmic and real life-varieties, illuminating the Platonic, Roman, and Jewish strands of Philo’s thought while leaving the contradictions intact. Addressing recent scholarship on Philo, Bloch argues that Philo’s stay in Rome cannot be understood as a unifying background for his thought and that it hardly had any bearing on his depiction of the ritual dances of the ascetic *therapeutai*. Ruth Webb (“‘Making the God Present within Himself’: Pantomime Dance and Devotion in Fourth-century Antioch”) discusses the late antique idea that the dancer, through the animated and dynamic *mimēsis* of his (her) body, is singularly able to conjure up the presence of the god he (she) impersonates. Webb shows that this idea, which is concisely expressed in Libanius’ speech *On behalf of the Dancers* (or. 64), is not unique to him but underlies certain poems of the Greek Anthology dwelling on the comparison between dancers and statues and finds echoes in theurgic practices current in Neoplatonic circles. Each in its own way, the five chapters explore dance as a means of communication with the divine, drawing on the pictorial, literary, epigraphical and philosophical traces that the diverse practices examined here left behind.

The next section zooms in on the spectacle culture on the theatrical stage and at the dinner-party. Laura Gianvittorio-Ungar (“Envisioning and Reenacting the Chorus in Republican Tragedy: The Cases of Naevius’ *Lycurgus* and Ennius’ *Eumenides*”) investigates the Roman reception of choral scenes from Aeschylus’ *Edonians* and *Eumenides*, two tragedies which were most certainly reperformed in Magna Graecia. She argues convincingly that these two tragedies were known to Naevius and Ennius not just as texts, but as plays, and she illustrates points of contact between the Greek models and their Roman counterparts not just in dance imagery but in actual dance performance. Timothy J. Moore (“Roman Comedy and the Final Dance”) discusses the evidence for dancing at or near the end of comedies by Plautus and Terence. In addition to metre and actual references to dancing in the final scenes of *Persa*, *Pseudolus*, and *Stichus*, Moore examines scenes that call for energetic and excited motion at crucial moments of the plot. He concludes that another twenty of the total of twenty-six surviving plays by Plautus and Terence feature scenes of lively motion performed in accompanied meters either in their final scenes or just before, or at the moment of the play’s climactic crisis or its dénouement. Zoa Alonso Fernández (“Dance and the Senses at the *convivium*”) draws on Plautus, Pliny the Younger, Martial, and Juvenal to delineate a set

of sensorial parameters within which the impact of dance in the synesthetic ambiance of the *convivium*, where food, scents, spectacles, and erotic excitement compete for the attention of the dinner guests, can be understood. Engaging with recent advances regarding the cognitive role of the senses – including kinesthesia – in experiencing performances, Alonso Fernández is able to look beyond the ostensible denigration of dance in the texts and to uncover a deep awareness of its affective power, which may extend even to the readers of literary dance scenes. Sylvain Perrot, in “*Toute peine mérite salaire: l’orchēstopalaistodidaktos Stephanos (P. Daris 7)*”, examines a recently published document which enriches our knowledge of dance in Roman Egypt. P. Daris 7, a papyrus attributed to the third century CE, contains a hapax designating a practitioner of the *orchestopala*, a dance genre attested also on inscriptions, for instance in an epitaph from the Vatican necropolis from the third century CE. The new document (first published in 2011) demonstrates that the *orchestopala* was known in different parts of the empire; in addition, it sheds light on the socio-economic conditions under which dancers were hired and on the relationship between music and dance. Perrot adduces many parallels to elucidate the occasions on which dancers performed as well as the composition of dance troupes, and he concludes that the *orchestopala* was probably performed to the sounds of the *aulos* and the rhythms of castagnettes. The two remaining papers of this section focus on pantomime. Helen Slaney (“*The Kinetic Vocabulary of Tragedy*”) compares passages from Senecan drama (which was informed by pantomime) with Euripides in order to get a sense of how tragic scenarios may have been transposed into pantomime, arguing that the latter genre used single words – notably words indicating physical movement – as focal points around which the highly dynamic performance was organised. Raffaella Viccei (“*Performative Aspects of the Pantomime and Performative Spaces: Alcestis Barcinonensis and Archaeological Sites*”) discusses the dramatic potential of the late antique *Alcestis*, a hexameter poem preserved on papyrus, highlighting the intense textual presence of the body and its sensations, the rapid shifts between movement and stillness, the frequent alternations of male and female characters. To flesh out her observations, Viccei adduces insights from contemporary reperformances at the Roman theatres of *Faesulae* (2003) and *Mediolanum* (2009), which give clues as to how theatrical spaces inform and interact with the dance. Together, these chapters convey a sense of the manifold dramatic genres and social spaces of which dances were part and to whose appeal they greatly contributed.

The last section, entitled “*Discourses*”, contains three chapters which explore dance as a concept and a metaphor. Dance was the subject of analysis, reflection, and evaluation in a wide range of contexts, among them the theatre or rhetorical practice and theory, and dance imagery enriches both prose and poetry with its manifold connotations and symbolic meanings, mirroring the important place of dance in Roman culture. Eleonora Rocconi (“*The Orator and the Dancer: Conceptualizing Gestures in Roman Performances*”) details the development of the comparison between two specialists of expressing emotions through the body, the orator and the dancer, from

Cicero to Quintilian, showing that the influence of pantomime becomes more and more palpable in this discussion, for instance in the attention to the dancer's hand gestures and their relation to keywords in the accompanying text (an aspect addressed by Slaney as well). Karin Schlapbach ("Der Dichter als Tänzer und Körperperformer: Die Kinetik des Dichtens bei Horaz") examines metapoetic dance images in Horace. Focusing on a set of passages from the Epistles which cast the poet alternately as a gladiator, a racehorse, a pantomime, or a tightrope artist, the chapter argues that these images foreground the spectacular and awe-inspiring dimension of these competitive or performative disciplines, and that they portray the making of poetry less as an exercise in representation than as a virtuosic physical art. This interpretation is complemented with a discussion of select dance images in the Odes. Finally, Lauren Curtis ("Roman Rhythms: Music, Dance, and Imperial Ethics in Suetonius' *Life of Augustus*") elucidates the political implications of a passage from Suetonius' *Life of Augustus*: when at the theatre a *cinaedus* plays his circular hand-drum, the crowd mockingly compares his sounds and gestures to Octavian's endeavour to control the globe. In this Roman variation on the connection between dance and political power which is better known from Greek culture, the Roman *populus* draws a clear and sophisticated parallel between the performance of a solo dancer and Roman imperial power. Curtis' discussion shows that in this anecdote theatrical dance is not just symbolic of political order but participates in the interactions that define the relationship between the future *princeps* and the people.

Without making any claim to exhaustivity, the fourteen chapters of this book shed light on Roman dance by focusing on specific periods and contexts. Taken together, they suggest that dance not only permeated the fabric of Roman culture, but that it served perhaps also to connect various dimensions of Roman culture that we tend to think of as separate: a ritual libation could be accompanied by a pantomime of sorts (Graf), and a pantomime impersonating a god could make the divine singularly present (Webb), dancers were as eloquent as orators, and orators as expressive as dancers (Rocconi), dancing, dining, and erotic excitement all converged in providing deeply affecting multi-sensory impressions (Alonso Fernández), and the connotations of dance could colour the public perception of the ruler (Curtis). What connects these seemingly disparate contexts and functions of dance is not only the variable physical practice of dance as such, but also the kinesthetic experience of the spectator, whose own body assures a kind of continuity by storing memories of past instances and occasions of dance which inform responses to present ones.⁶⁹ If the case studies collected in this volume cannot add up to a comprehensive overview of the Roman "dancescape",

69 On the notion of kinesthesia in dance studies, see for instance Foster 2011; Olsen 2017; Slaney in this volume.

they will hopefully give an impression of its richness and serve as an invitation for further study.⁷⁰

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70 The term "dancescape" is used in connection with Rome by Naerebout 2009, 147–148. I would like to thank the Swiss Academy of the Humanities and Social Sciences, the University of Fribourg, and the Swiss National Science Foundation for their generous conference grants, and the Swiss National Science Foundation for supporting the open access publication of this volume. Many thanks also to Isabela Grigoraş, Caroline Bélanger, and Thibault Emonet for their precious help at various stages of editing this volume.

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Part I: Religion

Between Magna Graecia and Rome^{*} *Towards an Archaeological Approach to Dance Performance in Cults*

ANGELA BELLIA

Abstract: The study of material evidence on dance, combined with a particular attention to the contexts of discovery, sheds light on the uses of dance performances in ancient societies, allowing us to explore the function and meaning of dance in the ancient world. Based on this approach, this chapter investigates the representations of female intertwined dancers painted or carved on various media in the Roman Empire. The most fruitful comparisons can be made in Southern Italy, where intertwined dances seem to be connected with the cycle of death and rebirth. The chapter argues that the dance scenes on Roman votive artefacts, along with the epigraphic dedications, point not only to a specific idea of ritual and dance performances in local cults, but also to an explicit preservation of their memory.

Introduction

Dance was a central element of Roman religion, and dance performances were typical of many Roman rituals, which were influenced by a range of cultural practices from regions across the Empire.¹ Rituals accompanied by dance and music were part of Roman daily life, and structured around the city temporally as well as spatially, as certain sounds, movements, gestures, and behaviours were regularly repeated according to the festival calendar. Aside from foreign cults, evidence of dance in traditional Roman cults is relatively sparse,² but ancient written sources claim that dances in armour in particular had a long tradition dating back to the royal period. Thus dance was consid-

* I would like to express my gratitude to Karin Schlapbach for involving me in this initiative.

1 Fless/Moede 2007, 249–262.

2 Giannotta 2004, 342–343.

ered by ancient sources to be a traditional and noteworthy element of Roman ritual, even though the style changed over time with the introduction of new cults.³

Written and figurative sources securely document two Roman cults that involved dancing: rituals devoted to the *Salii*, when the dance was a great public spectacle, and to the Arval Brethren.⁴ The form of the dance in the latter ritual remains uncertain, since this dance was performed without audience. The only indigenous Roman figures whose dances are well attested in the visual arts are the Lares, but we lack the written sources to interpret their meaning.⁵

According to Friederike Fless and Katja Moede,⁶ scholarship is limited in how far it can describe the specific formal qualities of dance in Roman religion. Dance is a human bodily movement, intentional, rhythmical and patterned, with some sound as a cue, usually performed communally with any number of active and passive participants.⁷ Whichever way we seek to understand the function and meaning of dance in a sacred context, it should be clear that it is an indispensable part of the education of a member of society. Choreography – by which I mean “a sequence of dance movements that is considered to be a distinct, bounded unit of performance”⁸ – cannot be reconstructed for different rituals: written sources simply do not contain that kind of information and detail, and the actual movement is almost completely lost to us. As Frederick Naerebout has noted, since “we have no examples of actual dances, we cannot say to what extent descriptions and images are documenting existing dances and, if they do, whether they do so in a more or less reliable way, i. e., documenting observable reality in a manner we can relate to.”⁹

Archaeological and ethnographic research shows that dance is prone to change, similarly to any other phenomenon in human society, since it is a dynamic element of ritual. This implies that the common practice of combining evidence from sources ranging from the Bronze Age to Byzantium in a single picture of dance, or of individual dances, in ancient society, cannot be anything other than misleading. This is also true in the Roman Empire: according to Naerebout, the “multiculturalism” of the Empire meant that “rituals changed and were exchanged with the concomitant music, song, dance and other nonverbal communication”,¹⁰ thereby enhancing the power of dance

3 Naerebout 2009, 143–158; Naerebout 2013.

4 Giannotta 2004, 337–340. See also Torelli 1990, 93–106; Torelli 1997, 227–255; Prescendi in this volume.

5 Cruccas/Parodo 2015, 141–159.

6 Fless/Moede 2007, 249.

7 Naerebout 1997, 155–165; Naerebout 2019, 32.

8 Naerebout 2017, 41.

9 Naerebout 2015, 109.

10 Naerebout 2009, 143.

in religious practice and its multisensory and symbolic capacity according to different geographical and temporal locations and social organisation.¹¹

However, the archaeological evidence related to dance is potentially quite informative about the movements that appeared in practice. Ancient dance scenes depicted on stone, pottery, or any other material are archaeological objects that can tell us about dance practice and the context of its performance,¹² and so these artefacts are the archaeological correlates of actual performance:¹³ they allow us firstly to examine the context of the archaeological evidence of dance related to the sacred and/or funerary sphere, and secondly, to examine performance spaces.¹⁴

Consequently, analysing the contexts and spaces of dance performances allows us to examine the function of dance and the role of dancers in a ritual setting, even if the religious dimension of the dance is not always accessible to us. Indeed, studying the context and the specific qualities of media (like images) can offer insights into the importance and relevance of dance performances for rituals and ceremonies, as well as the roles of musicians and specialised musical instruments. In this respect, dance should no longer be considered as something distinct that can be studied in isolation, but rather as a specific manifestation of a general type of human behaviour.¹⁵ Moreover, the archaeological evidence allows us to decipher which ritual dance sequences once appeared in a performative space and in a particular sacred sphere.

There were several kinds of locations where dancing regularly took place for sacred events, including boundary stones, springs, groves, and fields. Of course, dance performances most typically took place in shrines, either in the sacred spaces around the altar or in front of the buildings where the altar or the statue stood.¹⁶ As Clemente Marconi has argued,¹⁷ ritual activities took place in special locations, which were closer to the other world than to this one. Although dancers might perform ceremonial movements anywhere, many chose to perform dances at the shrines or sacred spaces where the deity seemed especially present.¹⁸ These performers often stood before the statues themselves, or around them, to make their dances visible to the deities: in both cases, the dance performance could be considered as an offering to the divinities.

The archaeological evidence of dance performances, like all images related to cults, including reliefs, may have contributed to the overall goal of the ritual performances that used dance, music, sacred verbal formulas, and material offerings to the gods: that is, to induce a sense of the numinous in the participants. Choral and musical perfor-

11 Hanna 1987, 203; Soar/Aamodt 2014, 2.

12 Hanna 1988, 281–306.

13 Estienne 2015, 379–383.

14 Hölscher 2018, 24–27. See also Garfinkel 2014, 6.

15 Naerebout 2019, 32.

16 Giannotta 2004, 342.

17 Marconi 2007, 28.

18 Giannotta 2004, 339.

mances during sacred events could be considered a favourite language of communication with, and an offering to, the gods, which were carried out in the framework of the ritual ceremony: so in a sacred context, dance and sonic events contributed to the enactment of rituals.¹⁹ As Catherine Bell has highlighted,²⁰ gestures of touch, sacrifices, prayers, specific clothing and postures, songs and chants, and dances and music are all important aspects of rituals²¹ and indispensable to the rhythm and frame of a ceremony. Moreover, dances in this context may also be called performative in the sense that they were dramatic performances, involving dancers, an audience, a set-apart space and time, and conventional movements.²²

If sound and music, in Roman rituals, formed a sonic background (the form of which was widely heard and engraved in the memory of every worshipper), then dance, which effectively disrupted the ideal of solemn walking, could only be observed by actual spectators: sound and ritualised movements, together with the burning or distribution of scents, the illumination and decoration of the routes or the sacred space, and the decoration of participants, may have given shape to the ritual setting. On sacred occasions, the performers of ritualised movements were usually priests or priestesses, although women or children may have been specially selected to perform a dance. But just as in dramatic performances, dance, often accompanied by music or sounds, may also have been performed by professional dancers and musicians. Moreover, as Karin Schlapbach puts it,²³ dance spectacles typically involve dancing and singing, which opens up new avenues in creating and defining cultural knowledge. Choral performances would have seemed even more dramatic for their use of multiple instruments and the frequent addition of accompanying movement. On certain occasions, the chorus walked in a solemn manner, in a ritual procession reminiscent of Greek cult practices and the closely related dramatic performances.²⁴

Although some facets of this performative dimension of ritual are not suitable for visual representations, there is much interesting archaeological evidence from the Roman period that is worth analysing. It is, however, necessary to remember that local repertoires changed and grew over time. In this essay we will focus on performances related to a choral dance that seems to be related to female divinities in the Cisalpine area of North Italy. As we will see, this dance, which was performed by female dancers holding and alternating their intertwined arms, appears to be associated with the cult of the *Matres* and *Matronae*, deities of fertility, birth, and death, although we lack written sources concerning their worship (Fig. 1);²⁵ we only have information about festivals

19 Connelly 2011, 320. See also Bellia 2020, 75–79.

20 Bell 1997, 159–164.

21 Fless/Moede 2007, 259–262.

22 Sklar 2007, 38–42.

23 Schlapbach 2018, 19–21.

24 Gianvittorio 2017, 104–113.

25 Bauchhens/Neumann 1987, *passim*; Bauchhens 1997, 808–816; Mekacher 2005, 108–110.

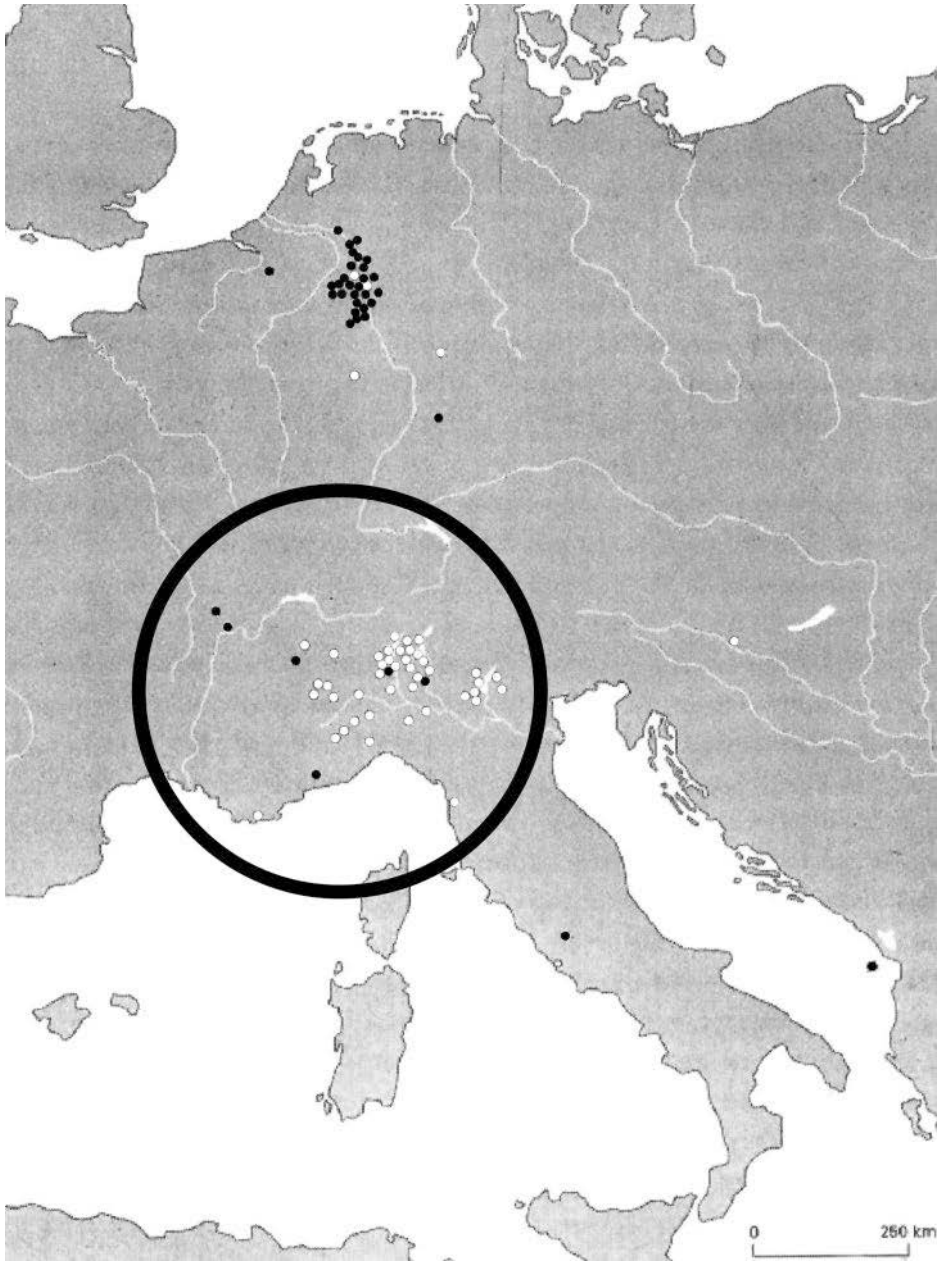


Fig. 1 Map showing the distribution of dedications to the *Matres* and *Matronae* (with and without epithets) and the spread of their cult in North Italy.

that celebrated the renewal and the awakening of nature, and that honoured these goddesses, who kept a special watch over all aspects of women's lives.²⁶ The reliefs, which generally represent the goddesses in groups of three bearing attributes of sovereignty and fertility, are clearly modelled on the Classical figurations of mother goddesses.²⁷

Images depicting groups of intertwined female dancers in a ritual setting seem to have figurative parallels with the groups of dancers that were represented in Magna Graecia from the seventh century BCE until the third century BCE, when South Italy was undergoing a process of Romanisation which, according to Strabo,²⁸ ended during the Augustan Age, or in the late first century BCE. While most of the small cultic sites disappeared from South Italy's cities, this did not necessarily (as has generally been thought) occur around 273–272 BCE (as deduced from the Latin colony of Paestum: the conquest of Taranto was the emblematic date of the “end” of Magna Graecia).²⁹ Some sacred places were maintained into the second century BCE, and even up to the Empire: the cult continued and spread throughout the Roman world, but also changed. An older god may often lurk behind a god of the Roman pantheon: this god would have been assimilated, by the process of the so-called *interpretatio Romana*,³⁰ into a Roman deity with some similar characteristics. But conversely, it is also possible that the Roman deity was accepted by the local people,³¹ who may have imitated the Roman cult practice.

Dance Depictions on Roman Reliefs in the Cisalpine Area

Although no surviving literary sources refer to the cult of the *Matres* and *Matronae*, nonetheless epigraphs, reliefs and terracotta figurines found in Spain, France, Great Britain, Germany, and particularly in North Italy, act as archaeological evidence of its spread between the first and the fifth centuries CE. The cult can be traced back to the second millennium BCE. Some evidence even from the third century BCE has been attributed to these goddesses. Moreover, deities were already being represented in orinthomorphic triads as early as the sixth/fifth century BCE.

According to Noémie Beck,³² the Romans adapted a pre-existing cult for a cultural context where the representation of anthropomorphic divinities was otherwise still unknown. Thanks to Etruscan-Italic influences, the anthropomorphic figures of the

26 Torelli 1984, 31–50; Brelich 2015, 224.

27 Terracotta groups of female dancers and instruments players were discovered in sacred places and sanctuaries in Magna Graecia and in Sicily. Bellia 2014, 13–46.

28 *Geographia*, VI, 1, 2.

29 Pedley 1990, 55–58. See also de Cazanove 2007, 53–56.

30 Rüpke 2014, 472–473. See also Derks 1998, 94–118.

31 Lolos 2009, 264–266.

32 Beck 2009, 35–38. See also Miedico 2016, 205.

goddesses seem to appear for the first time in North Italy, while the first actual human representation of the *Matres* and *Matronae* appeared during the Roman occupation. It is worth noting that hundreds of inscribed votive reliefs with the representation of a group of female figures only began to appear in the Cisalpine area after the Roman conquest.

Epigraphic and figurative sources from North Italy reveal a cult devoted to three deities. Judging by dedications to the *Matres* and *Matronae*, the cult was popular among the legions, and soldiers of various ranks participated in their cult.³³ It was common to call them *Matres* or *Matronae* in this area, and their cult was related not only to fertility and the worship of water, but also to birth, death, and re-birth. While some cultic places and many sanctuaries devoted to these deities have been found beyond the Alps in Northern Europe, no such site has been identified in the Cisalpine area. However, isolated discoveries of single altars at springs and grottoes, and at crossroads and commercial routes, allow us to speculate on a relationship between the *Matres* and *Matronae* and Nymphs, Juno, Mercury or the Lares.

Research on epigraphic and iconographic sources related to the cult of the *Matres* and *Matronae* in the Cisalpine area has revealed that most of the dedications come from the area around Milan, Como, Varese, Novara and Vercelli. The theonym was frequently accompanied by cultural epithets (*epiclesis*) that drew explicit limits to the deity's field of action, as was the case in Milan, where the cult of the *Matronis Dervonnis* – a term probably of Celtic origin designating oak –³⁴ was worshipped. While their generic name *Matres* and *Matronae* seems to be Latin, their epithets are exclusively of Celtic or Germanic origin. It is noteworthy that the same epithet can be associated with both the terms *Matres* and *Matronae* in the inscriptions, which proves that these two forms are interchangeable and equivalent in meaning.³⁵ In this area of North Italy, this resulted in a peculiar iconography on Roman votive artefacts with Latin inscriptions, as well as rituals that combine elements of both local and Roman religious traditions.³⁶

According to Gambari,³⁷ the most ancient image related to the three goddesses may appear on a relief from the third/second century BCE. This relief, found on the Masso Falchero in Tubergengo of Viù di Lanzo (Ninin Mills) near Turin, depicts three anthropomorphic figures with raised arms, perhaps recalling a dancing group (Fig. 2): this image could indicate the pre-Roman origin of the *Matres* and *Matronae* cult in this area. It is interesting to note that there is no archaeological evidence of *Matres* and *Matronae* representations in the Cisalpine area over the two following centuries, at least until the Julio-Claudian era in the first century CE.

33 Phang 2001, 187. See also Tagliamonte 1994, 188.

34 Landucci Gattinoni 1986, 33–35; Soldati Forcella / Antico Gallina 1979–1980, 216–217; Viglienghi 1976, 147–153.

35 Derks 1998, 120; Beck 2009, 47–48.

36 Haensch 2007, 180–185. Van Andringa 2007, 83–95; Moede 2007, 164–170. See also Hölscher 2018, 35–40.

37 Gambari 2007, 39–45.

Though we cannot assume that such images are precise representations, we can nevertheless reflect on ritual actions and dance performances, and glean some information from these depictions.



Fig. 2 Anthropomorphic figures with raised arms. Image related to the *Matres* and *Matronae* on the relief discovered on the Masso Falchero in Tuborghengo of Viù di Lanzo (Ninin Mills) near Turin (Italy). Third-second century BCE. From Gambari 2007, 40.

In 1982, Gemma Sena Chiesa completed her study on the altars dedicated to the worship of the *Matres* and *Matronae* in the Cisalpine area.³⁸ Firstly, her research considers the so-called *Ara delle Matrone*, which dates from the first century CE and was found in Angera in April 1909, and is currently kept at the Museum of Varese (Fig. 3).³⁹ Carved in a Candoglia relief, on the front side of the fragmented marble block are three women in an arrangement that suggests a dance. They hold hands, alternating their intertwined arms, and moving to the right. The three figures wear long dresses, with their hair gathered in a simple bun on the neck. In front of them, to the right, there is a fourth, male figure: he could be the lead dancer of the group. The dance seems to be performed in a sacred space around an oak tree, at the foot of which is an amphora. On the top right, the ends of a ribbon seem to belong to a festoon, similar to the leaf festoon carved on one side of the altar. On the other side, a fragmentary epigraphic dedication to the *Matronae* is carved. There also seems to be a carving of a bovine horn and a human head, which probably represent the remnants of a sacrifice scene.⁴⁰

38 Sena Chiesa 1982, 116–125; Tocchetti Pollini 1983, 171–174.

39 Varese, Musei Civici, inv. 5001. Guzzo/Moscato/Sartori 1994, 262–263, n. 758; Sartori 2009, 368, nr. ANG10.06.

40 Miedico 2016, 211–212.



Fig. 3 Varese, Musei Civici, inv. 5001. Relief with three women in an intertwined dance and a man on the so-called *Ara delle Matrone* discovered in Angera (Italy). The three figures wear long dresses. On the right, the fourth, male figure could be the lead dancer of the group. First or second century CE. From Sartori 2009, 368, nr. ANG10.06. Fragmentary epigraphic dedication: *VÓTO [SOLVTO] MA [TRONIS] SEX(tus) S [-----] DIO [-----]*

Surrounded by a dancing female group, the lead dancer, perhaps representing a priest or a sacrificer, seems to move around the altar where the actual sacrificial ceremony may have started with an offering of wine. The rite represented here may have been accompanied by music,⁴¹ most likely played on a *tibia*, the most common instrument in all Roman sacrificial ceremonies, or on a lyre.⁴²

An intertwined dance is also depicted on the altar from Pallanza, in the same geographical area, dedicated to the Emperor Caligula by *Narcissus*. An epigraphic dedication to the *Matronae* has also been carved into the altar.⁴³ This relief, from the first century CE, features a scene very similar to that on the *Ara delle Matrone*: three women

41 Hickson Hahn 2007, 237–245.

42 Vendries/Péché 2004, 406–410; Fless/Moede 2015, 257–259. See also Scheid 2007, 143.

43 Pallanza, Church of St. Stephen. Moreno 2001, 128–129, fig. 125; Garman 2008, 39–42, fig. 1.

are dancing and moving to the right, similarly dressed (Fig. 4). They are holding hands and performing a dance in a sacred space, and surrounded by a vegetable wreath, perhaps of oak, that ends in ribbons: this was an emblem recalling the numinous character of the grove and spring, and the chthonic quality of the sacrificial gifts linked to the springtime cult of female divinities.⁴⁴ The dance scene continues on the left side of the altar, depicting a woman who seems to be following the group; on the right side, a fifth woman seems to lead the dancing group. On the fourth side, under the inscription, a sacrifice scene features a musician holding a *tibia*.⁴⁵ The depiction of dancers in scenes of this type suggest that ritualised movements and sounds played a significant role in all stages of the ritual, including the moment of sacrifice itself.



Fig. 4 Pallanza, Church of St. Stephen. Intertwined dance depicted on the altar, dedicated to Caligula Emperor by Narcissus. The female dancers are represented in a sacred space surrounded by a vegetable wreath ending with ribbons. First century CE.

From Moreno 2001, 128, fig. 125.

Two other reliefs with representations of an intertwined dance, performed by five female figures, have been discovered in Avignana in the *Statio ad Fines* area (near Turin), on the way to the *Matronae Vertex*, at the crossroads of ancient paths. As with the previous examples, they feature a carved dedication to the *Matronae* (Fig. 5).⁴⁶

44 De Cazanove 2015, 186–188.

45 Miedico 2016, 212.

46 Turin, Museum of antiquity. Inv. ST 548. Guzzo/Moscatti/Sartori 1994, 262, n. 757.



Fig. 5 Turin, Museum of antiquity. Inv. ST 548. Relief with the representation of an intertwined dance performed by five female figures. From Avignana (Italy). First century CE.

Epigraphic dedication: *MATRONIS/TI(berius) IVLIVS PRISCILL(ibertus)/ACESTES*

From Guzzo/Moscato/Sartori 1994, 177, cat. 757

There are many other examples of such scenes on altars. One, found at Sommariva del Bosco, near Cuneo, depicts a group of three intertwined female dancers, a female divinity, possibly Minerva, and a worshipper.⁴⁷ It is worth noting that the intertwined dance appears not only on carved reliefs, but also on fragmented pottery from the same area (Fig. 6).⁴⁸

As with the altars, the recurrent figurative element in these scenes is a group of figures holding hands and performing an intertwined dance in a sacred space, often around an oak tree, which is also an ancient symbol of fertility, and linked to the Celtic

47 Miedico 2016, 212–213.

48 Moreno 2001, 127, fig. 124.

sacred sphere as a medium between the human and divine worlds.⁴⁹ This depiction could recall an actual dancing procession making its way toward the altar of the divinities to be honoured. The continuous sequence of this dance had to be structured as a discernible unit so that the participants in a ceremony could identify this ritual action and adapt their behaviour accordingly.⁵⁰ It is worth noting that dance is an important structuring element, since movement in a ritual space can introduce a new moment of the ritual.



Fig. 6 Intertwined female figures on fragmented pottery.
From Vercelli (Italy). First century CE. From Moreno 2001, 127, fig. 124.

However, it is very difficult for modern observers fully to enter the cultural and symbolic dimension of these ancient dance imageries. The images show only a snapshot of a moment, marking the main protagonists and items, but they do not say anything about the temporal features and the sequence of ritual events. Some questions emerge as a result. Since the reliefs are accompanied by carved inscriptions and dedications,

49 Spagnolo Garzoli 1996, 89–112. For the sacred function of the oak tree, see Miles 2016, 170–175.

50 Burkert 2003, 223–225.

there is no doubt that the carved choruses are linked to the religious sphere of the *Matres* and *Matronae*:⁵¹ so what is the ritual function and the meaning of the intertwined dance in their worship? The second issue concerns the roles of the dancers: are they divinities, or simply female worshippers dancing an intertwined dance as an integral part of a religious festival performed in a sacred space? There is also a third issue, related to the practicalities of dance performances: do these figures represent actual dancers in a sacred setting during a particular festive occasion? And if so, are they situated in a public or private space? In order to answer some of these questions, it is necessary to consider other representations of intertwined dances, to investigate the relationship between the dance movements and ritual performance, and to ask why these particular dance representations were chosen for the worship of these female deities, and why these ceremonial movements were depicted around their altars.

The best comparisons can be made in South Italy, where groups of female intertwined dancers are depicted on and/or carved into various media: given the archaeological contexts of their discovery, these representations seem related not only to female and wedding spheres, but also to the dualism of life and death, and to the sacred and funerary ideology that was widespread throughout Magna Graecia.⁵²

Intertwined Dancing Groups in Magna Graecia

As we have seen, like most choral dancing, intertwined dance was linked to religious rituals and performed in a sacred space. So, this dance can be defined as a group of choral dancers moving synchronously in a dancescape, sometimes led by a lead dancer. To reference Naerebout,⁵³ we can consider a dancescape as a sacred space or a ritual space where bodily movements take place, but also where other senses, especially hearing and sight, are involved. However, the complexity of the related rituals means that it was quite difficult to reproduce them in images: it is almost impossible to produce a narrative within a single image.

The images related to the worship of *Matres* and *Matronae* give the impression that the intertwined dance was performed by female dancers arranged in single file, but it is possible that this dance could also have been performed in multiple files or circular formation.⁵⁴ However, intertwined dancing was different from the type of dances that was widespread in the ancient Mediterranean world, which involved groups of dancers arranged in a circle or rows of female and male dancers moving towards each other (Fig. 7).

51 Beck 2009, 54–57.

52 Wonder 2014, 517–520.

53 Naerebout 2017, 39.

54 Naerebout 2017, 50.



Fig. 7 Taranto, National Archaeological Museum. Row of female and male dancers depicted on a *perirrhanteion*. Sixth cent. BCE. From Lippolis 1997, 535, tav. XXIX,1.

The intertwined dance was characterised by the figures' interlocking hands, where each female dancer grasped the hand of the previous or next figure. In this way a chain was formed with a leader at both ends, allowing a reversal in the dance's direction. This type of choreography, which is found to this day in traditional dances,⁵⁵ creates a sort of labyrinthine winding path.

The earliest depiction (Fig. 8a–c) of this interweaving dance being performed solely by women is found on a sixth-century BCE Etruscan vase from Vulci, discovered in the Tomb of Isis, known as “Polledrara *hydria*”.⁵⁶ Many scholars have linked the intertwined dance on this vase with the Theseic dance, not only because the first female dancer is holding the thread in her left hand, but also because it shows a female figure, perhaps Ariadne, standing behind the hero killing the Minotaur.⁵⁷ This is an exceptional example of intertwined dance related to the Theseus myth: all the choral dances represented in other scenes associated with this myth always involve both boys and girls dancing together. One example is an interweaving dance on a clay triad group dating from the seventh/sixth century BCE, which depicts one male and two female dancing figures (Fig. 9).⁵⁸

55 Buttitta 2008, 159–160; Gould/Tahmasebian 2019, 64–68.

56 London, British Museum, H 228. Todisco 1996, 126, tavv. LX–LXI,2.

57 Todisco 1999, 444 (previous bibliography at note 38). See also Gadaleta 2002, 137.

58 Taranto, National Archaeological Museum. Lippolis 1995, 87, tav. XXX,3.

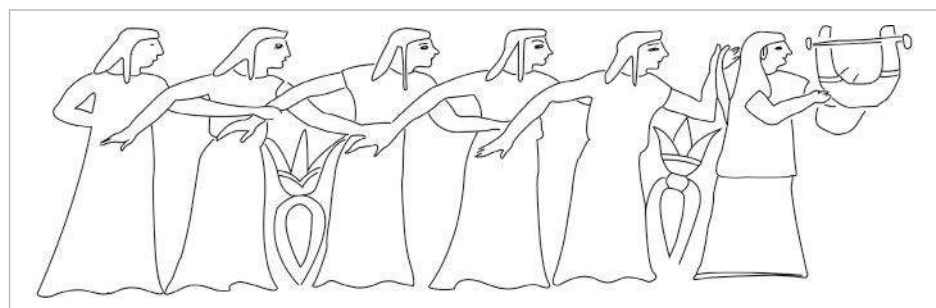
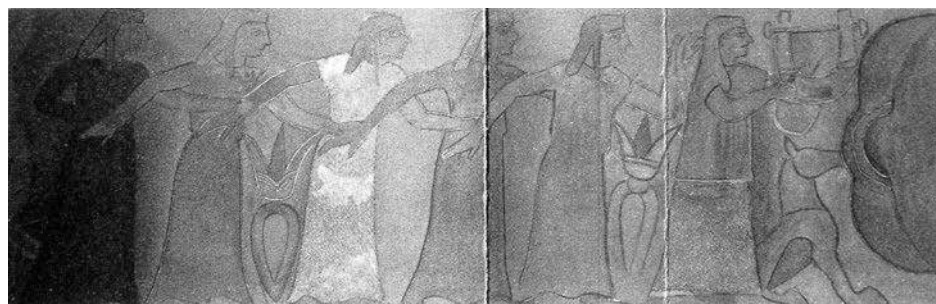
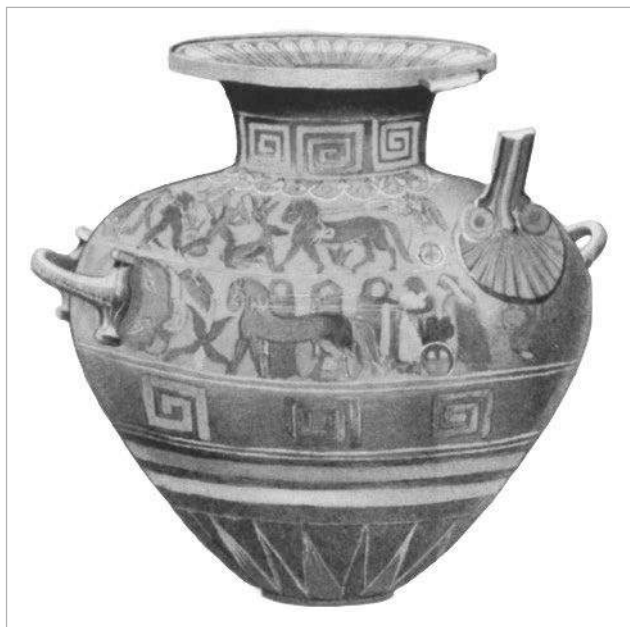


Fig. 8a–c London, British Museum, H 228. Interweaving dance depicted on the “Polledrara Hydria” from Vulci (Italy). Sixth cent. BCE. From Todisco 1996, 126, tavv. LX–LXI.2.



Fig. 9 Taranto, National Archaeological Museum. Interweaving dance on a clay triad group, depicting male and female dancers. From the Satyron Sanctuary near Taranto. Seventh/sixth century BCE. From Lippolis 1995, 87, tav. XXX,3.

These figurines discovered in Satyrion near Taranto, in a sanctuary associated with a spring – most likely devoted to the Nymph Satyria – could be considered as evidence that the intertwined dances of the Theseus myth and *geranos* were performed in Magna Graecia as early as the Archaic Age. Although many aspects of the *geranos* dance have already been extensively discussed,⁵⁹ it is useful to recall the symbolic meaning of this dance related to the labyrinth and its reference not only to prenuptial rites of passage and changes of status,⁶⁰ but also to the cycle of life and death, and the hope of life after death, symbolised by the changing of the dance direction, which seems to be a particularity of the intertwined dance.⁶¹

59 On the *geranos* dance, see Lawler 1946, 112–130; Delavaud-Roux 1994, 78–79; Moreno 2001, 120–129; Gadaleta 2002, 144; Mancini 2004–2005, 158–160. Written sources related to *geranos* are collected in Todisco 1996, 128–130, and in Todisco 1999, 445–447. Philostratus the Younger (*Imagines*, X, 18) quotes a depiction of an intertwining dance.

60 Buttitta 2008, 161–163.

61 An intertwined dance is depicted on an attic *lebes gamikos* attributed to the Syrikos Painter (470–450 a. C.). Museum of Mykonos, inv. 970. Todisco 1999, 444; Gadaleta 2002, 142–143, figg. 63–67.

As Luigi Todisco⁶² and other scholars have highlighted, the most interesting example of intertwined dance comes from Magna Graecia (Fig. 10). The “Dancers’ Tomb” in Ruvo, Apulia, features images in a bi-dimensional space on the four interior walls, which are dated to the fifth century BCE, and preserved at the National Archaeological Museum of Naples. It depicts a group of female choral dancers performing an intertwined dance, accompanied by a lyre player: they are ready to change the direction of movement, ideally around the dead.⁶³



Fig. 10 Naples, National Archaeological Museum. Invv. 9352–9357. Particular of the “Dancers’ Tomb” of Ruvo in Apulia. Fifth cent. BCE. From Todisco 1996, 127–126, tavv. LIII–LIX.

The neck of an Apulian volute krater from the fourth century BCE features another intertwined dance, performed by four female dancers in a sacred space – as indicated by the two *boukrania* (skulls) at the sides, typical iconographical markers of a sacred space (Fig. 11).⁶⁴ This vase, attributed to the De Schultess painter, may have originated in the area surrounding Taranto, and is preserved at the White and Levy Collection in New York.⁶⁵ Todisco⁶⁶ and Paolo Moreno⁶⁷ identify the symbolic meaning of the intertwined dance scene on the krater as connected to the relationship between birth

62 See also Todisco 1996, 435–465; Todisco 1999, 123–132; Gadaleta 2002, 135–156.

63 Naples, National Archaeological Museum. Invv. 9352–9357. Todisco 1996, 127–126, tavv. LIII–LIX; Gadaleta 2002, 8–13, figg. 1–6.

64 New York, Shelby White and Leon Levy Collection. Inv. 381. Todisco 1996, 127–128; Todisco 1999, 444, fig. 14; Gadaleta 2002, 146–147, figg. 69–71.

65 Trendall/Cambitoglou 1991, 133–135, n. 78.

66 Todisco 1996, 127–128; Todisco 1999, 444–445.

67 Moreno 2001, 126–128.

and death as a ritual of passage: this in turn can be compared with youth initiation and prenuptial rites.⁶⁸

Another example of a group of female dancers performing an intertwining dance, this time accompanied by an *aulos* player, is found on an Apulian *Thymiaterion*, a vase used for burning incense during rituals and wedding ceremonies (Fig. 12).⁶⁹ It is worth noting, too, that an unpublished terracotta group of three female intertwined dancers has been discovered in the tomb of a little girl from Herakleia, a Greek *polis* founded by Taranto. Other objects related to the female sphere and nuptial rites have been found in the same grave (dating to the end of fourth century BCE), and are preserved at the National Museum of Siritide-Policoro, on the Gulf of Taranto (Fig. 13).⁷⁰



Fig. 11 New York, Shelby White and Leon Levy Collection. Inv. 381. Intertwined dance performed by four female dancers in a sacred space depicted on the neck of an Apulian volute krater (from Taranto?). Fourth cent. BCE. From Todisco 1999, 444, fig. 14.

68 Lonsdale 1993, 72–73.

69 Beverly Hills, Antiquities trade. Todisco/Sisto 1998, 603, fig. 30; Todisco 1999, 447, fig. 15; Gadaleta 2002, 150, fig. 72.

70 Policoro (MT), National Archaeological Museum of Siritide. Inv. 216374. Unpublished.



Fig. 12 Beverly Hills, Antiquities trade. An intertwining dance accompanied by an *aulos* player depicted on an Apulian *Thymiaterion*, fourth cent. BCE.
Graphic reworking of image from Todisco 1999, 447, fig. 15 (image courtesy of Luigi Todisco).
Archaeo Design and Drawing: Orazio Pulvirenti



Fig. 13 Policoro (MT), National Archaeological Museum of Siritide. Inv. 216374.
Terracotta group with the representation of three intertwined females. End of fourth cent. BCE.
Photo: Angela Bellia

As Mario Torelli notes,⁷¹ the symbolic meaning of this particular dance appears to address an ideal symmetry between two transitions: marriage and death. Thus, depic-

71 Torelli 1992, 12.

tions of the intertwined dance seem to be related to these important phases of life, which may explain the presence of images of intertwined dancing groups in Magna Graecia, where this dance could be recalling performances related to the female sphere and rites of passage.

On the basis of this set of evidence and the contexts of their discovery, it should be considered that the intertwined dance and its particular movement, which allows the dancers to change the direction, symbolically signifies a change (of status, of life, of human condition): this symbolic meaning may explain its depiction on various media in different geographical areas and periods, as well as its association, in North Italy, with cults and rituals related to the female divinities, who were patronesses of fertility for both humans and nature.

Taken together, the archaeological evidence found in Magna Graecia and in the Cisalpine area suggests that intertwined dance was closely allied with ceremonies involving rites of passage and initiation, and with nuptial rites, linking intertwined dance with the cycle of death and rebirth. What remains to be understood is how these rituals were connected with events and marital unions promoted by Romans in an area on the border of Celtic and German regions at a moment when the Empire needed to establish and reinforce alliances in this area.⁷²

A Dancing Festival in the Cisalpine Area?

Religious ritual was a favourite subject for Roman sculptors and painters; we possess countless images of sacred events, but only a few that explicitly show a worshiper in the act of dancing. This is not surprising, given the difficulties of depicting movement. We have not distinguished between human and non-human dancers in the images of intertwined dances related to the worship of *Matres* and *Matronae*, but it is possible to consider them as reflective of human dance in honour of these divinities and their retinue. Therefore, the images present us at least with an idea of which dance was appropriate for which context.

As Naerebout has highlighted,⁷³ images were intended to portray “dance” but not any particular event. For this reason, the depictions (just like written sources) do not allow us to reconstruct actual performances, especially since we also lack the music and song texts. Not only can we never see or hear these performances, but we must also consider that a dance and a particular movement are never fixed but are constantly evolving, and even if a dance can be localised and pinned down in time, every performance is unique and can never be repeated in exactly the same way. Therefore, images

⁷² Beck 2009, 17–20.

⁷³ Naerebout 2019, 35.

can profitably be scrutinised in terms of the function and social role of dance as it marks an occasion as out of the ordinary, mobilises an audience, and conveys ideas about the community and about social relations.⁷⁴

As Beck has argued,⁷⁵ archaeological evidence related to the worship of *Matres* and *Matronae* has been most notably discovered in places connected with springs and water sources in the Cisalpine area, where the ritual use of grottoes dates back to pre-history.⁷⁶ There is evidence that caves were often used for celebrations related to the female and nuptial sphere:⁷⁷ the presence of springs and water sources, their protected entrances, and their liminality made grottoes particularly attractive as locations for the cult of the *Matres* and *Matronae*, who have often been identified with Nymphs, and, as Torelli notes,⁷⁸ are connected with the rites of passage of women and some seasonal festive occasions, perhaps similar to the *Matronalia*, a festival of nature's renewal and a New Year's celebration observed in Rome since the Archaic period, in honour of Juno Lucina, the goddess of childbirth, but also Roman mothers and wives.⁷⁹

Protecting women and embodying fertility were also functions of the *Matres* and *Matronae*, which would explain why they were compared and assimilated to the *Junones* in four inscriptions from Cisalpine area.⁸⁰ These various instances show that the term *Junones* was believed to be identical to the term *Matronae*: it may even have completely replaced it in some areas, including large parts of North Italy, after the Roman invasion.

A possible reference to such a festival in the scenes of female dances in the Cisalpine area could mean that women had their own particular religious roles, and suggest that the women were vital in the spread of the *Matres* and *Matronae* cult.⁸¹ It is worth considering that in this cult *elite* women, both local and Roman, had the chance to lead religious rituals and celebrations, as various forms of archaeological evidence seem to indicate. Like the *Matronalia*, *Matres* and *Matronae* worship allowed women to have a presence, specifically one that brought the Romans and local populations together.

This cult could serve as an example of a mixed culture that emerged in the Cisalpine area.⁸² Roman legal reforms made marriages much more viable, which helped to create social interactions and blood ties between Romans and local populations:⁸³ in particular, those Romans who married local women were exposed to the *Matronae*, and

74 Naerebout 2019, 49.

75 Beck 2009, 334–344.

76 David 2014, 180–181.

77 Larson 2001, 211–225; Buttitta 2013, 247–290.

78 Torelli 1984, 67.

79 Estienne 2011, 245–246; Brelich 2015, 224.

80 Epigraphic sources are collected in Beck 2009, 84.

81 Lomas 2014, 485–487.

82 Arslan 1994, 66.

83 Torelli 1988, 53–74.

gravitated towards the cult both to get closer to the locals and to win over the deities for protection.⁸⁴

The Roman presence – formed by soldiers and Italic immigrants⁸⁵ – did indeed use coercive imperialistic power in North Italy, but the participation across socio-cultural exchanges between both groups, which created the mixed ritual and iconography, suggests an active mutual participation in religious behaviour.⁸⁶ The opportunities related to the cult, as well as the family ties of marriage between Romans and locals, fostered this religious community. The *Matres* and *Matronae* cult in the Cisalpine area provides an example of Romans and locals forming communities together in the frontiers. In this case, a common religious worship brought the groups together in a social organisation.⁸⁷

Within this context, dance performances could function as a means of social control, helping to establish and maintain new social groupings.⁸⁸ The study of dance performances and their ritual contexts related to the Roman votive artefacts found in the Cisalpine area may help us to understand how social relations could be marked, shaped, and introduced by bodily and ritualised movement in special festivals and ritual acts.

Conclusion

Depictions of intertwined dances performed by groups of worshippers are not simply dedications and material objects but dynamic and expressive products of human behaviour in cult. Taking into account the communicative nature of dance, which carries a great deal of significance beyond that represented by everyday movement, these objects may have been conceived as remembrances of rituals that involved not only dancers (and, obviously, singers and musicians who formed a sonic background), but usually also priests, priestesses, or cult personnel in special events who were all relevant for the community. Thus, it is necessary to consider the representations of intertwined dancers, and their relationship with the religious sphere, on a case-by-case basis, while keeping in mind the different uses of the same type of representations for different sacred occasions, and, where possible, the differing archaeological contexts in which these depictions were found.

The images might themselves “participate” in these ceremonies, most likely related to rituals of social transformation. These sacred occasions were privileged moments

84 Rothe 2014, 506–507.

85 Sartori 1994, 120.

86 Rüpke 2014, 475–479.

87 Sartori 1994, 121. See also Lee-Stecum 2014, 464–467.

88 Slofstra 1983, 71–81.

for the consecration of these images to the divinities that ensured these passages. The worshippers might incorporate their offering into the ritual as a tool for illustrating proper behaviour during the sacred events.⁸⁹

Dance, alongside music and sound as inseparable components in the sacred sphere, strengthens the power of performances,⁹⁰ which relies in great part on the effect of a heightened multisensory experience:⁹¹ dancing performed in sacred settings was intended to maximise the effects of the ceremony, and to reinforce the solidarity engendered by these practices. Active participation in processing, listening, and viewing, created a *communitas* of shared experience.⁹² The desire to retain a tangible memento of a dance performance in a sacred setting could have led worshippers to offer particular dedications that depicted dancing performances: this may have contributed to evoking the experience of cult by recalling bodily movements and sounds in a sacred setting.⁹³ Keeping this perspective in mind, the dance scenes on Roman votive artefacts and the epigraphic dedications could be associated not only with a specific idea of ritual and dance performances in the local cult of *Matres* and *Matronae* in the Cisalpine area, but also with an explicit preservation of their memory.⁹⁴

The link between sacred events and dance performances during their celebrations is the key to understanding the symbolic meanings and the production of depictions of intertwined dancers on altars and images, which are spread across a broad geographical space and a wide chronological spectrum in the ancient world, particularly between Magna Graecia and Rome.

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89 Chaniotis 2009, 3–4.

90 Bell 1997, 159–164.

91 Betts 2017, 26–28.

92 Buttà 2014, 7–8.

93 Bellia 2018, 94–95.

94 Spickermann 2015, 412–414.

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Trois pas vers les dieux

Le tripudium entre danse et divination *

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Abstract: This chapter examines the term *tripudium* as a form of dance and a form of divination. In the context of religious processions (Arvals, Saliens, and others), the *tripudium* denotes a sequence of three steps which associates the singing of an hymn to the rhythmical beats of the feet. In divination, it signifies a way of controlling the consentment of the gods by observing whether the chickens eat. These two practices can be linked if one admits the existence of an archaic form of divination based on the observation of how the chickens behaved in general, and in particular of how they hopped towards their fodder. A contact between these two practices could have occurred in the context of the Salien rites, both at the level of the divinatory practices performed by these priests and at the level of the symbolism suggested by their dance and by the myth of their origin.

La première attestation de *tripudium* dans la littérature latine se trouve chez Catulle (63, 26) quand il décrit la danse des Galles, les fidèles de la Mater Magna. Tite-Live utilise ce terme pour décrire le mouvement des soldats ibères et gaulois (21, 42, 3 ; 25, 17, 4 ; 38, 17, 4).¹ *Tripudium* a donc une acception large. Cependant, avant tout, il est un terme technique décrivant la démarche de deux prêtresses romaines en contexte rituel, les arvales et les saliens², ainsi que le nom d'une pratique divinatoire consistant à observer si les poulets, sortis de leurs cages, mangent abondamment et font tomber de la nourriture de leur bec. Comment interpréter cette homonymie ? Les savants ont proposé des explications, qui oscillent entre deux extrêmes : d'un côté, Pighi³, par exemple, affirme que les deux sens techniques du terme seraient complètement

* Je remercie Mélanie Lozat, qui a relu cet article et m'a donné des importantes suggestions. Je remercie également G. Ferri d'avoir discuté avec moi le dossier des Saliens. En particulier, je suis très reconnaissante à John Scheid pour ses précieuses suggestions sur ces rituels très complexes.

1 Cf. aussi Pighi 1949–1950, 149–150.

2 Sur la portée identitaire de ce terme dans la culture romaine, cf. Alonso Fernández 2016a. Plus en général sur la danse à Rome, cf. Alonso Fernández 2020.

3 Pighi 1949–1950. Cf. aussi Foti 2011.

indépendants l'un de l'autre ; de l'autre côté, Habinek⁴ considère que la danse serait une imitation du sautillerment des oiseaux constituant l'augure. Si je reviens sur cette question, c'est pour considérer quelques aspects qui me paraissent avoir été négligés. Cette analyse permettra d'articuler les deux phénomènes, l'un par rapport à l'autre, sur la base des critères ayant plus affaire au sens des rites qu'à la dérivation étymologique. Pour accomplir ce parcours, nous partirons de la confrérie des arvales, pour laquelle nous disposons de comptes rendus épigraphiques, qui, bien que plus récents, ont cependant l'avantage d'offrir une compréhension détaillée du rituel. On passera ensuite à la danse des saliens et enfin à la comparaison avec le *tripudium* augural.

Le terme *tripudium*

Étymologiquement, *tripudium* signifie « trois pieds » (*tris* et *pes*)⁵ et désigne le fait de frapper les pieds par terre en composant des unités de trois (trois pas qui se répètent constituant une unité rythmique). Ce geste peut être utilisé par exemple pour la scansion d'un rythme métrique. Un passage du Pseudo-Marius Victorinus est particulièrement intéressant parce qu'il ajoute une ultérieure signification au « pied » : « il est appelé pied soit parce que dans la percussion métrique le battement de pied est posé et levé ; soit parce que, puisque nous marchons et avançons grâce aux pieds, ainsi le vers avance et scande à travers les pieds métriques ».⁶ Le « pied » est ainsi compris comme le mouvement qui permet aux vers d'avancer de la même manière qu'avancent les humains.

Dans le contexte des confréries religieuses, *tripudium* désigne une démarche propre à certains rituels, où le rythme joue un rôle important parce qu'à la déambulation s'associe le chant. En effet, les arvales ainsi que les saliens effectuent le *tripudium* en chantant des hymnes.⁷ Si l'utilisation plus large prédomine dans la littérature latine, c'est cependant le *terminus technicus* qui nous intéresse ici.

Le *tripudium* des arvales

Lors de la fête annuelle dans le sanctuaire extra-urbain de Dea Dia, la sodalité des arvales accomplit le *tripudium* et récite le *carmen*.⁸ Le terme *tripudium* n'est jamais utilisé,

4 Habinek 2005, 28.

5 Pour une probable étymologie grecque cf. par exemple La Rue 1995, 26.

6 Marius Victorinus, GL VI, 44, 4-6 : *pes vocatur sive quia in percussione metrica pedis pulsus ponitur tolliturque, seu quia, ut nos pedibus nostris ingredimur atque progredimus, ita et versus per hos pedes metricos procedit et scandit*. Cf. aussi Marbach 1939.

7 Cf. Scheid 2007.

8 Le verbe utilisé est *tripodare* traduit par Ernout/Meillet 1932 comme « danser à trois temps ».

mais le verbe *tripodare* apparaît dans les comptes rendus de la confrérie pour décrire un rituel qui, comme l'a relevé John Scheid,⁹ n'accompagne aucun rite sacrificiel. Il se situe au contraire après les sacrifices et l'onction de la statue. La récitation de l'hymne scandée sur les trois pas représente, affirme-t-il, presque une conclusion des sacrifices et constitue un rite autonome qui, pour autant, se différencie de la prononciation d'une prière accompagnant d'autres gestes d'offrande. Elle est une offrande en elle-même.

Ce rite est décrit de manière particulièrement suggestive dans les comptes rendus. Les arvaux présents dans le sanctuaire se rendent dans le temple de Dea Dia où ils accomplissent quelques autres rites, et ensuite :

Puis, ils s'assirent sur les bancs de marbre et partagèrent les pains 'décorés' de laurier entre les esclaves publics. Ils reçurent des savons (?) avec des raves et parfumèrent les déesses. Le sanctuaire fut fermé et tous sortirent. Enfermés à l'intérieur, la toge relevée, les livres pris, les prêtres frappèrent le sol de leurs pieds selon un rythme ternaire en scandant l'hymne en ces termes :

« Aidez-nous ô Lares, aidez-nous ô Lares ... Mars ... »

[...]

Après la danse, les esclaves publics entrèrent ensuite sur un signe donné et recueillirent les livrets.¹⁰

Selon John Scheid,¹¹ le fait que les arvaux soient enfermés dans le sanctuaire serait une manière de mimer l'activité des divinités invoquées sur le territoire romain représenté par cet espace fermé : les Lares, divinités du terroir donnent le cadre de l'opération demandée, Mars protège ce territoire et ses récoltes, et les Semones veillent sur ceux-ci. A cette interprétation, on peut ajouter encore quelques réflexions à propos de la « danse » en analysant de près des détails énoncés dans le texte.

Les arvaux se préparent pour accomplir le rite en remontant leur toge et en prenant les livres (*succincti libellis acceptis*)¹² qui leur sont donnés par les esclaves. Ces derniers

9 Scheid 2008, 22. Sur les arvaux, voir aussi Scheid 1990.

10 Scheid 1998, 295 ss. (traduction légèrement modifiée), inscription no. 100, a (recto), 29-38 (Elagabal année 218 ap. J. C.) : *Deinde in aedem intraver(unt) et ollas precati sunt et osteis apertis per clivum iacta / verunt, deinde subsellis marmoreis consed(erunt) et panes laureat(os) per public(os) partiti sunt ib<i> omn(es) l<oment>a / cum rapinis acceperunt et deas unguentaverunt et aed<e=I>s clusa e(st) omnes <f>or<a>s ex<i>erunt. Ibi sacerdotes / clusi succincti libellis acceptis carmen descendentes tripodaverunt in verba haec enos Lases iuvate / [e]nos Lases iuvate [...] / post tripodationem deinde signo dato publ<i>c<i> introier(unt) et libellos receperunt.*

11 Scheid 2008, 21.

12 Scheid 1998, 303 ss., inscription no. 101, 3-4 (année 219) : *et aed(es) clusa e(st) : omn(es) foras [exi] er(unt) ibi / sac[er]dotes clusi succinct(i) libellis acc(eptis) carm(en) dic(entes) tripodaver(unt) / deinde signo dato publ(ici) introier(unt) et libell(os) recep(erunt) ...* « Ensuite le sanctuaire fut fermé, tous sortirent. Enfermés à l'intérieur, la toge relevée, pris les livres, les prêtres frappèrent le sol selon un rythme ternaire en récitant l'hymne. Ensuite, au signal donné, les esclaves publics entrèrent et recueillirent les livrets ».

ensuite sortent, ferment les portes et ne reviennent qu'à la fin du rite, pour recueillir les livrets. Le fait de retrousser la toge est un geste qui indique la dimension cinétique du rituel. L'adjectif *succinctus* ou *incinctus* est d'ailleurs utilisé pour les Lares qui ont leur tunique remontée et serrée autour de leur taille par une ceinture. M. Bettini a relevé que cet adjectif est mentionné par Ovide et Perse comme une épithète de ces divinités.¹³ On parle de Lares *succincti* ou *incincti* comme si ce détail de leur habillement était déterminant pour leur identité. Effectivement, cette manière de porter les habits révèle un état d'activité : être *incinctus* est la marque de celui qui se met à accomplir des travaux, contrairement à celui qui est *discinctus*, c'est-à-dire qui porte la tunique détachée, signe de négligence et de détente. Bettini cite comme exemple un passage du *Rudens* de Plaute, dans lequel une prêtresse de Vénus accueille deux jeunes femmes et leur réchauffe l'eau pour le bain. Pour ce faire, elle retrousse sa tunique (411 : *eapse <sic> succincta*), signe qu'elle se met au travail. Retrousser (*succingere*) des habits permet en effet d'être plus rapide dans les mouvements et caractérise ceux qui les accomplissent avec zèle. Les Lares *succincti* sont donc des dieux en action.

Si on revient maintenant aux arvaes, on comprend que l'ajustement de la toge ne représente pas seulement un banal geste de préparation qui leur permettra de déambuler aisément sur un rythme ternaire, mais il constitue plutôt un marqueur de commencement, comme le geste de se laver les mains dans d'autres rites. En ajustant leur toge, les arvaes indiquent qu'ils passent à une dimension dynamique de la procédure rituelle. On pourrait évoquer comme comparaison le *cinctus Gabinus*, c'est-à-dire la manière de se draper la toge sur la tête propre de ceux qui s'apprêtent à se vouer aux ennemis pour sauver sa propre armée (*devotio*). Comme l'a remarqué A. Dubourdieu, se draper la toge selon le *cinctus Gabinus* est le geste de celui qui se met en action pour franchir une frontière, pour être à la fois sacrificateur et victime.¹⁴ Modifier l'habit d'une certaine manière est donc un signe tangible de l'entrée en action.

Quant aux livres, instruments leur permettant de bien prononcer l'hymne, utilisés à la manière d'autres supports rituels contenant des prières, ils sont gardés à la main lors de la déambulation. Le fait que les prêtres lisent des chants dans des livres tout en déambulant (*tripodantes carmen legerunt*)¹⁵ laisse imaginer que leur démarche devait être plutôt calme, sans sauts ni pas rapides. Le *carmen* d'ailleurs ne devait pas être un hymne chanté, mais plutôt récité : les textes précisent qu'il est lu ou parlé.¹⁶ Quant au mouvement des pieds, J. Scheid arrive à la conclusion que leur battement scande la

13 Cf. par exemple Ovide, *fast.* 2, 633–634 : *et libate dapes, ut, grati pignus honoris, / nutriat incinctos missa patella Lares* (« Offrez également des mets, comme gage d'un honneur apprécié, afin qu'une patelle envoyée nourrisse les Lares à la tunique retroussée »). Bettini 2015, 57–75.

14 Dubourdieu 1986, 16 ; cf. aussi Ferri 2017, 354 qui souligne le geste de se tenir le menton. Je remercie G. Ferri de m'avoir suggéré ce parallèle.

15 Scheid 1998, 334, no. 114, colonne 2 (année 240), 33–34 : *libellos acceperunt, et tripodantes carmen legerunt, et signo dato officialibus* ; ligne 35 : *libellos reddiderunt*.

16 Cf. Scheid 2008, 21.

métrique du *carmen* dans le sens où chaque *kolon* – c'est-à-dire chaque petite unité formée par des groupements des syllabes – est composé de trois temps : ce chant est donc une « tripodie ». C'est en scandant ces *kola* à trois temps que les arvaes exécutaient leur *tripudium*.

Scheid a également relevé le parallèle entre cette performance et la procession de 27 jeunes filles organisée à la suite des prodiges de 207 av. J.-C.¹⁷ Les autorités romaines avaient décidé d'expié des prodiges par différents rites. L'un d'eux était composé d'un hymne, rédigé par le poète le plus en vue du moment, Livius Andronicus, que les filles devaient chanter en procession :

Après quoi, les 27 jeunes filles, revêtues de longues robes, s'avançaient en chantant en l'honneur de Junon Reine un hymne à l'époque, peut-être, digne d'éloge pour des esprits incultes, mais qui, s'il était cité, serait aujourd'hui grossier et informe ; marchant derrière les rangs des jeunes filles, les décemvirs, couronnés de laurier et vêtus de la prétexte, allèrent de la porte au forum, en empruntant le vicus Jugarius. Au forum, la procession s'arrêta, et, faisant passer une corde par leurs mains (*reste data*), les jeunes filles s'avancèrent, accompagnant leur chant par le rythme obtenu par le battement de leurs pieds (*uirgines sonum uocis pulsu pedum modulantes incesserunt*).¹⁸

L'exhibition des jeunes filles a lieu au Forum, où la procession s'arrête pour que le chant et les mouvements des pieds ensemble se présentent comme une chorégraphie : elles accomplissent une performance en tant que groupe dans le cadre de la performance plus vaste. L'ablatif *reste data* est difficile à interpréter : il indique soit que les jeunes filles tenaient une corde, soit qu'elles se donnaient les mains afin de former une chaîne.¹⁹ Il convient de retenir principalement que les jeunes filles modulent le son de la voix sur le rythme de leurs pas (*sonum uocis pulsu pedum modulantes*) et que ce détail représente un parallèle pertinent avec le *tripudium* des arvaes. Comme eux, les filles constituent également un groupe à part à l'intérieur de la procession à laquelle participent aussi les décemvirs. L'hommage rendu à la déesse à travers le chant accompagné du rythme des pieds – qui dans le cas des filles n'est pas appelé *tripudium* – leur est confié comme la récitation de l'hymne est confiée aux arvaes.

17 Pour le passage de Tite-Live et l'expiation des prodiges cf. Champeaux 1996 ; pour la procession cf. récemment l'interprétation de Curtis 2021.

18 Tite-Live 27, 37, 13–14 trad. Jal 1998, légèrement modifiée : *tum septem et uiginti uirgines, longam indutae uestem, carmen in lunonem reginam canentes ibant, illa tempestate forsitan laudabile rudibus ingeniis, nunc abhorrens et inconditum si referatur ; uirginum ordinem sequebantur decemviri coronati laurea praetextatique. a porta Iugario uico in forum uenere ; in foro pompa constitit et per manus reste data uirgines sonum uocis pulsu pedum modulantes incesserunt.*

19 Le seul autre parallèle connu dans la littérature se trouve chez Térence, *Adel.* 752, où un personnage affirme vouloir danser entre des femmes « en tirant une corde » (*tu inter eas restim ductans saltabis*). Pour avoir une idée de cette performance, on l'a comparée avec celle du célèbre tombeau de Ruvo en Apulie qui remonte à l'année 400 av. J. C. On y voit 27 jeunes filles qui dansent en se donnant la main et forment comme une corde. Cf. Champeaux 1996 ; Bellia dans ce volume.

Un regard porté au contexte italice permet d'établir un parallèle avec un autre rite composé d'une procession rythmée et d'un texte récité. Les Tables Eugubines présentent le terme *atripursatu* (< **a-tri-pod-a-tod*), qui est un impératif futur à la troisième personne se référant à l'officiant et qui semble construit sur la même racine que le terme *tripudium*²⁰. Il indique un mouvement à trois temps et est formé par un préverbe *a-* ou *aha-* correspondant à la préposition latine *ad* indiquant un déplacement vers un lieu.²¹ Il constitue la base d'une prière prononcée par l'*arfertur* du collège sacerdotal des *Atiierie*, c'est-à-dire celui qui encadre les prises d'auspices, effectue les sacrifices et organise le banquet des Frères.²² Cet officiant n'accomplit pas une danse, mais une procession lors de laquelle les pieds donnent le rythme à sa démarche et à ses gestes rituels. Il ne prononce pas un hymne, c'est-à-dire un chant ayant des ambitions littéraires, mais une prière fonctionnelle au rite. A la différence des arvales, donc, pour lesquels la récitation du *carmen* et la démarche *tripodantes* constituait une offrande aux dieux en elle-même, le *tripudium* iguvin semble être plutôt une forme d'accompagnement d'autres rituels tels que les gestes d'offrande auxquels les prières se réfèrent. En outre, il est accompli par une seule personne et à la vue de tous, tandis que les arvales récitent leur hymne tous ensemble et à huis clos dans le sanctuaire de Dea Dia. Cependant, au-delà des différences, même ce cas italice confirme quelques idées générales déjà vues en analysant le dossier des arvales, c'est-à-dire que le *tripudium* n'est pas une danse indépendante, mais une performance associant mouvement et parole, comme l'est aussi la *choreia*, présente au cœur de la vie politique et artistiques des cités grecques.²³ Le rythme constitue la base pour la scansion du texte, qu'il soit un hymne comme dans le cas des arvales, ou une prière comme dans le cas des tables de Gubbio.

Le *tripudium* des saliens

L'autre confrérie réputée pour le *tripudium* est celle des saliens. Les *prêtres danseurs de Rome* – pour reprendre le titre que R. Cirilli²⁴ donne à sa monographie – tirent leur nom de *salio*, *salire*, qui signifie « sauter, danser ». Selon Varron (*ling.* 5, 85), leur nom viendrait en effet de « *salitare* parce que, chaque année, sur le Comitium, au cours de leurs cérémonies rituelles, ils ont la coutume de le faire et ils doivent le faire ». ²⁵ Le « saut de danse » est donc un élément fondamental de l'identité des saliens : Varron

20 Je remercie Emmanuel Dupraz pour avoir discuté avec moi ce terme et d'avoir clarifié les différents passages où il apparaît, c'est-à-dire II a 15 – II a 43 ; II b 1 – II b 29 ; VI b 16 ; VI b 36 ; VII a 23 ; VII a 36. Cf. Dupraz 2020, 59–60 et 88–89.

21 Untermann 2000, 62–63.

22 Lacam 2011.

23 Weiss 2020.

24 Cirilli 1913. Sur les Saliens cf. Bloch 1958; Ferri 2021 avec la bibliographie citée.

25 Varron, *ling.* 5, 85 : *Salii ab salitando, quod facere in comitio in sacris quotannis et solent et debent.*

utilise en effet les verbes *solent et debent* indiquant ainsi un devoir rituel. Le mythe qui raconte l'origine de la procession, lors de laquelle les saliens portent les boucliers, n'explique pas pourquoi elle est constituée de pas de danse. À part des divergences sur les origines (une peste, des foudres qui frappent la terre), les auteurs concordent sur la structure de base : les 12 saliens²⁶ sont chargés de porter en procession un bouclier donné à Numa par Jupiter, pour lui témoigner que l'accord entre les dieux et les humains est rétabli, et 11 autres boucliers identiques sont fabriqués par un artisan nommé Mamurius Veturius en vue de protéger le vrai bouclier d'un possible vol. La procession des saliens, qui se déroule à travers la ville (*per urbem*, cf. Tite-Live ci-dessous), année après année, dans le temps cyclique du rituel, est un signe tangible du partenariat avec les dieux dans la gestion de la *res publica*.²⁷ Il s'agira dès lors d'examiner les gestes rituels accomplis lors de ces processions et de comprendre, en particulier, comment s'articule le *tripudium* aux autres éléments rituels.

Tite-Live raconte ainsi leur genèse :

Numa choisit également douze saliens en l'honneur de Mars Gradivus et leur donna comme costume distinctif une tunique brodée et par-dessus la tunique une plaque de bronze sur la poitrine. Il les chargea de porter les boucliers tombés du ciel qu'on nomme *ancilia* en chantant des hymnes accompagnés de trois pas cadencés et d'une danse cérémonielle.²⁸

Ce passage de Tite-Live indique que la tâche rituelle des saliens se compose de trois éléments : le chant des *carmina*, les séquences de trois pas cadencés et la danse sautée.

Le chant des *carmina* peut être synchronique aux mouvements des pieds, comme on l'a déjà vu dans les cas précédents. Le *tripudium* est évidemment l'unité de trois pas qui scandent le rythme par le battement des pieds. Cette interprétation est confirmée aussi par un passage d'Horace (*carmin.* 4, 1, 28), selon lequel des jeunes filles et garçons dansent en tapant la terre trois fois comme les saliens (*in morem Salium ter quatiant*

26 Il s'agit des *Salii Palatini* que la tradition fait remonter à Numa. 12 autres *Salii*, dit *Collini* auraient été ajoutés par Tullus Hostilius, cf. Ferri 2016.

27 Cf. Habinek 2005, 8–33 ; Curtis 2021. Selon G. Dumézil (1974, 286–287) l'intervention des saliens encadre le début et la fin de la saison guerrière : ils prennent part aux Quinquatrus du 19 mars, qui marquent le début des activités guerrières, et à l'Armilustrium du 19 octobre, qui, au contraire, en désigne la fin avec la purification des armes. Les saliens sont répartis en deux collèges : les Palatini, qui s'occupent du culte de Mars, et les Collini ou Agonales qui s'occupent du culte de Quirinus. Selon Rüpkke 1990, 24–25 cependant les saliens participent seulement aux festivités de mars et pas à celles du mois d'octobre. Cette présence automnale serait selon lui une interprétation de Dumézil à partir d'une lecture erronée d'un passage de Varron. Pourtant l'analyse détaillée des sources analysées par Wissowa 1912, 144 ; 449–450 ; 555–558 pourrait au contraire fournir des arguments pour suivre Dumézil et interpréter cette prétrise en lien étroit avec le cycle de la guerre, de la conservation des armes et de la triade Jupiter, Mars, Quirinus, comme l'affirme Serv. *Aen.* 8, 663.

28 Tite-Live 1, 20, 4 : *Salios item duodecim Marti Gradiuo legit, tunicaeque pictae insigne dedit et super tunicam aeneum pectori tegumen ; caelestiaque arma, quae ancilia appellantur, ferre ac per urbem ire canentes carmina cum tripudiis sollemnique saltatu iussit* (trad. Baillet 1940, modifiée).

humum).²⁹ Mais comment les Anciens associent-ils le chant rythmé des hymnes saliens avec les sauts de danse ? La lecture d'autres sources nous permettra de mieux comprendre.

Denys d'Halicarnasse affirme que les saliens « accomplissent des mouvements en rythme avec les armes au son de la flûte tantôt tous ensemble, tantôt en alternance et ils chantent des hymnes ancestraux ensemble avec des danses ».³⁰ Même si Denys d'Halicarnasse ne fait aucune mention des « trois pas », il parle de rythme, terme sous lequel il faut certainement entendre le *tripudium*. En outre, il relève que les saliens dansent tantôt ὅμοῦ (« ensemble »), tantôt παραλλάξ (« en alternance »). Cet élément a été clarifié par la comparaison avec les sources latines. Des chercheurs ont en effet montré que les verbes *antruare* et *redantruare*, cités exclusivement par Festus et Paul Diacre,³¹ désignent des figures chorégraphiques, lors desquels le *praesul*, c'est-à-dire celui qui dirige la danse, fait des mouvements, imités ensuite par les autres saliens. De nombreuses études³² ont pointé la dimension circulaire de cette chorégraphie, puisque le verbe *antruare* est comparé par Paul Diacre au mouvement obtenu par une louche qui remue des *exta* (partie de viande réservée aux dieux) qui bouillent dans une casserole.³³ Un terme en particulier a suscité beaucoup de discussions. Le poète satirique Lucilius (2^e av. J.-C.) cité par Festus p. 334 Lindsay aurait utilisé le terme *vulgus* pour désigner la communauté qui imite les mouvements du chef de danse : *praesul ut ampruet inde*, <ut> *uulgus redampruet* (« quand le chef des danseurs danse, la foule lui répond avec les mêmes mouvements »). La question porte sur le groupe désigné par *vulgus*. En effet ce terme, qui signifie littéralement « la foule », pourrait signifier d'un côté toutes les personnes qui assistent à la danse des saliens reproduisant les mouvements du *praesul*. Dans ce cas, *vulgus* représenterait tous les Romains qui dansent avec

29 Cf. Scheid 2008, 22.

30 Denys d'Halicarnasse 2, 70, 5 : κινῶνται γὰρ πρὸς αὐλὸν ἐν ῥυθμῷ τὰς ἐνοπλίους κινήσεις τοτὲ μὲν ὁμοῦ, τοτὲ δὲ παραλλάξ καὶ πατρίους τινὰς ὕμνους ἄδουσιν ἅμα ταῖς χορείαις, trad. personnelle.

31 Festus p. 334 Lindsay : *Redantruare dicitur in Saliorum exultationibus*, « cum praesul ampruauit », quod est, motus edidit, ei referuntur inuicem idem motus. Lucilius (320) : « praesul ut ampruet inde, <ut> uulgus redampruet †att. » Pacuius (104) : « Promerenda gratia simul cum uideam Graios nihil mediocriter redampruare, opibusque summis persequi. » (« Redantruare : on dit cela dans les danses des saliens, parce que, lorsque le chef des danseurs ampruauit, c'est-à-dire qu'il a exécuté certains mouvements, on reproduit en retour les mêmes mouvements. Lucilius (320) : « Quand le chef des danseurs danse (*ampruet*), la foule lui répond avec les mêmes mouvements (*redampruet*) ». Pacuius (104) : « Il faut mériter sa faveur, d'autant que je vois les Grecs redonner en retour non de manière mesurée (*redampruare*) et poursuivre des plus grandes richesses. » Guittard 2007, 61–97 ; Alonso Fernández 2016b ; Ferri 2016. Ce mouvement a été comparé avec celui que mettent en scène les jeunes lors qu'ils accomplissent le *lusus Troiae*, cf. *infra*.

32 Cf. Alonso Fernández 2016b et la bibliographie citée.

33 Festus p. 9 Lindsay : *antroare gratias referre. Truant moventur. Truam quoque vocant, quo permovent coquentes exta*. (« *antroare* : rendre grâce. *Truant* ils se meuvent. Ils appellent aussi *trua* l'ustensile avec lequel ils remuent les entrailles, en les faisant cuire »). Sur la relation de ce mouvement avec celui accompli par les jeunes représentés sur l'oinochoé de Tragiatella, censés accomplir le *lusus Troiae*, cf. Menichetti 1992 ; 1994, 57–65.

la confrérie. De l'autre côté, Lucilius aurait pu utiliser *vulgus*, dans un style propre à la satire, pour indiquer la sodalité des saliens comme si elle était une « foule »³⁴. Dans ce cas, donc, aux mouvements du *praesul*, répondraient seulement les confrères. Les arvaes ainsi que les 27 jeunes filles vues auparavant sembleraient plutôt valider cette deuxième hypothèse. Pour les arvaes, nous avons remarqué que la récitation du *carmen* au rythme ternaire du pied, qui se fait à huis-clos après avoir fait sortir les esclaves, constitue un moment de cohésion du groupe. De même, les jeunes filles dansent entre elles à l'intérieur d'une procession ayant plusieurs acteurs. En outre, il serait plutôt étonnant qu'aucun texte ne fasse allusion à une foule de Romains dansant avec les saliens. A mon avis, il est donc plus probable que la procession des saliens constitue un moment lors duquel la confrérie se montre dans la ville en tant qu'unité, en mettant en valeur sa cohésion corporative.

Quelques autres informations intéressantes sont présentes chez Plutarque qui décrit la danse accomplie pendant le mois de mars : « ils frappent les boucliers avec des petits poignards. La danse consiste principalement en un mouvement des pieds ; les saliens se déplacent gracieusement, en décrivant des tours et des figures sur un rythme rapide et précipité, avec un mélange de force et légèreté ».³⁵ En parlant de Mamurius Veturius, l'artisan qui aurait construit les onze boucliers semblables à celui descendu du ciel, Plutarque affirme encore : « on dit que Mamurius, fut récompensé de son habileté par la mention (de son nom) dans le chant récité par les saliens avec la pyrrhique ».³⁶ La performance rituelle des saliens, rapprochée aux danses grecques de type militaire (pyrrhique), se déroule selon un parcours vaste de la ville de Rome,³⁷ comme le disait aussi Tite-Live, et se compose d'une chorégraphie complexe, réunissant des sauts vigoureux au son de la flûte et au rythme des boucliers frappés par les poignards ainsi que du chant des hymnes.

D'après les descriptions analysées, le *carmen saliare* semblerait chanté à la différence du *carmen arvale* qui, comme nous l'avons vu, est dit ou lu, mais pas chanté. Tite-Live en effet emploie pour les saliens le verbe *canere* ; Denys d'Halicarnasse (ἄδουσιν) et Plutarque (δι' ᾠδῆς) parlent aussi de chant. Contrairement aux arvaes, qui lisent le *carmen* dans des livres, les saliens ne semblent pas utiliser de supports écrits. On peut imaginer que lors des processions des saliens, il pouvait y avoir des moments de marche accompagnée du son des armes entrechoquées et des moments où la performance acrobatique prenait le dessous et lors desquels les saliens accomplissaient

34 Pour la discussion de ce terme cf. Alonso Fernández 2011, 274–276 ; 2016b, 14 ; 2017.

35 Plutarque, *Num.* 13, 5 : ἐγχειριδίους δὲ μικροῖς τὰ ὄπλα κρούοντες. ἢ δὲ ἄλλη τῆς ὀρχήσεως ποδῶν ἔργον ἐστὶ : κινουῦνται γὰρ ἐπιτερπῶς, ἕλιγμούς τινας καὶ μεταβολὰς ἐν ῥυθμῷ τάχος ἔχοντι καὶ πυκνότητα μετὰ ῥώμης καὶ κουφότητος ἀποδιδόντες (trad. Ozanam 2001, modifiée).

36 Plutarque, *Num.* 13, 7 : τῷ δὲ Μαμουρίῳ λέγουσι μισθὸν γενέσθαι τῆς τέχνης ἐκείνης μνήμην τινὰ δι' ᾠδῆς ὑπὸ τῶν Σαλίων ἅμα τῇ πυρρίχῃ διαπεραινομένης (trad. personnelle). Sur la pyrrhique, cf. Ceccarelli 1998.

37 Cf. Ferri 2016.

des figures « avec un mélange de force et légèreté », comme le dit Plutarque. Servius Danielis ajoute que « les saliens entouraient les autels en faisant le *tripudium* ; tandis qu'ils dansaient armés à la manière ancienne après la victoire des Tiburtins sur les Volsques » :³⁸ le *tripudium* donc semble être la démarche qui caractérise le mieux l'attitude des saliens quand ils s'adressent aux dieux.

En comparant ces descriptions avec le mythe d'origine, on est frappé par le rôle des boucliers. Si la tradition raconte en effet que cette procession a été établie pour mettre en valeur ces objets, qui sont des *pignora imperii*, c'est-à-dire des objets dont dépend la stabilité de l'empire,³⁹ et dont un serait « achéiropoïète » puisque descendu du ciel, le rite ne semble pas leur accorder la place d'objets sacrés. Ils sont portés en procession en tant qu'instruments rituels, tels que les livres par les arvaes. Ils ne semblent pas traités comme *mirabilia* à vénérer, comme on s'attendrait en lisant le mythe d'origine. Au contraire, leur fonction est clairement celle de produire un son peut-être pour battre le rythme ou pour d'autres raisons rituelles, par exemple pour produire un effet de protection grâce au bruit, comme le soutient Castaldo.⁴⁰

Le fameux passage de Sénèque (*Epist. Lucil.* 15, 4), toujours cité quand on parle des saliens,⁴¹ compare leurs sauts à ceux des *fullones*, c'est-à-dire à ceux qui foulent les tissus. Ce travail en effet, consistait à battre, sous des coups des pieds, des tissus de laine dans des vasques pleines de l'argile et d'eau chaude jusqu'à ce qu'ils feutrent et donnent un produit plus imperméable. Titinius, auteur des comédies à peu près contemporain de Terence, écrit une pièce ayant pour titre *Fullones* ou *Fullonia*, dont nous sont conservés quelques fragments. Un passage fait justement référence à ce travail des pieds : « c'est ici la terre, et non l'eau, où tu as l'habitude de babiller tes pieds, en foulant la craie, puisque tu laves les vêtements ».⁴² Le fait de presser ces tissus sous les pieds était donc en effet considéré comme typique de cette profession, pas seulement à Rome : un hiéroglyphe égyptien utilisait déjà deux jambes dans l'eau pour représenter le foulon. Même s'il s'agit probablement d'un hasard il vaut la peine de signaler que les *fullones* ont leur fête au même moment que les saliens, c'est-à-dire le 19 mars, lors de la fête des Quinquatrus.⁴³

38 Servius Danielis, in *Aen.* 8, 285 : *Salii sunt, qui tripudiantes aras circumibant. saltabant autem ritu veteri armati post uictoriam Tiburtinorum de Volscis* (trad. personnelle).

39 Cf. Servius, in *Aen.* 7, 188 et Ferri 2010, 203–206.

40 Sur l'importance du son dans ce rite cf. Castaldo 2022, que je remercie de m'avoir permis de lire avant publication. Elle met en relief que le bruit produit par les boucliers peut être comparé à celui d'autres rites de protection de territoires.

41 Cf. par exemple Alonso Fernández 2011, 171 ; Ferri 2016, 87.

42 Nonius Marcellus p. 245, 32 ; cf. Blümner 1875, 161–162 ; Bardon 1956, vol. 2, 39–40.

43 Ovide, *fast.* 3, 821–822 : les *fullones* célèbrent en effet la fête pour Minerve la déesse des activités artisanales et les saliens célèbrent leur cortège comme pendant d'autres jours de mars, cf. Dumézil 1974, 286.

Le discours tourne de plus en plus autour du battement des pieds, un geste qui, combiné à l'élan des sauts, doit avoir créé un climat particulier, probablement ressenti comme joyeux. Dans un de ses *carmina* (1, 37, 1-4), Horace fait en effet appel à l'image des saliens pour inciter à avoir une attitude heureuse après la nouvelle de la mort de Marc Antoine et Cléopâtre, ennemis de Rome (30 av. J.-C.). Sur la base d'une poésie du poète grec Alcée, il compose à son tour : « Maintenant tu peux boire, tu peux frapper ton pied libre sur la terre ; maintenant, amis, le temps est venu d'orner le lit de banquet (lectisterne) des dieux avec un repas digne des saliens ». ⁴⁴ Horace n'hésite pas à mobiliser l'image des saliens pour inciter à boire, à manger et à danser. Le repas des saliens devait être renommé pour son abondance et leur danse devait bien se prêter à peindre ce climat d'excitation. Il se pourrait, dans ce contexte, que le terme *tripudium* acquiert une coloration de « joie » ⁴⁵ en association avec l'*exsultatio*. En effet, le *tripudium* se laisse peu à peu attirer dans la sphère sémantique de *exsultare* jusqu'à contaminer sa signification originelle pour prendre celle d'effervescence émotionnelle, et ensuite aussi d'élan de joie. ⁴⁶ On peut citer à ce propos aussi la probable étymologie commune de *tripudium* et de *triumphus*, c'est-à-dire d'un rite qui, selon Bonfante, passe d'une procession de purification à celle d'une « personal glorification of the general ». ⁴⁷ D'ailleurs, le terme « triumphe » scande le *carmen arvale*. ⁴⁸

Le *tripudium* des saliens est donc l'emblème de la fête et leur danse acrobatique avec le battement des pieds constitue une « icône » de cette performance. Cela est compréhensible si on pense à l'impact visuel et sonore provoqué par ces douze jeunes qui atterrissent tous ensemble avec leurs boucliers à la main. On comprend la préoccupation de Catulle (17, 5), qui craint pour la stabilité d'un pont à leur passage ! ⁴⁹ A la différence du *tripudium* des arvaux, qui semble être plutôt une « pavane » maîtrisée – les livres à la main dénotant une certaine *gravitas* –, et de l'*atripursatu* de Gubbio avec son avancement posé qui accompagne rites et prières, le *tripudium* des saliens est la base d'un vrai spectacle chorégraphique, avec saut et acrobaties : il véhicule une effervescence joyeuse.

44 Horace, *carm.* 1, 37, 1-4 : *Nunc est bibendum, nunc pede libero / pulsanda tellus, nunc Saliaribus / ornare pulvinar deorum / tempus erat dapibus, sodales* (trad. personnelle). Voir Schlapbach dans ce volume, ci-dessous p. 291.

45 Pour décrire quelqu'un qui a satisfaction à accomplir des méfaits, Cicéron (*Sest.* 88) utilise les participes présents *exsultantem ac tripudiantem* hors du contexte de la danse des saliens. Cf. aussi Alonso Fernández 2011, 125-126 et, en particulier sur ce passage, 87.

46 La Rue 1995 met en relief cette connotation qui se renforce surtout à partir des textes de l'antiquité chrétienne.

47 Bonfante Warren 1970, 66.

48 Scheid 1998, no. 100, a (recto) 29-38.

49 Guittard 2007, 69.

Le *tripudium* dans la divination

L'*auspicium ex tripudiis* est un *terminus technicus* de la langue augurale indiquant une manière de contrôler le consentement des dieux de la part des généraux quand ils veulent accomplir une entreprise guerrière. A la fin de la République, il consiste à observer si les poulets, préalablement gardés dans une cage et affamés, une fois libérés, mangent et font tomber quelques bribes de leur bec. Il est décrit, entre autres, dans le fameux passage de Cicéron :

L'auspicant dit : « S'ils mangent, annonce-le ! » – « Ils mangent. » Quels oiseaux ? Et où ? On répond que l'officiant appelé pour cette raison « pullaire » a apporté les poulets (*pulli*) dans une cage. C'est donc cela les oiseaux messagers de Jupiter ! Qu'ils mangent ou non, quelle importance ? Cela n'a aucun rapport avec les auspices. Mais puisqu'il est nécessaire, quand ils mangent, que quelque chose tombe de leur bec et frappe la terre (cela s'appelait d'abord *terripavium* puis *terripudium*, et cette forme se dit maintenant *tripudium*), puisque donc une boulette tombe du bec d'un poulet, un *tripudium* parfait (*tripudium solistimum*) est annoncé à l'auspicant.⁵⁰

Cicéron affirme qu'il y a *tripudium solistimum*, le signe parfait, si la nourriture tombe du bec des poulets. Si l'on considère que l'adjectif augmente et met en exergue la valeur du nom, quelle est alors la signification du substantif simple ?⁵¹

En lisant attentivement le passage de Cicéron, il semblerait que le premier élément relevé par le pullaire est que les poulets mangent. Ce n'est que dans un deuxième temps qu'il annonce que la nourriture tombe de leur bec et que le *tripudium solistimum* s'est vérifié. Le *tripudium* pourrait donc être constitué par le fait que les poulets mangent et ce signe devient *solistimum* quand les poulets ont tellement d'appétit qu'ils font tomber la nourriture par terre. L'adjectif *sol(l)istimus* est en effet un superlatif de *sol-lus*, un terme attesté principalement en osque, qui signifie « entier »⁵². Ce superlatif, propre de la langue augurale, est utilisé exclusivement avec *tripudium*. La nourriture qui tombe du bec des poulets est donc le signe de cette perfection. D'ailleurs, l'expression *tripudium solistimum* est utilisée aussi pour désigner le présage produit (ac-

50 Cicéron, *De la divination* 2, 72 : *Tum ille : dicitur, si pascuntur. – Pascuntur. – Quae aves ? aut ubi ? Attulit, inquit, in cavea pullos is, qui ex eo ipso nominatur pullarius. Haec sunt igitur aves internuntiae Iovis! quae pascantur necne, quid refert ? Nihil ad auspicia ; sed quia, cum pascuntur, necesse est aliquid ex ore cadere et terram pavire (terripavium primo, post terripudium dictum est ; hoc quidem iam tripudium dicitur) – cum igitur offa cecidit ex ore pulli, tum auspicanti tripudium solistimum nuntiatur* (trad. Freyburger/Scheid 1992).

51 Pighi 1949–1950.

52 Ernout/Meillet 1932, *sub voce* : *sollus* « entier » ; de Vaan 2008 *sub voce* : *sollus* « complete », *sollistimum* « satisfying the rites ».

cidentallement) par d'autres objets comme des noix⁵³ ou des arbres qui tombent sans intervention humaine.⁵⁴

Paul Diacre qui reprend un lemme corrompu de Festus affirme :

Puls : on donnait préférentiellement de la pâtée (*puls*) aux poulets (*pullis*) dans les auspices, parce qu'il était nécessaire que tombât par terre quelque chose, qui faisait le *tripudium*, c'est-à-dire le *terripuuuium* (*terra* et *pauire*). *Pauire* signifie en effet frapper. Ils pensaient que c'était un bon augure si les poulets, à travers lesquels ils prenaient les auspices, mangeaient, surtout si, alors qu'ils mangeaient, quelque chose leur tombait du bec. Par contre s'ils ne mangeaient pas du tout, ils pensaient qu'un danger était sur le point d'arriver.⁵⁵

Dans la première partie de ce passage, Paul Diacre se réfère à la même étymologie déjà présente aussi chez Cicéron, qui faisait de *tripudium* une contraction de *terra* et *pavire*, c'est-à-dire de « frapper la terre ». Évidemment, ce qui prédomine est l'idée de tomber. Cependant, dans la deuxième partie du passage, il confirme ce que nous venons d'affirmer : le signe premier est donné par le fait que les poulets ont envie de manger (*bonum augurium ... comedissent*), tandis qu'un manque d'appétit annoncerait un danger proche (*non edissent ... periculum imminere*). Faire tomber de la nourriture est un surplus, quelque chose qui s'ajoute au fait déjà positif qu'ils mangent (*praesertim si eis edentibus*).

Pour comprendre davantage ce rite, il faut penser à l'histoire de cette pratique divinatoire. Comme John Scheid l'a montré, l'observation des volatiles est attestée à partir du 3^e-2^e s. av. J.-C., quand l'armée romaine commence à conduire des batailles de plus en plus loin de Rome et que les conditions de consultation se font plus difficiles notamment à cause du manque de personnel spécialisé sur place.⁵⁶ C'est à cette époque que l'*auspicium ex tripudiis* prend la forme que nous connaissons et venons de décrire : si jusqu'alors on a observé le comportement des oiseaux sauvages en liberté,⁵⁷ à partir de ce moment on observe au contraire des oiseaux domestiques en captivité, c'est-à-dire dans des cages permettant de les transporter et de contrôler leur alimentation.⁵⁸ La

53 Servius Danielis, in *Aen.* 8, 29.

54 Sur les arbres qui tombent, cf. Festus p. 386 Lindsay. Cf. aussi Virgile, *Aen.* 6, 198-200, où Vénus envoie à Énée des oiseaux qui laissent tomber des miettes de son bec : ils sont interprétés comme un signe positif.

55 Paul Diacre p. 285 Lindsay : *Puls potissimum dabatur pullis in auspiciis, quia ex ea necesse erat aliquid decidere, quod tripudium faceret, id est terripuuuium. Pauire enim ferire est. Bonum enim augurium esse putabant, si pulli, per quos auspicabantur, comedissent, praesertim si eis edentibus aliquid ab ore decidisset. Sin autem omnino non edissent, arbitrabantur periculum imminere* (trad. personnelle).

56 Bouché-Leclercq 1882, 4, 204-205 ; Scheid 2011.

57 Cicéron, *div.* 2, 35 affirme en effet que selon une antique loi le *tripudium* pouvait se faire sur tout type d'oiseaux. Linderski 1986, 2156 parle du passage d'une forme d'*auspicia oblativa*, c'est-à-dire qui se manifeste de manière casuelle, à une forme d'*auspicia impetrativa*, c'est-à-dire « demandés ».

58 Bouché-Leclercq 1879, 1, 144 relève que même en Grèce il y avait des moyens pour faciliter les observations des oiseaux, même s'il n'y avait pas une pratique comparable à la divination romaine par

procédure devient plus ritualisée et la marge d'échec se réduit sensiblement : il y a en effet une grande probabilité que des poulets affamés sortis de leur cage se précipitent sur la nourriture et montrent ainsi le consentement des dieux. Le changement de la pratique augurale correspond chronologiquement à la grande diffusion des poulets dans l'alimentation des populations italiennes.⁵⁹ Il est logique de penser que la grande présence des poulets peut avoir exercé une certaine influence dans ce changement.

Si on connaît le fonctionnement du *tripudium* après l'introduction des poulets, il est légitime de se demander comment cette pratique divinatoire fonctionnait avant. En remontant vers une époque plus ancienne, quand la divination était faite avec des oiseaux sauvages, on peut supposer que le champ d'observation devait être plus vaste. Si depuis l'introduction des poulets, l'analyse s'est focalisée sur un seul geste – l'appétit –, anciennement elle pouvait porter sur beaucoup plus d'éléments. En observant les oiseaux sauvages, on pouvait en effet prêter attention à tout type de comportement : à leur vol, à leur manière de se déplacer, de chanter, à la direction dont ils provenaient, etc. Cela semble être confirmé par un lemme de Festus qui parle de *oscinum tripudium* qu'il explique comme étant un augure – ici *tripudium* a vraisemblablement la signification plus générale d'« augure » – annoncé par le chant de certains oiseaux.⁶⁰ La manière de manger et de sautiller n'étaient donc que deux des éléments observés. Cependant, en partant de l'étymologie du terme *tripudium* (*tris-pes*), on arrive à l'idée que le sautiller, en général ou vers une nourriture offerte exprès à ce but, pouvait être à l'origine d'un certain type de divination.⁶¹ Il devait être tellement relevant qu'il avait pris l'acception de « signe » et plus probablement de « signe de bon auspice ».⁶² Malheureusement, il ne reste aucun document attestant clairement l'observation de ce sautiller. Un passage très fragmentaire de Festus (p. 498 Lindsay) unit le terme *tripudium*, le saut de danse (*exultatio*) et le contexte de la divination :

les poulets. Quelques passages des tragédies, en effet, attestent que des oiseaux divinatoires sont nourris par les devins (cf. par exemple Eschyle, *Sept.* 24 ; Sophocle, *Antig.* 1000).

59 De Grossi Mazzorin 2005 ; De Grossi Mazzorin/Minniti 2019.

60 Fest. p. 214 Lindsay : *Oscinum tripudium est, quod oris cantu significat quid portendi ; cum cecinit coruus, cornix, noctua, parra, picus.* (« *Oscinum* : c'est un augure, qui signifie un présage annoncé par le chant ; quand a chanté le corbeau, la corneille, la chouette, l'engoulevent, le pivert).

61 Ernout/Meillet 1932 *sub voce* : *tripodare* : « *tripudium* a désigné aussi le présage donné par le sautiller des oiseaux et, par fausse étymologie, le présage fourni par les miettes tombant de leur bec ».

62 Bouché-Leclercq 1882, 4, 203 définit l'*auspicium ex tripudiis* comme des « auspices par les trépi-gnements ». Il avance l'idée que l'observation sur les oiseaux vise tous les actes de ces messagers des dieux et que le fait qu'on fasse attention au fait qu'ils mangent ne constitue pas une exception, parce que beaucoup de légendes grecques racontent que des oiseaux fatidiques laissent tomber de leur bec un morceau de viande sacrificielle. Le fait d'observer l'appétit des poulets donc ne constitue pas une innovation, continue-il : la vraie innovation consiste au contraire dans le fait de « restreindre l'observation à ce détail pris isolément ».

Tripudium ... <au>spiciis in exultatione tripudiat ... a terra pauienda sunt dicta. Nam pauire ... et ferire, a quo et pauimenta.

Tripudium ... dans le cadre des auspices, il accomplit trois pas en faisant un bond ... sont ainsi appelés du fait de frapper la terre (*a terra pauienda*). Car *pauire* (frapper) ... et *ferire* (frapper), d'où vient aussi dallages (*pauimenta*).

S'il n'était pas si fragmentaire, ce passage aurait pu être intéressant parce qu'il aurait pu constituer le chaînon manquant entre les deux phénomènes que nous étudions (danse et divination). On y trouve en effet la démarche de trois pas associée aux sauts euphoriques propres aux saliens dans le contexte des auspices.

Quel lien y a-t-il entre divination et danse ?

Quel lien pouvait-il donc y avoir entre le *tripudium* des oiseaux ainsi reconstruit et celui de la danse illustré auparavant ?

D'après les analyses conduites jusqu'ici, nous pouvons tenter de proposer d'autres pistes de réflexion que celle 'négationniste' de Pighi – selon laquelle le terme *tripudium* désignant la danse n'aurait rien à voir avec celui désignant la divination – ; ou celle mimétique de Habinek, qui considère que la danse serait une imitation du sautillerment des oiseaux.⁶³ Exclure qu'il y a un rapport entre les deux termes, serait en méconnaître l'étymologie. Cependant, il n'y a à mon avis aucun élément qui puisse indiquer la danse comme imitation de la pratique augurale. D'autres explications peuvent entrer en ligne de compte. Des éléments que nous avons pu mettre au clair, il me paraît que ce lien puisse se repérer plutôt dans le cadre des rites des saliens.

Tout d'abord, il ne faut pas exclure la possibilité d'un réel contact de ces deux pratiques : quelques indices pourraient faire penser que le *carmen saliare* contient une allusion à l'*auspicium ex tripudio*. On connaît l'existence d'un *tripudium* qualifié comme *sonivium*, un adjectif rare et toujours utilisé avec ce substantif.⁶⁴ Cicéron le rappelle à côté du *tripudium solistimum* dans un passage où ces signes sont décrits de manière indépendante, mais proches l'un de l'autre : « je n'ai pas consulté les dieux par le *tripudium solistimum* ni par le *tripudium sonivium*, mais il y a d'autres signes que j'observe ». ⁶⁵ Festus affirme que *sonivius* signifie « sonore », ⁶⁶ et, dans un passage très fragmentaire (p. 370 Lindsay), il dit qu'il s'agit d'un terme utilisé dans des *carmina* : *so>niuio si-*

63 Cf. les références au début de l'article.

64 Guittard 2007, 70 ; Sarullo 2014, 290.

65 Cicéron, *epist. ad fam.* 6, 6, 7 : *nec ex tripudiis solistimis aut soniviis tibi auguror, sed habeo alia signa quae observem* (trad. personnelle).

66 A part le passage cité dans le texte, Festus cite ce type de *tripudium* aussi dans un autre passage très corrompu (p. 382 Lindsay), dans lequel on apprend qu'il se réfère à un ouvrage de Appius Claudius Pulcher qui avait écrit un ouvrage sur la pratique augurale.

gnificat in car<min ... a>ugurali, sonanti. La lacune ne permet pas de comprendre de quel type de *carmina* il s'agit, ni à quel substantif se réfère l'adjectif *auguralis*. Dans sa collection des fragments des *carmina saliarum*, Maurenbrecher l'a intégré de cette manière : « 'sonivius' signifie dans le *carmen saliare* un 'tripudium augural qui sonne' » (<so>nivio significat in car<mine saliarum tripudio a>ugurali sonanti).⁶⁷ Si nous suivons cette intégration, nous admettons que l'expression *tripudium sonivium* était contenue dans les *carmina saliarum*. Cette confrérie fournissait-elle un augure consistant en trois pas qui résonnent ? Il y a une probabilité que le « son » des trois sauts des saliens qui frappent les boucliers soit considéré comme un signe positif. Nous avons d'ailleurs déjà souligné la place accordée dans les descriptions anciennes au son produit par les armes des saliens et fait allusion au pouvoir de protection souligné par Castaldo.⁶⁸

Si l'hypothèse d'un *tripudium* augural contenu dans le rite des saliens reste à confirmer, on peut néanmoins encore ajouter un indice même si celui-ci demeure tout aussi incertain que le précédent. La procédure du *tripudium* augural semble avoir été décrite dans le passage d'un antiquaire du I^{er} s. ap. J.-C., Sabidius, autrement inconnu, qui a écrit un commentaire du *carmen saliare*.⁶⁹ Son texte, dont un seul fragment est connu de manière très rudimentaire, est rapporté par les *scholia Veronensia* à Virgile⁷⁰ et illustre grâce aussi à d'importantes intégrations le *tripudium solistimum* avec un langage technique. Si nous admettons l'authenticité de ce texte,⁷¹ il est légitime de se demander, pourquoi Sabidius cite une pratique augurale qu'on appelait *tripudium* en parlant du chant des saliens. On peut supposer qu'il décrit la procédure augurale parce que cette pratique était mentionnée dans le *carmen* ou était pratiquée lors de la danse des saliens.

L'état des sources ne permet pas de spéculer davantage sur ce lien direct entre le *tripudium* comme pratique divinatoire et les rites des saliens. Cependant, l'interprétation de Dumézil, selon laquelle ces rites célèbrent l'ouverture de la saison guerrière pourraient renforcer cette hypothèse. En effet, on pourrait y voir une analogie entre ces rites annuels du début des activités guerrières et la prise des auspices que les généraux accomplissaient avant de livrer bataille.

En deuxième lieu, on pourrait trouver un rapprochement de nature plus symbolique. La démarche des saliens transmettant cet élan pourrait être un signe de bon auspice comme celle des oiseaux qui se rapprochent de la nourriture. En effet, le *tripudium* et l'*exultatio* en tant qu'éléments joyeux et affirmant une énergie positive peuvent consti-

67 Maurenbrecher 1894, fr. 16 ; cf aussi Guittard 2007, 70.

68 Cf. *supra* ; Castaldo 2022.

69 Bardou 1956, vol. 1, 297.

70 *Scholia Veronensia, ad Virg. Aen.* 10, 243-244 (Baschera 1999, 123) l'auspiciant, libérés les poulets devant les soldats, dit : « Qu'on annonce un augure bon, gauche et parfait, et celui parmi vous qui le voit, annonce qu'il y a le tripude » (*obnuntiatio a<ugurium bon>um <sinisterum solisti>mum, quisqu<is vestrum viderit>, tripudi<atum nunt>iato* (trad. personnelle).

71 L'authenticité de ce texte est mise en doute par Sarullo 2014, mais acceptée dans l'édition critique de Baschera 1999.

tuer un signe favorable. Il ne s'agit donc en aucun cas de penser que les saliens imitent les poulets, à mon avis, mais plutôt de rapprocher l'élan des uns et des autres.⁷² Cela permettrait de comprendre aussi pourquoi les soldats cités par Tite-Live sont dits faire le *tripudium* :⁷³ il décrit par ce terme une tension, une excitation capable de se transformer en énergie de guerre. C'est probablement cette excitation qui est à la base de la comparaison que Denys d'Halicarnasse fait entre les saliens et les Courètes⁷⁴ dans le contexte des danses armées, et que d'autres auteurs comme Catulle⁷⁵ font entre les saliens et les *galli*, en focalisant sur la perte de contrôle et l'aspect forcené de la danse. Cela aide à comprendre pourquoi cette excitation se transforme en véritable transport de joie dans le lexique plus tardif, surtout chez les auteurs chrétiens. Ennodius par exemple utilise l'expression *laetae urbis tripudia* (« la joie de la ville heureuse »), qui indique une émotion partagée par tous les concitoyens à la suite d'une paix stipulée.⁷⁶ A cette expression suit immédiatement *exultatio infinita provinciarum* (« l'exultation infinie des provinces », p. 349, 23), comme à montrer que les deux termes sont désormais un couple insécable capable d'exprimer une émotion d'euphorie collective.

En troisième lieu, il convient de relever un autre point de contact également sur le plan symbolique. Les textes, qui parlent de l'origine du rite des saliens, n'expliquent pas vraiment le lien entre la danse et les boucliers. Nous avons déjà remarqué que les descriptions du rite ne traitent pas des boucliers comme des objets d'origine divine mais plutôt comme des objets d'usage rituel. Or, il est clair que leur présence est en accord avec le caractère guerrier de la *sodalitas*, qui porte aussi une armure et des habits spéciaux.⁷⁷ En plus, les boucliers, déposés dans la *regia*, sont « bougés » (*commovere*) par les généraux de l'armée romaine, en prononçant la formule *Mars vigila*, avant de partir pour une campagne militaire.⁷⁸ Ils sont donc des éléments qui renvoient au contexte guerrier. Comme le disent F. Dupont et P. Letessier, les Saliens, « dansent la guerre avec leurs boucliers rituels et ouvrent ainsi la saison militaire en installant la guerre ». Dans ce sens, continuent Dupont et Letessier, cette danse n'est pas une imitation de la guerre, mais a une valeur performative.⁷⁹ Cependant les mythes ne soulignent pas cet aspect. Le seul élément qui est mis en exergue est la descente du bouclier vers le bas. En lisant ces récits on a l'impression que la danse soit créé non parce que les saliens

72 Sur le rapport entre les coqs et valeurs humains même si dans un contexte différent, cf. Vespa 2019.

73 Cf. les passages cités au début de l'article.

74 Denys d'Halicarnasse, 2, 70, 4-5 ; 71, 3-4 ; cf. Graf dans ce volume (pp. 92-95). Je remercie M. Lozot d'avoir partagé avec moi ses recherches et de la discussion que nous avons eue à ce propos.

75 Cf. Catulle 63, 26, cité au début de l'article.

76 Ennodius, *Vita B. Epiphani* p. 349, 22 Hartel.

77 Ferri 2016.

78 Servius, in *Aen.* 7, 603 : in *Martis sacrario ancilia commovere* ; 8, 3 *ancilia commovebat* [...] *dicens 'Mars vigila'*. Cf. Wissowa 1912, 144. Je remercie John Scheid d'avoir attiré mon attention sur cet aspect.

79 Dupont/Letessier 2011, 20.

veulent évoquer par le martèlement des pieds la descente du bouclier – qui d’ailleurs n’est pas décrit comme un objet provoquant un impact violent sur la terre, où il descend léger et atterrit dans les mains de Numa –, mais plutôt pour fêter cet évènement prodigieux dans toute la ville. En effet, la descente du bouclier fonctionne comme un prototype du présage favorable et suscite beaucoup d’émotion : c’est l’objet envoyé par les dieux pour témoigner qu’ils protégeront la ville parce que les Romains jouissent de leur accord de principe. Ce mythe a donc la même valeur que l’*auspicium ex tripudio* pour les généraux qui veulent accomplir une opération militaire : dans les deux cas ce qui compte c’est d’attester que les Romains ont le consentement des dieux. La nourriture qui tombe du bec des poulets ainsi que les noix ou les arbres qui tombent sans intervention humaine et constituent un *tripudium solistimum* partagent le même mouvement de descente du haut vers le bas avec ce prototype de présage favorable.

En guise de conclusion

En définitive, le *tripudium* religieux dans le cadre des rites des saliens ainsi que dans la divination est constitué de trois pas d’une démarche ritualisée qui met en communication le monde humain avec celui des dieux et qui révèle l’accord de ces derniers. En m’inspirant d’une phrase de Zoa Alonso Fernández,⁸⁰ je dirai que l’étude de ce terme montre comment le corps – et probablement le corps en général des humains et des animaux – est générateur de significations, qui sont ensuite interprétées pour lire le monde. Dans ce contexte en particulier, au mouvement rythmé s’associent les paroles et l’exaltation des sauts, et le corps dans sa démarche vers l’avant devient un signe positif pour toute action imminente.

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80 Alonso Fernández 2016b, 177.

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Ritual Dances in the Imperial Epoch

What Epigraphy Can Teach about Dancing

FRITZ GRAF

Abstract: This chapter taps into the rich epigraphic evidence for dancing in the Greek cities of the Roman empire. Focusing on dances in mystery cults and in the civic religious tradition, it traces the revival of traditional dance rituals after the crisis of the first century BCE. These revivals brought innovations. Professional solo dancers, including women, could now be part of the rituals, as in the mysteries of Demeter in Smyrna, and the worship of the imperial house could be integrated into ancient Festivals, such as that of Apollo Ptoios in Boeotia, which featured the traditional dance of the *syrtoi* (dancers in long flowing robes). A discussion of the Milesian *molpoi* (“singers and dancers”), of the Kouretes at Ephesos, who can usefully be compared with the Arval brethren at Rome, and of the little known *epispondorchestai* at Olympia who bear remarkable similarities to pantomimes, illustrates the important role of dance in major sanctuaries of the Greek East under Roman rule.

Introduction: Dance and Epigraphy

Dancing is an ephemeral art, despite its ancient and ubiquitous importance in human culture. To leave a trace that goes beyond the memory of the entranced dancer or enchanted viewer, dance needs to be recorded in another medium. Visual art has been the favorite such medium, from Neolithic cave walls to contemporary photographs and videos; they all are or claim to be screen shots, memorializing of a specific moment of dancing. Written records have reflexivity built into their creation and are thus less immediate. This explains the rarity of ancient texts on dancing compared to, for example, images of dancing on Attic vases; the one big exception is Lucian’s *On Dancing*, which mainly concerns one specific genre of ancient dance – and one that we ourselves may not even necessarily classify as dancing, that is, imperial pantomime. Inscriptions often come closer to screen shots than literary texts do: inscriptions preserve a specific historical moment that has survived as a lasting memory because it was recorded on durable material, a bronze tablet or a stone slab: although an uninterrupted chain of

manuscripts succeeded in creating the monument Horace wanted for himself, it is an inscription that preserves the performance context of his *Carmen Saeculare*. Lucian was well aware of this role of epigraphy for the history of dance: in the introduction to *On Dancing*, he illustrates the importance of dancing in the Greek past with the title “Dancer-in-Chief” that the ancient Thessalians gave their rulers and generals, “as may be seen from the inscriptions on the statues of their great men.”¹ As we will see, inscriptions continued to document dance under Roman rule.

The rare historians of ancient cultures who have worked on dance, however, seldom looked at the epigraphical record. One laudable and recent exception is Edith Hall who, in the 2008 conference volume on *New Directions in Ancient Pantomime*, presented four famous pantomime artists, among them one Ploutogenes, who in around 80 BCE performed in the small town of Priene, and the global virtuoso Tiberios Iulios Apolaustos, whose career covered the later second century CE. Both artists are only attested in inscriptions; literature does not know their names, despite their fame. The long career of Apolaustos was pieced together by Louis Robert and William Slater from a number of epigraphical documents; Ploutogenes is unknown except for his impressive performance in Priene.²

Inscriptions can not only preserve the names and sometimes fame of otherwise long forgotten performers; they also offer a window on the society in which they flourished. The inscription from Priene that mentions Ploutogenes is a long and bureaucratically convoluted honorary decree for an outstanding benefactor of the tiny city, Aulos Aimilios Zosimos, son of Sextos, a member of the elite whose family had been Roman citizens for at least since two generations. In the difficult year after the end of the First Mithridatic War, when Romans had been massacred in some cities and, among other cruelties, Sulla’s army destroyed the neighboring city of Ephesos, Zosimos was elected as the leading official, *stephanephoros*, of Priene. Immediately after his election, he called all the residents of Priene together for a sacrifice and banquet – free men and slaves, citizens, Romans and all other foreign residents – “something that nobody else has done after the war ended.”³ He also hired foreign entertainers, and especially the one man whose art was able “to influence people” (ψυχαγωγῆσαι) “unlike anyone else’s,” the pantomime Ploutogenes. Zosimos did this, as the text explains, because he wanted not only to delight the public, but also to offer them “useful distraction” (ἀπάτη): his over-arching political aim was to create harmony (ὁμόνοϊαν) among all inhabitants of his city, after the years of polarization. To the more thoughtful contemporaries, then, Ploutogenes’ art was not just a simple entertainment: the distraction it offered helped create civic harmony. The philosophical term ψυχαγωγεῖν, I assume,

1 Lucian, *On Dancing* 14 (trans. Fowler 1905). On the inscription detailing Augustus’ *Ludi saeculares*, see above p. 17 n. 36 (Introduction).

2 Hall 2008, 2–3; Robert 1930; Slater 1995 and 1996.

3 Hiller von Gaertringen 1906, no. 113.41–42.

suggests not just the clever idea of a well-educated secretary, but was used either by Ploutogenes or Zosimos to describe the power of the art; calling it an illusion (*ἀπάτη*) used to heal the pains of the dire post-war years follows Plato's *Laws*, where festivals and banquets with their entertainment were seen as a gift from the gods, which created a moment of respite from human suffering (*ἀναπαύλας τε αὐτοῖς τῶν πόνων*).⁴

Two hundred years later, Tiberius Iulius Apolaustus and some of his colleagues could describe themselves as “actors of tragic rhythmic movement” (*τραγικῆς ἐνρhythμοῦ κεινήσεως ὑποκριτής*): as Louis Robert saw, this consciously draws on the discourse of higher literature to mark the distance between pantomime, which was influenced by tragedy, and mime, with its resonance of comedy. The erudite term *ἐνρhythμος κίνησις* for the simple “dance”, *ὄρχησις*, is first attested in Plutarch's *Table Talk* and draws again on Platonic language and evaluations: Plato uses the adjective *ἐνρhythμος* to describe dancing in the *Laws*. “*Ἐνρhythμος κίνησις*” then becomes the Neoplatonic description both of human dancing and of the harmonic “dance” of the heavenly bodies.⁵ Outstanding human dancing thus has a social dimension that can be viewed in cosmological terms.

Greek inscriptions show how complex the world of public dancing was in the Imperial epoch. One can distinguish roughly four areas, but they are not fully isolated from each other. One is the art of pantomime, invented in late Hellenistic times and to whose history inscriptions contribute important information. A crucial insight is how the euergetism of the urban elites stimulated its development. In their competition for status, the very wealthy elite citizens created many civic festivals and fairs to which they invited professional entertainers, especially gladiators and pantomimes, giving them ample space to gain fame and income.⁶ The second area is the field of public festivals, with their elaborate contests in athletics and music, founded by the same Eastern elites in their cities. In them, the cities expressed their claim to Greek identity in a number of disciplines that Plato, in his *Laws*, had defined as the core for the education of the young – but unlike in Plato, where the performers were elite young men, now these contests attracted mainly professional artists and athletes, whereas the civic performers remained a less glamorous addition.⁷ Since early Hellenistic times, these artists had organized themselves in a number of “Associations of Dionysiac artists” that in the second century CE were patronized by the emperors, not least the Hellenophile Hadrian.⁸ Greek cultural practices thus became part of a Roman political project to knit together the Greek and Roman parts of the empire while, conversely, the *pax Romana* enabled and fuelled a revival of Greek traditions.

4 Plato, *Laws* 2.653D.

5 Plutarch, *Quaest. Conviv.* 623B; Plato, *Laws* 7.654a. Neoplatonists: Proclus, *Commentary on Plato's Politeia* 1.69 Kroll; *Commentary on the Timaios* 1.41 Diehl; *Platonic Theology* vol. 5.130 Saffrey/Westerink.

6 Overview de Ligt 1993.

7 See the program of the Demostheneia in Oinoanda, Wörrle 1988.

8 Le Guen 2001; for Hadrian: Petzl/Schwertheim 2006.

Both areas are well researched, especially in the context of benefaction by the imperial elite, which has fascinated historians for at least half a century.⁹ By contrast, two other areas of dancing in a religious context have received less attention: dancing in mystery cults, and dancing as part of the civic religious tradition. The study of these areas benefits considerably from epigraphy.

Dancing in Mystery Cults

First the mystery cults. Under the emperors, Dionysiac associations still contained maenads and satyrs, those age-old Bacchic dancers that are well-known from Attic vases as early as the sixth century BCE. As an innovation of the Imperial era, we now read of two associations of “Dancing Boukoloï” in Pergamon: “cow-herd,” *boukolos*, was the most common mystery grade in Hellenistic and Imperial mystery groups.¹⁰ Bacchic dancing is group dancing, performed by the thiasos, the group of initiates: this was still the case in the Imperial epoch. The images that we recall from a few Attic vases and Hellenistic reliefs, of maenads dancing alone and lost in themselves, do not contradict the reality of the many dancing groups: intense individual experience is not incompatible with group ritual. Imperial epoch grave inscriptions almost by definition combine the two, since they promise that the individual will participate in the thiasos of the blessed, who eternally continue what they were experiencing as bliss during their life-time. A second-century CE grave inscription tells us that Dionysos has invited the deceased girl “to dance in his thiasos” as the fulfilment of utter bliss.¹¹ A long Latin inscription from Thessaly consoles the parents with the image of their deceased boy joining the dancing nymphs in a flowery meadow.¹² In a later Greek epigram from Lydia, the same image is expressed as dancing with the other initiates, the *συνμύσται*.¹³ This has a long tradition in Bacchic mysteries: the famous Bacchic gold tablet from the southern Italian colony of Hipponion, which was put into a woman’s grave around 420 BCE, promises that the initiate would now, after her death, walk the road to paradise that the other initiates and *bakchoi* already walked.¹⁴

In all these Bacchic inscriptions, the Greek term for ‘dancing’ is *χορεύειν*, the technical term for a group event. Only one text focuses on individual dance; this introduces a

9 A seminal contribution was Veyne 1976.

10 Jaccottet 2003, nos. 98 and 99; for the Bacchic *boukolos* Jaccottet 2003, vol. 1: 101–122, esp. 108–110 on Pergamon.

11 Jaccottet 2003, no. 180 (Tusculum, 2nd cent. BCE)

12 *CIL* III 686 = *CLE* 1233.

13 *Tituli Asiae Minoris* V:1. 477 = Jaccottet 2003, no. 112 (Gölde in Lydia, 240/241 CE): a young man, Iulianus who died at age 17, is invited by Bromios to dance with him as his *συνμύστης*, *συνμύστην* εἶν' ἔχῃ με χορείαις ταῖς ἰδίαισιν.

14 Graf/Johnston 2012, 4, no. 1.

different facet of Dionysiac dancing. A grave epigram from Claudiou Polis in Bithynia, written in the late second century CE, introduces the deceased, one Saturninos, who died at age twenty-four, as “a Bacchic dancer (Βακχικός ὄρχηστής) who pleased the largest cities.”¹⁵ The description makes clear that this is not an experience in a thiasos: Saturninos was a professional solo-dancer with an international career. The characterization as Bacchic marks him as a Dionysiac artist: we find the same in the grave epigram of a pantomime in Rome who “told stories and said everything with his hands, experienced in Bromios and the sacred and clever dance [...] decorating every stage with his famous narrations.”¹⁶ This means that this individual professional dance was not part of the secret rites of Bacchic mysteries, but was a public dance in front of a large audience, performed on the stage of Dionysos – the god whose altar stood in the orchestra of any theatre was, after all, the god of public entertainment. Saturninos however happened to be an initiate as well, but of the cults in Eleusis and Samothrace, not of Dionysos; the Samothracian mysteries, with their promise of protection at sea, must have been tempting for a professional whose career obliged him to undertake frequent sea travel.¹⁷

None of these epigrams talks about dancing as part of the mystery rites. But there is a text that helps us at least to sense how professional dancers could be part of these rituals. Under the Romans, Smyrna celebrated the mysteries of Demeter, that were famous and favored by the rulers. A Smyrnaean decree honored two sisters, who acted as θεολόγοι in the local mysteries, “because they contributed assiduously everything to the worship of the goddess and the celebration of the initiates.”¹⁸ *Theologoi*, “speakers of the gods”, are orators who honor a divinity with a prose composition: in our case, a retelling of the myth of Demeter and her daughter. This narration is connected with a dance performance, but the text is too damaged to reveal more details. Scholars assumed that the two ladies were also dancing; two female dancers would fit the story of the two goddesses. Another possibility is that their prose exposition was underlaid with the performance of a pantomime; pantomimes were telling traditional myths. However this may be, it is helpful to recall that in 416 BCE Alcibiades and his Athenian friends were accused of having “revealed the Eleusinian mysteries by dance” (ἐξορχεῖσθαι), not just by telling or staging.¹⁹ This shows that it was possible to reveal

15 Becker-Bertau 1986, no. 83. See also Perrot in this volume, p. 210.

16 IG XIV 2124 = Moretti 1968–1990. vol. 3, p. 328: ἱστορίας δείξας καὶ χειρσὶν ἅπαντα λαλήσας | ἔμπειρος Βρομίωιο σοφῆς ἱερῆς τε χορείας, [...] κοσμήσας πᾶσαν θυμέλην διδαχαῖς πολυδόξοις.

17 Dimitrova 2008, 83, no. 29.

18 Petzl 1982/1990, no. 654: πάντα τὰ τε περὶ τὴν εὐσέβειαν τῆς θεοῦ ἡ καὶ τὴν τῶν μυστῶν ἑορτὴν ἔκτενῶς παρασχούσας.

19 The expression was proverbial (see, e.g., Luc. *salt.* 15). For Alcibiades, see, e.g., Plut. *Alcib.* 19. Petzl 1982/1990, no. 654 gives a summary of the scholarly discussion on the two Smyrnaean sisters; Nilsson 1961, 357 imagined them dancing the roles of Demeter and Kore.

the core rites of the mysteries by silent dancing – a mode chosen by Alkibiades perhaps to avoid the very accusation of impiety; it did not work.

One usually assumes that the Greek mystery cults were stable institutions that underwent few changes. But changes there were, as again the inscriptions suggest, and these changes are most likely due to the great caesura in the years between the Mithridatic Wars in the early first century BCE and the restorations under Augustus and Nero. Plutarch and Pausanias, among others, demonstrate the intense interest in mystery cults after the middle of the first century CE, which created ideal conditions for change under the disguise of tradition.

This is illustrated by a story that we learn from a Boeotian honorary decree from the reign of Claudius, although it is not connected with a mystery cult. The decree honors one Epameinondas, son of Epameinondas, the greatest benefactor of his town, Akraiphia. At one point Epameinondas was elected to organize the famous and old festival of Apollo Ptoios, the Ptoia already mentioned in Pindar: the festival had not taken place for thirty years, and Epameinondas reinvented it as “the Great Festival of Apollo Ptoios and the Emperors” (τὰ μεγάλα Πτωῖα καὶ Καισαρῆα), that is, he incorporated the worship of the imperial house into an event dedicated to Apollo. He also re-established “the traditional processions and the traditional dance of the syrtoi” (τὴν τῶν συρτῶν πάτριον [ν] ὄρχησιν): they too had not been performed for at least one generation.²⁰ The dance is an enigma. Συρτοί are long and flying dresses: this leads to something that recalls the dancing dervishes. This may indeed be traditional, as the inscription claims. But one can at least suspect that the dance was not a simple replica of something archaic. The performance during the newly restored festival would have been determined by contemporary perceptions and needs, as Zosimos in Priene had indicated them more than a century earlier: it may well have been seen now through lenses conditioned by pantomime itself, the most famous and popular ὄρχησις of the period. After the long interruption, it had to be reconstructed from the memories of the generation that had danced or seen it, and any memory is shaped by the contradictory tensions of past reality and present expectation.

Dancing as part of the civic religious tradition

This brings me to my fourth area: group dancing in the cults of some cities of Imperial Greece. Unlike the wordless dance of pantomime, dancing in Greece, especially the group dancing of the chorus, is traditionally accompanied by song. Already Homer uses the term μέλπομαι and μολπή for this complex performance with its varied ingredients of words and movement. Μολπή is typically connected with Apollo and the

20 IG VII 2712.66 (Akraiphia).

young men, as in the first book of the *Iliad* where the young men of the Greek army (κοῦροι Ἀχαιῶν) placate Apollo with a day-long μολπή in his sanctuary in Chryse; however, Homer also calls the songless ball game of Nausikaa on the beach a μολπή, to the confusion of the scholiasts: the rhythmic movement of the group counts more than the words of the song.²¹ The noun that characterizes the (male) performers, μολποί, “singer-dancers”, appears only in inscriptions.²² In the archaic and classical epoch, we know of *molpoi* mainly from Miletus and its colony Olbia. In both cities, they were connected with Apollo Delphinios, and they were not just “a guild of musicians” but were running the city together with their leader, the αἰσυμνήτης (“umpire”): at least the Milesian *molpoi* were a group of noblemen who, like Homer’s heroes, excelled in song and dance; but we can assume the same for the Milesian colony Olbia. Miletus was captured and destroyed in 494 BCE by the Persians; the reconstruction after the Persian Wars was the starting point of a complex history, with some political turmoils. The *molpoi* remain visible mainly as a cultic body where they, among other things, organized an annual procession to Didyma. Thus, they continued singing and dancing, but they also wielded some political power: several treaties with other cities about the mutual recognition of citizenship (*isopoliteia*) from the years around 200 BCE allow prosecution of contraventions by the *molpoi*, who thus were supervising Milesian citizenship (as their god, Apollo Delphinios, did in Athens).²³ In the years after Mithridates, we know less of them not just because of the thinning epigraphical record. They received a public boost at about the same time that the Akraiphian *syrtai* were restored: a Milesian decree written in or shortly after Tiberius’ reign forced the leadership of the city and the sanctuary of Didyma to organize again the traditional banquets for the magistrates and the *molpoi*, instead of allowing wealthy citizens to buy themselves out and thus diminish the importance of the association.²⁴ It is a reasonable assumption that during these banquets, the *molpoi* not only dined, but also performed their traditional dances and songs.

Other cities in the wider region had their own *molpoi*. In a law on ritual purity from the sanctuary of Athena in Lindos, dated to about 225 BCE, *molpoi* are among the ritual actors who had to preserve their purity, as did “the priests, musicians, and *hymnodoi*, hymn singers.”²⁵ The *molpoi* as “singers and dancers” are thus different from the simple

21 Homer, *Iliad* 1.472 (Chryse); *Odyssey* 6.101 (Nausikaa), with the scholiast’s remark “he calls any game a *molpé*, whereas younger poets use the term only for a song” (πάσαν παιδιὰν “μολπήν” λέγω. οἱ δὲ νεώτεροι τὴν ᾠδήν).

22 The entry in *LSJ* (“guild of musicians”) is too narrow; more in the supplement.

23 On their fifth century role, see Herda 2006. *Isopoliteia* decrees: Rehm 1913, no. 143A (Tralleis, a. 212/211 BCE); no. 146A (Mylasa, a. 209/208 BCE); no. 150 (Herakleia below Latmos, a. 180/161 BCE).

24 Rehm 1913, no. 134.

25 Blinkenberg 1941, no. 487; see also nos. 228 and 430.

singers of hymns who also were important in the shrine; in the context of a sanctuary of Athena, we can imagine them as young armed dancers, as in the *Iliad*.

In recent years, we have learned more about the *molpoi* in another Ionian shrine of Apollo, the oracular shrine in Klaros. In the Imperial age, embassies to the oracle were recorded by inscribing visitors' lists on the walls and columns in the sanctuary. Each delegation brought along a chorus of young men and women who performed hymns to the god; they usually called themselves *hymnodoi*, but in seven cases they were also called *molpoi*. Most delegations arrived from Eastern cities that only regarded themselves as Greek after Alexander's conquests: these *molpoi* do not reflect archaic customs but are a later invention inspired by Homer's Apolline *molpoi*, at a time when these towns were constructing their Greek identity, not unlike the way they also constructed Greek foundation myths that connected them with Argos or Korinth, sites of old Greek fame.²⁶ As in Homer, it is difficult to discern whether they were not just singing but also dancing; the terminology that seems to identify *molpoi* and *hymnodoi* rather argues for singing alone, as does the anachronism that some groups contained both young men and women: a singing chorus that combines both genders is somewhat more easily imaginable in the ancient world than a mixed-gender dancing group, for which we only have the subversive example of Bacchic groups. I thus suspect that the term *molpoi* is no more than an archaizing disguise for the *hymnodoi*, as if the organizers had read the entry in Hesychius' lexicon where the *μολπός* is explained as *ᾠδός* or *ὑμνωδός* and dancing is not part of this learned definition.²⁷

The body of texts about *molpoi* is small and leaves much information about their role and civic function to guess-work and uncertainty. There are, however, two more epigraphical bodies on cult dancers that are much more detailed and numerous: the inscriptions of the *Kouretai* in Ephesos and the dancers who figure in the list of the cult personnel of Olympia. The Ephesos corpus has created some interest among scholars, while the Olympia corpus has not; both deserve a new look.

Ephesos: the Kouretes

The Ephesian corpus consists of about fifty inscriptions, almost all inscribed on the outside of the prytaneion in Ephesos; they list the annually changing members of the association, the *synedrion* of the Kouretes.²⁸ The prytaneion was built in early Augustan times, and the inscriptions start shortly afterwards. Although the Kouretes are at-

26 Graf 2015; Scheer 1993.

27 Hesych. M 1584. A mixed chorus is mentioned, for instance, by Philo, in a special context (see Bloch in this volume, p. 105).

28 Knibbe 1981, nos. B1–B54 (only B52 and B53 are written on marble slabs). A good overview on the function and history of the Kouretes is Rogers 2012.

tested much earlier, we have no comparable lists, and the custom must have begun only then.²⁹ The lists obey a rather rigid form: after the title *Κουρήτες εὐσεβείς*, “Pious Kouretes”, later expanded to *εὐσεβείς καὶ φιλοσεβαστοί* “Pious and Emperor-Loving”, they give the names of five to seven men, many with Roman citizenship, then of several ritual specialists, whose names often tell us that they were slaves: the “Ritual Herald” (*ιεροκῆρυξ*), the “Seer for the Sacrifice” (*ιεροσκόπος*), the “Chief of Fumigation” (*ἐπιθυμιάτρον*), the “Flutist during Libations” (*σπονδαύλης*). This sketches a ritual that begins with a proclamation and goes on with fumigations, libations and animal sacrifice, all underlaid with flute music. If we take seriously what the Kouretes of mythology are – armed and noisy dancers who protect the baby Zeus – the gentlemen of the *syne-drion* were armed dancers as well; their performance was connected with a formal sacrifice.

The geographer Strabo confirms that a variation of the myth of the Kouretes was at home in Ephesos.³⁰ He describes the grove Ortygia outside Ephesos where Artemis was born and where the noise of the dancing Kouretes hid the baby’s wailing from Hera’s wrath; this explained why the local *ἀρχεῖον* of the Kouretes annually organized “mystical sacrifices and a banquet” in Ortygia. *Ἀρχεῖον* derives from *ἀρχή*, “rule, dominance”, and thus has to be a group of men, a club or association as part of the local power structure. This associates the temple of Artemis, which stood well outside the walls of Ephesos with the civic power in the city. The re-shaping of the city after 30/29 BCE, when Augustus named it the seat of the Roman governor of Asia, made this association visible by making the *prytaneion*, the political center of the city with its eternal fire of Hestia, another focus of the Kouretes. The close connection with Artemis was expressed by the presence of a statue of Ephesian Artemis with the many “breasts” in the new Augustan *prytaneion*, and the addition of “Augustus-Loving”, *φιλοσεβαστοί*, to the name of the Kouretes showed their deference to the emperor.

The Kouretes of the Imperial epoch were all members of the city elite: originally about half of them, and later almost all, had Roman citizenship, and many were also members of the city council or senate or had other political functions.³¹ Some of them were fathers of a *prytanis*, one of the executive officials of the city; others were senators: unlike what the name *κουρήτες* implied, they were often mature men, not adoles-

29 For the construction date Steskal 2010, 77–79.

30 Strabo 14.1.20: τῶν Κουρήτων ἀρχεῖον συνάγει συμπόσια καὶ τινὰς μυστικὰς θυσίας ἐπιτελεῖ. Tacitus, *Ann.* 3.61 mentions the birth myth in his report on the Ephesian claim for asylum, probably from the *senatus consultum*; cf. μυστήρια καὶ θυσία at Engelmann/Knibbe/Merkelbach 1980. no. 1077, an honorary decree for a priestess (reign of Caracalla).

31 Roman citizenship: Knibbe 1981, 98–100. Other positions: councillors *passim*; local gerousia B 22. B 32. B 40; herald and hymnodos in the imperial cult Knibbe 1981, B 4; *prytanis* B 9. B 35; brother of the *prytanis* B 32, father of the *prytanis* B 36; “father of the *prytanis* and *prytanis* as well” B 33; *ephebarchos* B20; *archiatros* B 38; in B 44, 9 Kuretes are also *neopoioi*, in C 2 three Kuretes are also secretaries of the assembly.

cents (κοῦροι). But like their mythical models, these gentlemen were still performing an armed dance. The name of their group implies dancing, as Dionysios of Halikarnassos underlines when he identifies the Roman Salii with the Greek *Kouretes* and derives either name from their dancing.³² The inscriptions are silent as to how their dancing looked, but it must have been the dance that both Dionysios' equation with Rome's Salii and Strabo's myth imply – more technically the *pyrrhiche*, the armed dance. Unfortunately, we have no clear idea what the *pyrrhiche* was: the descriptions reach from a dance in full armor, including a shield which the dancers were beating with their swords or javelins, to the *pyrrhiche* which Plutarch's elegant brother Lamprias knows to perform admirably in the palaestra of Chaironeia.³³ Plutarch underlines Lamprias's hand movements: this prohibits a dance in heavy armor and rather suggests the pantomimes. If one looks for ancient images, one finds the depiction of women dancing a sword dance in front of a palm tree on a vase fragment, now in the J. Paul Getty Museum; Christiane Bron connected it with Artemis.³⁴ The dancers have swords, but no shields; their left arms are wrapped in a cloak, which allows some gestures. If this still qualifies as armed dancing, it could offer a way to imagine the dance of these Ephesian gentlemen; as a form, it would add elements of the contemporary pantomime. Although Strabo speaks of mystery rites in connection with the Ephesian Kouretes, this does not necessarily exclude spectators: the main point is the self-presentation of members of the Ephesian civic elite in their relationship to the great goddess of the city on one side, and to the emperors on the other. This is the reason why the inscriptions of the Kouretes are not hidden away on walls in Ortygia but are highly visible, inscribed into columns and outside walls of the prytaneion.

A look at a religious institution of Imperial Rome helps to throw the Ephesian group into relief. Augustus either restored or founded the religious association of the Arval Brethren, an elite group consisting of the emperor and twelve of his familiars from among the senatorial nobility. The association had its religious center in the grove of Dea Dia well outside Rome; their rituals aimed at maintaining food security, always a major priority of a government. We are extremely well informed about its activities because they inscribed minutes of their meetings on the walls of the buildings inside the grove; the texts were accessible for all visitors to the shrine. Over time, these minutes became more detailed. In the year 218 CE, we read for the first and last time about how they performed the very archaic *carmen Arvale*, an invocation of Mars and the Lares as protectors of the agrarian land. In the course of a very complex ritual sequence, they assembled in the sanctuary in a short dress (*succincti*: “with lifted hem”), received carefully guarded books with the text of the hymn that they would return after the

32 Dion. Hal. *Antiquitates* 2.70 (see Prescendi in this volume, p. 81).

33 Plut. *mor.* 747ab. See Ceccarelli 1998.

34 Bron 1996. A few fifth century Attic vases depict female *pyrrhichistai* as a symposion entertainment, which is also attested in literature; see Couvenhes 2010.

ritual, and “danced to the words” of the hymn that the inscription reproduced *verbatim* (*tripodaverunt in verba haec*).³⁵ *Tripudare*, to perform a “three step”, looks like a slow and stomping dance that even elderly and ample senators could perform without serious risks to their health; the hymn itself invokes Mars as protector and source of Rome’s power. The care with which the song-books were treated and locked away after use would have evoked mystery rites for a Plutarch or Pausanias.

We lack a comparably detailed account of the Kouretes and their activity, and we do not know whether they were not only dancing but also singing. If we were looking for a traditional hymn, the one text that offers itself is the Zeus Hymn from Cretan Palaikastro, that addresses Zeus as the “Greatest Kouros”.³⁶ Its text that invokes Zeus to “enjoy the song/dance” (γέγαθι μόλπαι) and to “jump” (θόρε) may suggest that the singers were also dancing, although at one point they describe themselves as standing around Zeus’ altar.³⁷ Its transmission recalls the Arval Hymn: it happened to be copied on stone at about the same time, around 200 CE, but the inscription is clearly a copy of an earlier inscription, from the fourth or third century BCE.³⁸ The composition of the text of course could be much older – but as the Ephesian Kouretes, the singers/dancers of Palaikastro wanted to preserve their ritual in the Imperial epoch.

Olympia: the Epispodorchestai

Finally, the Olympia texts: these are lists of the regularly changing cult personnel, firmly dated with reference to the Olympic Games. One list covers the year of the Game, and two others together, the years in between. The oldest text is dated to 36 BCE, with no hint that there were earlier ones; the latest was written for Olympiad 261; shortly afterwards, invading barbarians destroyed the sanctuary.³⁹ They have been known for more than a century, without attracting much scholarly attention, despite their interest for the religious life of the sanctuary.⁴⁰ This life was intense: Pausanias lists seventy altars on which one sacrificed in Olympia; he mentions the titles of some sacred officials that recur in the epigraphical lists.⁴¹ On the other hand, the lists do not cover the entire life of the sanctuary: no priests are mentioned, and their regular title Διὸς ἱερά, “rites of Zeus”, connects them only with Zeus, not any other deities in the sanctuary.⁴²

35 Scheid 1998, no. 100. On the *tripudium*, see Prescendi in this volume; on the Arval brethren, *ibid.*

36 West 1965.

37 See West 1965, 157 (“our hymn ... preceded or accompanied by a dance”).

38 West 1965, 151.

39 On the chronology, Dittenberger/Purgold 1896, cols. 137–138.

40 Edited in Dittenberger/Purgold 1896, nos. 58–141.

41 Paus. 5.15.7

42 “Rites of Zeus”, with ἱερά a neutral plural, rather than “sacred to Zeus” with a feminine singular.

The form of these inscriptions is unique: they are almost all inscribed on reused marble tiles from the temple of Zeus.⁴³ These tiles are thin, on average about 7 centimeters, since they were supposed to admit light to the temple interior; earthquakes and barbarians together broke most of them, and their fragments were found in the entire sanctuary, with the highest density around the prytaneion of the Eleans that lied in the northwest corner of the altis, next to the temple of Hera (a find map is urgently desired). Inscriptions on very thin tiles cannot have been mounted on a marble base for presentation, as regular stelai were. They needed a support behind them, most likely the prytaneion walls on which they were mounted: this recalls the prytaneion of Ephesos with its wall inscriptions and lists of cult functionaries: sacred bureaucracy must have found lists of officials the most stable indicators of religious life, and the sanctuary walls the safest place for recording them.

The lists are somewhat less standardized than the ones from Ephesos. There is a core of officials that remains stable on all the lists. The sequence always begins with the three θεοκόλοι Ὀλυμπικοί, the chief overseers of all the sacrifices in Olympia, who change annually; according to Pausanias, an individual *theokolos* is responsible for the sacrifices of an entire month before he hands on the responsibility to his successor.⁴⁴ The next entry are the three “Libation Bearers” (σπονδοφόροι), often the sons of a *theokolos*: they are not only responsible for the libations in the sanctuary, but also for the sacred truce before, during and after the Olympic games, that the Eleans pledged with each city. There follow the usually two diviners from both Olympian seer clans, the Klytiadai and Iamidai: no sacrifice is performed without divination. Together with them, the texts name the ἐξηγητής, the Sacred Expounder; his role must have been to interpret unusual and aberrant events during the sacrifices and Games.

These officials came all from the great families of Elis. Then, there were the specialists that were not members of the elite; not all of them appear in all lists, for unclear reasons. The texts always name the flute-player, the σπονδαύλης, as in Ephesos: sometimes one, sometimes several; their music accompanied the libations and all other ritual activities. Then follows the entry that is most important in this context, the “Dancers together with the Libations”, ἐπισπονδορχισταί, a title that echoes that of the *spondaulai*; they are almost always three. The lists end with the secretary who was responsible for the inscription. Sometimes the inscriptions name other functionaries – the “Daily Sacrificer”, καθημεροθύτης, whose presence shows that in Olympia, as in other major Greek sanctuaries, one sacrificed daily; the ξυλεύς, “Woodman”, who was important

43 Only the list Dittenberger/Purgold 1896, nos. 121 and 122 were inscribed in the base of the honorary statue for *theokolos* T. Flavius Archelaus, no. 484.

44 Paus. 5.15.10. Pausanias’ term θεκόλος recurs only once, in the late inscription Dittenberger/Purgold 1896, no. 123; otherwise it is always θεοκόλος, already in the archaic sacred law Siewert 2017; see also the commentary of Dittenberger/Purgold 1896, on no. 123.

because in Olympia sacrifices were burnt with the wood of white poplars; finally the butcher (μάγειρος) who dismembered the sacrificial animals.

The list of ritual actors again sketches an image of the ceremonies. Libations are at their center, performed with dancing and flute playing by a *spondophoros* or sometimes an *oinochoos*, “Wine Pourer”; fire on the altars (and implicitly fumigations) are common; animal sacrifices must have been performed, but seem less prominent, as also the absence of any priest suggests; Pausanias does not differentiate his seventy altars as to the rituals performed on them. Nor does Pausanias mention the dancers. This might have to do with their social position: they are not elite members, as they are in Ephesos, but slaves, mostly belonging either to the temple of Zeus or a *spondophoros*.⁴⁵ When we can guess their age, they seem young; we can also guess that they were not only gifted dancers, but also received some training.

The Greek of their title hints at their role. Ἐπισπονδορχησταί are dancers “during” or “in addition to” libations: dancing accompanies the libations, and it makes some sense that they often are the slaves of the *spondophoros*. In a few inscriptions, they are called ὑποσπονδαρχησταί: rather than a mistake by a mason, this is an interesting interpretation of their function as “helpers at the beginning of libations.”⁴⁶ Their standard number fits such a role: there are three dancers, as there are three *spondophoroi*.⁴⁷ Thus, ordinarily a single *spondophoros* performed the libations and perhaps spoke the prayers, with the flute playing in the background and a single dancer silently accompanying him: this feels like a pantomime ritual.

Such a ritual is alluded to in yet another epigraphical text, a first century CE bilingual grave epigram from Petelia (Calabria).⁴⁸ The dedication is in Latin prose: “To Celadio from the troupe of the pantomime Ionicus. He lived five years” – Ionicus being not only the director but also the boy’s father.⁴⁹ In a Greek epigram, the father expresses his grief about the untimely death with an unusual image: “Where will you perform sacrifices to the gods, Kelados, where will you consecrate wreaths and cakes together with incense on an altar? Wretched boy, a barbarian Hades stole you away from the stage!”⁵⁰ This is obviously not a description of his fate in the underworld, but of the boy’s role on the stage: at the start of any performance in the theatre of Dionysos, he danced during a sacrifice of wreaths, incense and cakes – or rather, if we take his father’s words seriously, his dance performed the sacrifice. Being only five and perhaps too small to reach up to the surface of an altar, I can imagine him silently dancing out

45 Zoumbaki 1997 and 2001, 129–131. The abbreviation δου in Dittenberger/Purgold 1896, no. 61, 62, 64.

46 Dittenberger/Purgold 1896, nos 80 (57 CE); 118 (241 CE); 121 (245/249); 122 (265 CE).

47 The few variations – four no. 63; two nos. 74, 77; one nos. 66, 67 – are not regular, nor do they look intentional.

48 Lazzarini 2004 (SEG 54. 961).

49 *Celadioni grex Ionici | pantomimi vix(it) an(nos) V.*

50 ποῦ σε θεοῖς θύειν, Κέλαδε, ποῦ δ’ ἄρτια βωμοῖς στέμματα σὺν λιβάνω θ’ ἀγνά φέρειν πελανά; τὸν μογερόν σκηνῆς ἐξείρπασε βάρβαρος Ἄ<ι>δης.

the sacrifice while an adult such as his father put the gifts on the altar. In a similar way, the Olympian dancer represented the ritual in his dance while it was performed by the *spondophoros*.

Conclusion

Dancing has always been part of the ritual world of the Greeks, as illustrated by the “Greek young men” who, in Homer’s narration, sing and dance all day long in Apollo’s sanctuary in Chryse. In the Imperial epoch, dancing as a group performance, or the silent acting of a pantomime, was still vital as a part of the contests at the growing number of festivals in the cities of the Greek east, as demonstrated by Lucian’s *On Dancing*, or in the foundation documents and victory inscriptions of performers. In these pages, I tried to show that it was also integrated into the worship of major sanctuaries, of Zeus in Olympia, Artemis in Ephesos, and Apollo in Miletus. With their names of *Kouretes* and *Molpoi*, these groups claimed a high antiquity – which they doubtless had. In the Imperial epoch, the Romanized elites of their cities continued these traditions, including their close relationship with the political center of the cities, as expressed in the *prytaneion* of Ephesos; the connection with the *prytaneion* of the Eleians in Olympia, however, has to do with the *theokoloi* and *spondophoroi*, the sacred administrators and diplomats of Olympia, not with the dancing slaves.

It is not easy to see how much the role and form of these all-male group dances was anchored in a tradition that came flowing down, without interruption, from archaic origins. Given the history of the Greek East, between Mithridates and the Julio-Claudians, and the rare voices that confess to interruptions, such as Epameinondas in Akraiphia, an interruption and unconsciously innovative resumption of the tradition is more likely than unbroken continuity. In Olympia, the lists of sacrificial personnel begin at a date that one can understand as a time of recovery after the ravages of the Mithridatic Wars and Sulla’s retribution; there are other signs of renewal.⁵¹ In Ephesos, we can see how the historical and archaeological record points to a new beginning under Augustus. In both places, we see how the individual form of the dance was influenced by the art of the pantomime and its growing importance in the culture of spectacles; if we had more information on the *molpoi*, we doubtless would see the same. In all these cities – and beyond, as for example in Akraiphia – the citizens and their leaders regarded the continuation of these traditional male dances as desirable and necessary expressions of their Greekness in the Roman world.

51 The new dating after Olympiads is first attested in 64 BCE, Dittenberger/Purgold 1896, no. 530 (see also Siewert 2002).

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,Tänze, die keine Tänze waren‘
Widersprüchliches über den Tanz bei Philon von Alexandrien

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Abstract: The oeuvre of Philo of Alexandria does not lend itself to easy systematization. Scholarly attempts, such as those by Harry A. Wolfson and, more recently, by Maren Niehoff, reach their limits not least due to the manifold contradictions in Philo's work. Philo's remarks on dance can serve as an example: sharp condemnations of dance and music stand in contrast with various forms of appreciation. Philo distinguishes the frivolous mime and pantomime, which he condemns, from the cosmic dance with its philosophical and theological insights. While music and dance can distract from what is truly important, they are nevertheless considered part of a thorough education. Most explicit is Philo's meandering handling of dance in his report on the Therapeutae (*De Vita Contemplativa*).

Der Tanz liefert eine willkommene Fallstudie, um Philon von Alexandrien und seinem Verhältnis zu Rom näherzukommen. Philon, der jüdische Religionsphilosoph, der in Alexandrien in der römischen Provinz Ägypten auf Griechisch mithilfe der jüdischen Bibeltradition die Welt zu verstehen versucht, ist nur schwer auf einen Nenner zu bringen. Wie lässt sich Philons Werk philosophisch verorten? In welchem Verhältnis steht Philon zum entstehenden rabbinischen Diskurs in Judäa? Und dann auch: Wie steht es um Philons Beziehung zu Rom? Keine dieser Fragen, und gerade auch letztere, ist einfach zu beantworten. In seinem großen Oeuvre berichtet Philon nur sehr selten von sich selbst. Und der ideale, tugendhafte Mensch – exemplarisch vertreten durch Moses – ist nach Philon gerade ortsungebunden, er ist ein Kosmopolit:

Als einziger von allen, die je geherrscht haben, hortete Moses weder Gold noch Silber, trieb keine Steuern ein, verschaffte sich keine Häuser, keine Besitztümer, kein Vieh, keine hauseigene Dienerschaft, keine Staatseinkünfte noch sonst etwas, was dem Prunk und Luxus dient, obwohl er all das in Hülle und Fülle hätte haben können. [...] Er (sc. der tugendhafte Mensch) ist ja Weltbürger (κοσμοπολίτης), weshalb er in keinem Staat der be-

wohnten Erde als Bürger eingeschrieben ist – mit gutem Grund: Nicht ein Stück Boden, sondern die ganze Welt ist sein Landanteil.¹

Nach Philon, der als früheste Quelle in der antiken Literatur das Wort „Kosmopolit“ belegt,² hat der tugendhafte Mensch keinen Pass. Es mag auch mit diesen kosmopolitischen Überzeugungen zusammenhängen, dass Philon im geographischen Dreieck Alexandrien-Rom-Jerusalem nicht leicht zu verorten ist.

Die Frage, wie sehr Philon unter dem Eindruck Roms seine Traktate verfasste – wie sehr sich römische Vorstellungen und „Trends“ in seinem Werk widerspiegeln –, wurde jüngst von Maren Niehoff monographisch behandelt. Dass Philon von Alexandrien in Rom war, ist unbestritten. Im Jahre 38 n. Chr. reiste er als Leiter einer jüdisch-alexandrinischen Delegation zum römischen Kaiser Caligula, um sich dort im Nachklang zu den antijüdischen Ausschreitungen in Alexandrien für die jüdische Sache einzusetzen. In *Philo of Alexandria: An Intellectual Biography* vertritt Niehoff die These, dass ein großer Teil von Philons Werk von seinem Aufenthalt in Rom geprägt sei.³ In praktisch allen Bereichen – in Bezug auf Philosophie, Religion, Gender und manch anderem – hätte Philons Aufenthalt in Rom sein weiteres Wirken als Religionsphilosoph nachhaltig verändert. Rom öffnete Philon die Augen und zwar in gleichsam unvergleichlicher Art und Weise: Kein anderer Autor jener Zeit „is known to have undergone such a significant intellectual development as Philo“, schreibt Niehoff.⁴ Nach Maren Niehoff dürfte Philon viel länger, bis zu 10 Jahre, in Rom geblieben sein, als die frühere Forschung bisher annahm, und dort einen Großteil seines Spätwerkes verfasst haben: notabene auch die „philosophischen“ Schriften und die sogenannte *Expositio Legis* (und damit auch die Traktate, die uns im Kontext von Philons Notizen zum Tanz besonders interessieren werden: *De Vita Contemplativa*, *De Opificio Mundi*, *De Abrahamo*, *De Vita Mosis*, *De Specialibus Legibus*, *De Virtutibus*). Mir scheint, dass Niehoff diesen neuen, römischen Philon überzeichnet. Dass der Aufenthalt in Rom bei Philon Spuren hinterließ, ist gut möglich (Parallelen wären rasch zur Hand, auch aus der jüdischen Antike, man denke an Herodes den Großen), aber was Niehoff als typisch römisch in Philons Spätwerk taxiert, bedingt nicht wirklich eine länger anhaltende Präsenz in Rom. Nach Niehoff spiegeln etwa die drei (erhaltenen) Biographien in Philons *Expositio Legis* (über Abraham, Joseph, und über Moses) den römischen Trend zum biographischen Genre

1 Phil. Mos. 1,152–157 (Übers. Bloch et al.).

2 Das wird häufig übersehen, zuletzt bei Nussbaum 2019, 64–80. Philon verwendet den griechischen Begriff *κοσμοπολίτης* insgesamt neun Mal. In der paganen Literatur ist er zum ersten Mal bei Diogenes Laertios 6.63 belegt, der über den Philosophen Diogenes berichtet, dieser habe gesagt, er sei ein Weltbürger. Wie genau dieses Zitat ist, muss freilich offenbleiben. Philon greift aber auf eine Idee zurück, die v. a. in der Stoa schon länger kursierte (cf. im Lateinischen Cic. Leg. 1,61).

3 Niehoff 2018 (deutsch 2019). Die folgende Kritik folgt meiner englischen Rezension des Buches in Bloch 2019b, cf. auch Lévy 2018.

4 Niehoff 2018, 242.

wider „which had just come in vogue in Rome.“⁵ Nun ist die Biographie ein recht heterogenes literarisches Genre und seine hellenistischen Spuren sind nicht einfach nachzuweisen, aber es existierte gewiss schon länger und war auch in Alexandrien bekannt.⁶ In Bezug auf die Rollen der Frauen sieht Niehoff eine dramatische Veränderung in Philons Werk, die erneut mit seiner Romerfahrung zu erklären sei. Erst in seinen „römischen“ Traktaten erhielten Frauen eine eigene Stimme, so etwa in *De Abrahamo*, wo Philon Abraham als römischen Prinzen ersinne, der von seiner mutigen Frau Sara auf militärischen Unternehmungen begleitet wird.⁷ Nur: Ähnliches fände man in jüdisch-hellenistischer Zeit gerade auch aus Ägypten (insbesondere etwa im jüdischen Roman *Joseph und Aseneth*). Alexandrien in römischer Zeit war kein Dorf an der Peripherie, sondern ein intellektuelles und ökonomisches Zentrum. Der Austausch mit Rom wird rege gewesen sein (Strabon berichtet von regelmäßigen Schifffahrten zwischen Alexandrien und Rom⁸) – so rege, dass sich Römisches und Alexandrinisches bzw. Griechisches kaum wirklich „auseinanderdividieren“ lässt.

Unter den Beispielen, an denen Maren Niehoff römischen Einfluss im Denken Philons festmachen möchte, ist auch seine Schilderung der „Therapeuten“ im Traktat *De Vita Contemplativa*. Die Therapeutinnen und Therapeuten sind jene Gruppierung jüdischer Philosophinnen und Philosophen, die nach Philon – der hierfür unsere einzige Quelle ist – in der Nähe Alexandriens beim mareotischen See lebten und sich asketisch ganz dem Schriftstudium widmeten.⁹ Alle sieben Wochen (genauer: alle sieben mal sieben Tage) versammeln sich die Therapeuten zu einem Symposium, an dem freilich nur Wasser und gesalzenes Brot aufgetischt wird, gelegentlich noch gewürzt mit Ysop.¹⁰ Höhepunkt der Feier ist ein Chortanz in der Nacht:

Nach dem Mahl veranstalten sie die heilige Nachtfeier. Diese geht auf folgende Weise vor sich: alle erheben sich gemeinsam, und in der Mitte des Speisesaals bilden sie zunächst zwei Chöre, den einen von Männern, den andern von Frauen. Zum Führer und Vorsänger wird für jeden Chor der geachtetste und musikalischste gewählt. Dann singen sie Hymnen auf Gott, in vielen Versmaßen und Melodien abgefasst, wobei sie teils ihre Stimmen zusammen erschallen lassen, teils im Wechselgesang die Harmonie aufnehmen, die Hände zum Takt bewegen und tanzen; bald singen sie voller Begeisterung Lieder, die für feierliche Aufzüge bestimmt sind, bald Lieder, welche vom Chor vorgetragen werden, wenn er stillsteht, sowie die bei Wendung und Gegenwendung im Chortanz üblichen Liedteile.¹¹

5 Niehoff 2018, 8; cf. 109–130.

6 Cf. Görgemanns 1997.

7 Niehoff 2018, 136.

8 Strabon 17,1,7.

9 Zu den Therapeuten, auch zur Frage der Historizität, cf. zuletzt Taylor 2017. Cf. auch ead. 2003.

10 Phil. Cont. 73.

11 Phil. Cont. 83–85 (Übers. Bormann 1964): μετὰ δὲ τὸ δεῖπνον τὴν ἱερὰν ἄγουσι παννυχίδα. ἄγεται δὲ ἡ παννυχὶς τὸν τρόπον τοῦτον. ἀνίστανται πάντες ἄθροοι, καὶ κατὰ μέσον τὸ συμπόσιον δύο γίνονται τὸ πρῶτον χοροί, ὁ μὲν ἀνδρῶν, ὁ δὲ γυναικῶν· ἡγεμῶν δὲ καὶ ἕξαρχος αἰρεῖται καθ’ ἑκάτερον

Es handelt sich offensichtlich um einen wohl orchestrierten, ritualisierten – nicht explizit als jüdisch definierten – Chortanz, an dem sowohl Männer als auch Frauen teilnehmen. Für Maren Niehoff ist Philons Beschreibung der Therapeuten ein weiteres Beispiel einer Schilderung *à la Romaine*: „The Therapeutae form another group of Jewish philosophers whom Philo interprets in a distinctly Roman mode. [...] Positioning himself vis-à-vis the Classical Greek tradition, Philo praises the Therapeutae for serving no wine at their symposia.“¹² Niehoff verweist u. a. auf Senecas Kritik am Symposium in *De Ira* und kommt zum Schluss: „Philo’s image of the abstemious Jewish philosophers perfectly fits this Roman rhetoric. Jews and Judaism emerge on the Roman side of a deep cultural division between philosophical restraint and Greek excess.“¹³ Tatsächlich polemisiert Philon in seinem Traktat über die Therapeuten gegen die Exzesse des griechischen Symposiums. Voller Abscheu und Spott schildert Philon griechische Gelage, an denen getrunken wird, bis man den Verstand verliert und auf einander losgeht, sich „Nasen, Ohren, Finger und noch andere Teile des Leibes“ abbeißt.¹⁴ Philon verweist auch explizit auf die Symposionsdarstellungen von Platon und Xenophon und verurteilt in diesem Zusammenhang auch die Päderastie.¹⁵ Das rein kontemplative Symposium der Therapeuten ist das koschere Pendant zu solchen Auswüchsen. Letztere sind nach Philon aber nicht nur ein Phänomen des klassischen Griechenlands, sondern „überall Mode“, „weil man nach dem italischen Aufwand und Luxus verlangt. Ihm streben Griechen und Nichtgriechen nach, wobei sie in ihren Zubereitungen mehr auf Gepränge als auf Bewirtung aus sind.“¹⁶ Und Philons Kritik an den Auswüchsen des dionysischen Treibens orientiert sich durchaus auch an Platon selbst.¹⁷ Philon baut seine Utopie der Therapeuten von Beginn des Traktats als Kontrast auf, zuallererst und wie so häufig, zu den Ägyptern und deren Theriomorphismus. Die Ägypter (und auch ihre „Nachbarvölker“, die sie „mit ihrer Torheit ansteckten“) sind in ihren Seelen blind und können Wahrheit und Falschheit nicht voneinander trennen.¹⁸ Damit stehen sie im Gegensatz zu Israel, das – so Philons gängige Etymologie von Israel – für jene, die Gott sehen, steht.¹⁹ Die Therapeuten sind hierfür ein utopisches Paradigma: „Die Gemeinschaft der Therapeuten aber, von Anfang an belehrt,

ἐντιμώτατός τε καὶ ἐμμελέστατος. εἶτα ἄδουσι πεποημένους ὕμνους εἰς τὸν θεὸν πολλοῖς μέτροις καὶ μέλεσι, τῇ μὲν συνηχοῦντες, τῇ δὲ καὶ ἀντιφώνοις ἀρμονίαις ἐπιχειρονομοῦντες καὶ ἐπορχοῦμενοι, καὶ ἐπιθειάζοντες τοτὲ μὲν τὰ προσόδια, τοτὲ δὲ τὰ στάσιμα, στροφάς τε τὰς ἐν χορείᾳ καὶ ἀντιστροφάς ποιούμενοι.

12 Niehoff 2018, 86–87.

13 Niehoff 2018, 87.

14 Phil. Cont. 40: Philon vergleicht das rohe Treiben der Symposianten mit jenem der Zyklopen, aber seine Formulierung erinnert auch an das Schicksal des Pentheus.

15 Phil. Cont. 57–63.

16 Phil. Cont. 48 (Übers. Bormann 1964).

17 Cf. unten S. 107–108.

18 Phil. Cont. 10.

19 Phil. Abr. 57; Praem. 44; Legat. 4.

immer das Sehvermögen zu gebrauchen, möge nach der Schau des Seienden streben, sich über die sinnlich wahrnehmbare Sonne hinaus erheben und niemals diesen Posten verlassen, der zum vollendeten Glück führt.“²⁰

Die simpel erscheinende Dichotomie zwischen den kontemplativen Therapeuten und den primitiven Symposiasten – weniger römisch als allgemein philosophisch geprägt – ist allerdings nicht ohne Brüche. Philon verlässt zu Beginn und zum Ende des Traktats *De Vita Contemplativa* die Klischees vom nüchternen Betrachter und bringt die Therapeuten in Verbindung mit den Bakchanten und Korybanten und damit dem paganen Vokabular des wilden Draußen, mitunter auch des ausgelassenen Tanzes des Dionysos und seiner Anhänger. Die Therapeuten, schreibt Philon ziemlich zu Beginn von *De Vita Contemplativa*, „befinden sich in Verzückung wie die Bakchanten oder Korybanten (καθάπερ οἱ βακχευόμενοι καὶ κορυβαντιῶντες ἐνθουσιάζουσι), bis sie das Ziel ihrer Sehnsucht erblicken.“²¹ Noch expliziter „dionysisch“ wird Philons Sprache dann gegen Ende des Traktats im Zusammenhang mit dem erwähnten Tanz in der Nachtfeier alle 50 Tage:

Wenn dann jeder der beiden Chöre allein für sich seinen Anteil am Fest erhalten hat und sie wie bei den Bakchusfesten (καθάπερ ἐν ταῖς βακχείαις) den ungemischten Wein der Gottesliebe in vollen Zügen genossen haben, vermischen sie sich untereinander und werden ein Chor aus zweien. Damit ahmen sie den Chor nach, der vor langer Zeit am Roten Meer zusammentrat auf Grund der dort gewirkten Wunder.²²

Nachdem die vorher getrennten Männer- und Frauenchöre ungemischten (also nicht mit Wasser verdünnten) Wein getrunken haben, vermischen sie sich nun im Tanz. Dies ist auch in allgemein griechisch-römischem Kontext ungewöhnlich: Gemischtgeschlechtliche Chöre sind in Griechenland nur in dionysischem Zusammenhang (Mänaden und Satyrn) vorstellbar, und auch in Rom sind sie die Ausnahme.²³ Gewiss spricht Philon metaphorisch vom „ungemischten Wein der Gottesliebe“ (ἀκράτου ... τοῦ θεοφιλοῦς). „Gottestrunkenheit“ steht, wie Hans Lewy richtig schreibt, anstelle der „physischen Bezechtheit“,²⁴ und das Ziel des Chortanzes ist Frömmigkeit (εὐσέβεια).²⁵ Es ist eine nüchterne Trunkenheit, der sich die Therapeuten hergeben (μέθῃ νηφάλιος: ein Oxymoron, das sich nur bei Philon findet²⁶), und entsprechend folgt am Tag nach der *pannychis* auch kein Kater: „Bis zum frühen Morgen verharren sie in dieser schö-

20 Phil. Cont. 11 (Übers. Bormann 1964).

21 Phil. Cont. 12–13 (Übers. Bormann 1964). Zu bakchischen Tänzen vgl. auch Graf in diesem Band, S. 88–89.

22 Phil. Cont. 85 (Übers. Bormann 1964).

23 In Horaz' *carmen saeculare* singen Mädchen und Knaben zusammen (v. 6: *virgines lectas puerosque castos*). Vgl. Graf in diesem Band, S. 92.

24 Lewy 1929, 34.

25 Phil. Cont. 88–89.

26 Lewy 1929, 3–41.

nen Trunkenheit, dann richten sie den Blick und den ganzen Körper nach Osten und verharren in dieser Haltung, ohne dass sie einen schweren Kopf haben oder ihnen die Augen zufallen.“²⁷ Aber es ist nichtsdestoweniger bemerkenswert, dass Philon gerade hier, am Höhepunkt der Feier, auf das Vokabular jener dionysischen Ekstase zurückgreift, die er andernorts heftig verurteilt. Man sollte diese Sprache nicht vorschnell als nichts aussagende Metapher abtun. Wie ich anderswo ausführlicher darlege, hat die Sprache der griechischen Mythologie bei Philon neben aller Polemik durchaus eine gewisse Relevanz. Philon macht sich griechische Mythen wiederholt zu eigen und kann mithilfe paganer Mythologeme sogar wesentliche Orientierungspunkte der jüdischen Theologie auf den Punkt bringen. So dient Philon z. B. der Minotaurus-Mythos als Beleg für das biblische Verbot der Sodomie und Skylla kann neben Kain die Unzerstörbarkeit des Schlechten bezeugen.²⁸

Mit dem „Chor, der vor langer Zeit am Roten Meer zusammentrat“, sind die Chöre von Moses und Mirjam gemeint, die gemäß Ex 15 nach dem Wunder am Schilfmeer sangen bzw. im Falle Mirjams auch tanzten: „Da nahm die Prophetin Mirjam, die Schwester Aarons, die Trommel in ihre Hand, und alle Frauen zogen hinter ihr hinaus mit Trommeln und in Reigentänzen.“²⁹ Von einer Vermischung der beiden Chöre ist im biblischen Text freilich nicht die Rede. Durch Philons Parallelisierung des gemischten Therapeutenchors mit der biblischen Vorlage erhält nun auch letztere ein dionysisches Kleid. Philons mäanderhafte, Dionysische verurteilende und gleichzeitig aufnehmende Schilderung des Therapeutenfestes passt nicht nur zu seinem sonstigen Umgang mit paganer Mythologie, sondern auch zu seinen ambivalenten Bemerkungen zum Tanz in seinem Gesamtwerk.³⁰

Falscher und richtiger Tanz

Das Zitat aus dem Titel meines Aufsatzes – „Tänze, die keine Tänze waren“ – stammt aus Philons groß angelegter Moses-Biographie, wohl einem Spätwerk aus den 40er Jahren des 1. Jh.s n. Chr.:³¹

Daraufhin fertigten sie einen goldenen Stier an, ein Abbild desjenigen Tieres, das man in dem Land für das heiligste hielt. Sie brachten Opfer dar, die keine Opfer waren, und

27 Phil. Cont. 89 (Übers. Bormann 1964).

28 Bloch 2019a, id. 2011.

29 Ex 15,20 (Übers. Zürcher Bibel). Tal Ilan hat aufgezeigt, dass in der Hebräischen Bibel und in Rabbinica die Sprache des Tanzes nach dem Gender differenziert: Der Reigentanz der Frauen (wie in Ex 15,20) wird mit dem hebräischen Verb חול (hul) wiedergeben, der Tanz des Mannes mit dem hebräischen Verb רקד (raqad, so Davids Tanz in 1 Chr 15,29). Cf. Ilan 2003.

30 Zum Motiv des Tanzes bei Philon cf. die grundlegenden Arbeiten von Miller 1986 und Bermond 2001.

31 Niehoff 2018, 246.

führten Tänze auf, die keine Tänze waren (χορούς ἀχορεύτους), und sangen Lobgesänge, die sich von Klageliedern nicht unterschieden, und sie betranken sich mit unverdünntem Wein und wurden von einem doppelten Rausch gepackt: einem von Wein und einem von Unverstand, die ganze Nacht schwelgend, sich nicht kümmernd um das, was kommen würde, genossen sie zusammen die süßen Laster; aber die Gerechtigkeit lauerte ihnen auf und sah auf die nicht Sehenden wie auch auf die Strafen, die sie verdienten.³²

Die Rede ist vom Tanz um das goldene Kalb, das die Israeliten gegossen hatten, während Moses auf dem Berg Sinai die 10 Gebote erhielt. Unterhalb des Gottesbergs agieren die Israeliten profan, gleichsam anti-mosaisch. Sie tun genau das, was Philon in seiner Therapeuten-Utopie dem griechisch-römischen Symposium vorwirft. Die israelitischen Tänze um das goldene Kalb sind eine Dystopie. Dazu passen in Philons Bericht die seltenen Adjektive ἄθυτος und ἀχόρευτος. Die Israeliten bringen Opfer dar, die keine richtigen Opfer sind, und führten Tänze auf, die keine richtigen Tänze sind. Das Wort ἀχόρευτος ist selten; zuerst ist es in der griechischen Tragödie belegt: Bei Sophokles und bei Euripides bedeutet es so viel wie „freudlos“.³³ Nirgends in der klassischen und hellenistischen griechischen Literatur kommt es aber so häufig vor wie bei Philon von Alexandrien, nämlich fünf Mal. An einer fast wörtlichen Parallelstelle zur eben zitierten Stelle, im Traktat „Über die Einzelgesetze“, spricht Philon ebenfalls von den Tänzen um das goldene Kalb, die keine richtigen Tänze waren (dort noch ergänzt um καὶ ἐορτὰς ἀνεόρτους: „unfestliche Feste“).³⁴ Dann kann sich ἀχόρευτος bei Philon in einem allgemeineren Sinne aber auch auf die Bildung bzw. fehlende Bildung beziehen: auf die Sophisten, deren Denken „ungeübt und unharmonisch“ ist (ἀχόρευτος μὲν καὶ ἄμουσος ἢ διάνοια).³⁵ An einer Stelle, an der Philon kurz definiert, was Tapferkeit ist (es ist das Verstehen von dem, was man ertragen muss), bezeichnet er jene, die solch Grundlegendes nicht verstehen, als παντελῶς ἄμουσοι καὶ ἀχόρευτοι: das sind Menschen ohne Kenntnisse in Musik und Tanz bzw. hier ganz allgemein Leute, die „ungebildet“ sind.³⁶ An einer weiteren Stelle bringt Philon ἀχόρευτος explizit mit der klassischen Grundausbildung, der ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία, in Verbindung.³⁷ Hinter diesem Verständnis von ἀχόρευτος, wörtlich „not trained in the dance or chorus“ (LSJ), steht Platon, bei dem in den „Gesetzen“ ἀχόρευτος ein Synonym zu ἀπαίδευτος ist: Tanzen

32 Phil. Mos. 2,162–163 (Übers. Bloch et al.): εἶτα χρυσοῦν ταῦρον κατασκευασάμενοι, μίμημα τοῦ κατὰ τὴν χώραν ἱερωτάτου ζώου δοκοῦντος εἶναι, θυσίας ἄθυτους ἀνήγον καὶ χορούς ἀχορεύτους ἴστασαν ἕμνους τε ἡδὸν θρήνων οὐδὲν διαφέροντας καὶ ἐμφορηθέντες ἀκράτου διπλῆ μέθη κατίσχοντο, τῆ μὲν ἐξ οἴνου, τῆ δὲ καὶ ἀφροσύνης, κωμάζοντές τε καὶ παννυχίζοντες ἀπροόρατοι τοῦ μέλλοντος ἡδέσι κακοῖς συνεβίουν, ἐφεδρευούσης δίκης, ἢ μὴ βλέποντας ἐβλεπε καὶ ὧν ἄξιοι τιμωριῶν εἰσιν.

33 Soph. El. 1069; Eur. Tro. 121.

34 Phil. Spec. Leg. 3,125.

35 Phil. Migr 72.

36 Phil. Spec. 4,145.

37 Phil. Legat. 168. Cf. auch Ebr. 33: ἐγκύκλιον χορείαν (der Reigen der Bildungsgegenstände).

und Gesang gehören eben zur Bildung.³⁸ Nur wer über diese Grundkenntnisse verfügt, kann Höherem entgegenstreben.

Philon verurteilt nicht den Tanz an sich, er verurteilt den falschen Tanz.³⁹ Von daher mag es nicht überraschen, dass Philon auch Moses in die Musikschule schickt. Moses, über dessen Bildungsweg die Bibel nichts berichtet, genießt in der Fassung Philons eine Ausbildung erster Güte, eine „königliche Erziehung“⁴⁰. Und hierzu gehört auch die Musik:

In Arithmetik und Geometrie wie auch der Theorie von Rhythmik, Harmonie und Metrik und der gesamten Musik (καὶ μουσικὴν τὴν σύμπασαν), wie sie in der Anwendung von Instrumenten und in den Lehren wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen und spezielleren Darlegungen der Ägypter erscheinen, unterwies ihn die Gelehrten.⁴¹

In einer raren autobiographischen Notiz blickt Philon auf seine eigene Ausbildung zurück. Über drei Fachgebiete habe er sich der Philosophie angenähert: die Grammatik, die Geometrie und die Musik. Letztere „war voll schöner Rhythmen, Harmonien und Melodien.“⁴² Philon inszeniert für Moses offensichtlich eine Propädeutik, wie er sie selbst kannte. Sie gingen sozusagen in Parallelklassen.⁴³ Der Tanz wird als Fach nicht explizit aufgeführt, kann aber wohl unter die Musik subsumiert werden. Jedenfalls sind wir hier weit entfernt von einem rein metaphorischen Verständnis von Musik. Freilich aber auch weit entfernt von der ausgelassenen Welt eines Dionysos und der Mänaden. Moses und Philon erlernen die Musik der Akademie, die Musik Apollos, nicht jene des Dionysos.⁴⁴

Dass Philon Moses, den Therapeuten und auch sich selbst eine gewisse Nähe zu Musik (und Tanz) zugesteht, steht einigermaßen im Widerspruch zu recht prinzipiellen Verurteilungen an anderen Orten in seinem Werk. Philon, der immer wieder die Wichtigkeit des Sehnsinns für die Gotteserkenntnis unterstreicht, kritisiert die Hingabe zu Sinnlichem außerhalb von Theologie und Philosophie als Irrweg. Geist und Verstand statt Körperlichem und Sinnlichem lautet seine Devise. Tanz und Theater stehen hierzu im Widerspruch. Philon spricht diesbezüglich wiederholt in scharfen Gender-Dichotomien: Körperlich-Sinnliches steht für das Weibliche, das Geistige für das Männliche. Die gut gefüllten Stadien mit ihren mannigfaltigen Aufführungsfor-

38 Plat. leg. 654a–b: Οὐκοῦν ὁ μὲν ἀπαιδευτος ἀχόρευτος ἡμῖν ἔσται, τὸν δὲ πεπαιδευμένον ἰκανῶς κεχορευκότα θετέον; cf. Bermond 2001, 72–73; Kurke 2013, 129–130.

39 Cf. Bermond 2001, 61–66.

40 Phil. Mos 1,20: τροφή βασιλική.

41 Phil. Mos. 1,23 (Übers. Bloch et al.).

42 Phil. Congr. 76 (Übers. Lewy 1938).

43 Cf. Bloch 2013.

44 Zur Spannung zwischen der Musik des Apollo und jener des Dionysos im griechischen Kontext cf. Burkert 1985, 223–225.

men – zu denen auch der Tanz gehörte – waren Philon ein Dorn im Auge. Die dort gespielte Musik sei „unmännlich“ (ἀνανδρος):

Denn wie käme es sonst, dass allenthalben auf weitem Erdenrund die Schaustätten tagtäglich von vielen Tausenden gefüllt werden? Denn die Knechte des Gehörs und Gesichtes, die Ohr und Auge zügellos umherschweifen lassen, Lautenschläger, Lautensänger und diese ganze weichliche und unmännliche Musik schätzen, Tänzern und anderen Schauspielern (ὄρχηστὰς καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους μίμους) anhängen, weil sie ganz verweichlichte Haltungen und Bewegungen vorführen, beklatschen beständig den Kampf auf der Bühne und denken nicht an ihre Vervollkommnung oder die der Allgemeinheit, sondern zerstören durch Auge und Ohr unselig ihre Lebensführung.⁴⁵

Im Gegensatz zur heidnischen Welt von Theater und Tanz steht bei Philon der jüdische Sabbat, der ganz der Philosophie gewidmet ist. In seiner Moses-Biographie – jenem Werk, in dem Philon Moses in die Musikschule schickt – wird im zweiten Buch das ausgelassene Treiben der Mimen und Tänzer von der heiter-philosophischen Stimmung (ἐν ἰλαραῖς διάγοντας εὐθυμίας) am Sabbat unterschieden. Fatal wäre es, wenn man wie die „Theatersüchtigen“ seine Seele „zur Sklavin des Sehens und Hörens“ machen und sich an den „Vorstellungen von Mimen und Tänzern (μίμων ἢ ὄρχηστῶν ἐπιδείξεισι)“ ergötzen würde.⁴⁶ Von einer „Theatromania“ – von Menschen, die gleichsam süchtig sind nach Mimen- und Tanzaufführungen im Theater – ist in der antiken Literatur hier zum ersten Mal die Rede. Bei Origenes wird „Theatromania“ dann noch durch „Orchestomania“ (Tanzsucht) ergänzt.⁴⁷

Philon ist freilich selbst auffällig gut informiert über die pagane Theaterszene. Er kannte sie aus eigener Anschauung:

So war ich oft schon im Theater dabei und habe selber gesehen, wie von einem und demselben Liede der auf der Bühne auftretenden Schauspieler oder Sänger ein Teil der Zuschauer so mitgerissen wurde, dass sie ganz aufgeregt unwillkürlich davon widerhallten und Beifallsrufe ausstießen, ein anderer Teil aber sich so unberührt verhielt, dass man darum hätte glauben können, sie unterschieden sich gar nicht von ihren leblosen Stufen-sitzen, andere wieder so heftige Abneigung empfanden, dass sie fluchtartig das Schauspiel verließen und sich überdies mit beiden Händen die Ohren ausbeutelten, damit nur ja kein Ton darin bliebe und nachhallend ihrer mürrischen und missvergnügten Seele keine Unlust bereite.⁴⁸

45 Phil. Agr. 35 (Übers. I. Heinemann 1923, leicht angepasst).

46 Phil. Mos. 2,211.

47 Orig. c. Celsum 3,56 (θεατρομανίας καὶ ὄρχηστομανίας καὶ δεισιδαιμονίας). Cf. Bermond 2001, 129–132.

48 Phil. Ebr. 177 (Übers. M. Adler 1929). Cf. Friesen 2017.

Die Spannung zwischen der Hochachtung von Musik einerseits und der Kritik an Aufführungen auf Bühne und Tanz andererseits findet sich schon bei Platon, Philons wichtigstem Orientierungspunkt neben der Bibel: Platon verurteilt in den „Gesetzen“ den Verfall von guter, leiser Musik zu lauter und unschöner. Und im „Staat“ findet sich eine ähnliche Diskrepanz wie bei Philon zwischen jenen, die dauernd ins Theater rennen (bei Platon zu den städtischen wie zu den ländlichen Dionysien), einerseits und den Weisheitsliebenden andererseits.⁴⁹

Ein wiederkehrendes Motiv im Werk Philons ist der kosmische Tanz: der harmonische Tanz der Sterne und Planeten.⁵⁰ Dank seiner Sehkraft vermag der Mensch, „Sonne und Mond, Planeten und Fixsterne, des Himmels hochheiliges Heer, diese Welt in der Welt, ferner die Auf- und Untergänge, die harmonischen Reigentänze (*χορείας ἐμμελεῖς*) und die nach bestimmten Zeitabläufen eintretenden Wegkreuzungen, Verfinsterungen, Wiedererstrahlungen“ zu erkennen.⁵¹ Es ist dieses Sehen, das dem Menschen den Weg zur Philosophie und zur Gotteserkenntnis offenlegt. Tanz steht hier keineswegs im Widerspruch zum Glauben. Vielmehr ist es umgekehrt: Es ist der Tanz, der zum Glauben an das Göttliche führt. „Choreia“ (das Wort kommt im Werk Philons nicht weniger als 27 Mal vor), der Chortanz, den der kontemplative Theologe und Philosoph betrachten kann, scheint der kosmische Gegenpol zu sein zum ausgelassenen Tanz der Bühne, den Philon verurteilt. Aber ganz so simpel ist es nicht. Philon kann auch dem irdischen Tanz etwas abgewinnen – insbesondere dann, wenn die Sache seinem pythagoreisch geprägten Flair für Zahlenspiele dienen kann. Die wichtigste Zahl ist für Philon die Sieben: Sie steht für die Schöpfungswoche, aber auch für die Schöpfung Mensch. Irgendwie gelangt Philon immer zur Summe Sieben: Der äußere Körper besteht genauso aus sieben Teilen (Kopf, Brust, Bauch, zwei Händen und zwei Füßen) wie der innere (Magen, Herz, Lunge, Milz, Leber und die zwei Nieren) und wie „der hervorragendste Teil in einem Lebewesen, der Kopf“ (zwei Augen, zwei Ohren, zwei Nasenlöcher, ein Mund).⁵² In diesem Zusammenhang verweist Philon auch auf die sieben Bewegungen beim Tanz und meint hier offensichtlich nicht den idealen kosmischen Tanz, sondern jenen, den er eben selbst auch von der Bühne kennt: Nicht nur kann der Mensch sieben Arten von Tönen wiedergeben (hoch, tief, gedehnt, gehaucht, dünn, lang und kurz),⁵³ er bewegt sich auch in sieben Richtungen:

49 Plat. leg. 700a–701b. Jene, die dem Verfall der Musik anhängen, werden in dionysischer Sprache als Schwärmende, von Lust Ergriffene beschrieben (*βακχεύοντες καὶ μᾶλλον τοῦ δέοντος κατεχόμενοι ὑφ' ἡδονῆς*); Plat. rep. 475d–e. Cf. Bermond 2001, 62–63.

50 Cf. hierzu die detaillierte Studie von Miller 1986 sowie Bermond 2001, 85–128 und Schlapbach 2018, 137–144.

51 Phil. Spec. Leg. 3,187–188 (Übers. I. Heinemann 1910).

52 Phil. Op. 118–119.

53 Phil. Op. 121.

τὴν ἄνω, τὴν κάτω, τὴν ἐπὶ δεξιᾷ, τὴν ἐπ’ εὐώνυμα, τὴν πρόσω, τὴν κατόπιν, τὴν ἐν κύκλῳ, ἅς ἐν τοῖς μάλιστα τρανοῦσιν οἱ τὴν ὄρχησιν ἐπιδεικνύμενοι.

hinauf, hinab, nach rechts, nach links, vorwärts, rückwärts und im Kreise; alle zusammen zeigen besonders diejenigen, die einen Tanz aufführen.⁵⁴

Damit stehen die Bewegungen der Tänzer gleichsam auch in Übereinstimmung mit dem harmonischen Reigentanz der (sieben) Planeten, wie ihn schon Platon beschreibt.⁵⁵ Dazu passt, dass Philon kurz darauf auch auf die sieben Saiten der Lyra verweist und auch diese in Analogie zum kosmischen Tanz der Planeten bringt.

Denn die siebensaitige Lyra, die dem Chor der Planeten entspricht (ἀναλογοῦσα τῇ τῶν πλανήτων χορεία), bringt vorzügliche Harmonien hervor und nimmt unter allen Musikinstrumenten nahezu den ersten Rang ein.⁵⁶

Philon kreierte ein Wechselspiel zwischen der kosmischen „chorea“ und dem irdischen Leben: auch mit der Musik und für einen Moment zumindest auch mit dem Bühnentanz. Im Judentum wird dieser Austausch von kosmischer und irdischer Harmonie durch die Menora, den siebenarmigen Leuchter, symbolisiert:

Das allein mag erwähnt werden, dass der heilige Leuchter und die sieben Lampen auf ihm ein Abbild des himmlischen Reigens der sieben Planeten sind (ὅτι τῆς κατ’ οὐρανὸν τῶν ἑπτὰ πλανήτων χορείας μίμημά ἐστιν ἡ ἱερὰ λυχνία καὶ οἱ ἐπ’ αὐτῆς ἑπτὰ λύχνοι). Wieso, wird man vielleicht fragen. Darauf antworten wir: Wie der Leuchter ist auch jeder der Planeten ein Lichtträger; da sie hellstrahlend sind, so senden sie leuchtende Strahlen zur Erde nieder, besonders der mittlere von ihnen, die Sonne.⁵⁷

Das wichtigste Symbol des antiken Judentums, der siebenarmige Leuchter, wird von Philon mit dem kosmischen Tanz der Planeten in Verbindung gebracht.⁵⁸ Diese Form absoluter kosmischer Harmonie spiegelt sich zudem – und vor allem – in Moses wider, dem frömmsten Menschen und perfekten Weisen.⁵⁹ In *De Vita Mosis* präsentiert Philon Moses als ein vierfaches, aber einheitliches und in sich stimmiges Ideal. Moses ist König, Gesetzgeber, Priester und Prophet in Einem:

54 Phil. Op. 122 (Übers. J. Cohn 1909).

55 Plat. Tim. 40c. Miller 1986, 70.

56 Phil. Op. 126 (Übers. J. Cohn 1909).

57 Phil. Her. 221–222 (Übers. J. Cohn 1909). Miller 1986, 71.

58 Die kosmische Symbolik der Menora findet sich eine Generation später auch bei Flavius Josephus (Bell. Iud. 5,217; Ant. Iud. 3,144–146) und dann auch im Midrasch (Num Rabbah 15,7). Zur Bedeutung der Menora cf. Fine 2016.

59 Moses ist für Philon der Frömmste aller, die je gewesen sind (Mos. 2,192: ὁσιώτατον τῶν πρότερον γενομένων), und der perfekte Weise, der als einziger die ungemischte Weisheit gekostet hat (2,204: πάνσοφε, μόνος ἀμιγῶς ἡκρατίσω σοφίας).

Schön ist die Vereinigung dieser vier Fähigkeiten und voller Harmonie: Verschlungen und einander festhaltend tanzen sie zusammen (ἐμπλεκόμεναι γὰρ καὶ ἀλλήλων ἐχόμεναι συγχορεύουσι), unterstützen und ergänzen sie sich, die jungfräulichen Chariten nachahmend, deren Unzertrennlichkeit unverrückbares Naturgesetz ist. Daher kann man von ihnen mit Recht sagen, was man sonst von den Tugenden zu sagen pflegt: Wer eine hat, hat alle.⁶⁰

Moses' vier Standbeine, die sich perfekt ergänzen, werden von Philon allegorisch mit den tanzenden Chariten/Grazien in Verbindung gebracht, die in Literatur und Kunst eine harmonische Einheit bilden. In der Regel sind die Chariten nur zu dritt, hier kommt eine vierte dazu.⁶¹ Moses' Tugenden tanzen im Kreis – ganz parallel zum kosmischen Tanz der Gestirne.⁶²

Kurz bevor der biblische Moses stirbt, singt er noch einmal ein Lied, das zweite nach jenem nach der Durchquerung des Schilfmeers.⁶³ Philon inszeniert aus der biblischen Vorlage einen harmonischen Schlussgesang, im Laufe dessen sich Moses unter der strengen Aufsicht der Engel schließlich in den Tod tanzt:

Er (Moses) berief gleichsam eine göttliche Versammlung ein, die Elemente des Alls und die hauptsächlichsten Bestandteile der Welt, Himmel und Erde, die Erde als Heim der Sterblichen, den Himmel als Wohnstätte der Unsterblichen, und stimmte in ihrer Mitte den durchweg harmonisch klingenden Sang an. Denn hören sollten ihn Menschen und dienstuende Engel, jene als Schüler, damit sie lernen in gleicher Weise den Dank abzustatten, jene als Aufseher, die auf Grund ihrer Erfahrung darauf achten, ob nicht im Gesange ein Missklang vorkomme, und die zugleich starke Zweifel hegen, ob ein an den vergänglichen Leib gefesselter Mensch in derselben Weise wie Sonne und Mond und der allheilige Reigen (πανιέρω χορῶ) der anderen Gestirne seinen Geist musikalisch zu bilden und mit dem göttlichen Instrument, dem Himmel und dem gesamten Weltall, in Verbindung zu bringen vermag. Der Hierophant aber stellte sich in die Reihe der Reigentänzer am Äther (ταχθεις δ' ἐν τοῖς κατὰ τὸν αἰθέρα χορευταῖς ὁ ιεροφάντης) (...). Als er aber das aus Frömmigkeit und Menschenliebe gewissermaßen zusammengesetzte Tanzlied (τὰς χορείας) beendet hatte, begann er aus dem sterblichen Leben in das unsterbliche hinüberzuwandern und merkte allmählich, dass die Bestandteile, aus denen er zusammengesetzt war, sich voneinander schieden, indem der nach Art einer Muschel ihn umgebende Körper

60 Phil. Mos. 2,7 (Übers. Bloch et al.).

61 Schachter 1997. In Abr. 54 stehen die Chariten (dort sind es drei) für die Stammväter Abraham, Isaak und Jakob.

62 Miller 1986, 65: „The law-giver of Israel was thus a microcosmic image of the law-giver of the universe.“

63 Deut 32,1–43.

abgetan, die Seele aber ihrer Hülle entkleidet wurde und das natürliche Verlangen hatte, von hinnen zu scheiden.⁶⁴

Nach Philon erhebt sich der wahre Philosoph in den Äther und wird Teil der Bewegungen von Sonne, Mond und der weiteren Himmelskörper – auch wenn ihm nur ein unscharfer Blick gewährt wird.⁶⁵ Und so wird Moses, der Allweise, am Ende seines Lebens Teil des kosmischen Tanzes. Während des Tanzes amtiert Moses ein letztes Mal als Prophet,⁶⁶ bis seine Seele, des Körpers entledigt, zum Göttlichen hin entschwebt.⁶⁷

Was bleibt? Das Werk des jüdischen Religionsphilosophen Philon von Alexandrien sperrt sich seit je gegen Versuche allzu stringenter Systematisierungen. Gesamtschauen, wie sie einst Harry A. Wolfson und jüngst Maren Niehoff vorgelegt haben,⁶⁸ stoßen trotz ihres großen Werts nicht zuletzt aufgrund der Widersprüchlichkeiten im Werk Philons an Grenzen. Philons Ausführungen zum Tanz können hierfür als Beispiel dienen. Scharfen Verurteilungen von Körperlichem steht eine variantenreiche Einverleibung von Musischem gegenüber. Philon kann in demselben Traktat (*De Vita Mosis*) vor Tanzdarbietungen warnen und Moses in den Musikunterricht schicken. Am Aussagekräftigsten ist Philons mäanderhafter Umgang mit dem Tanz in seinem Bericht über die Therapeuten (*De Vita Contemplativa*).

Philon unterscheidet den ausgelassenen, frivolen Mimen- und Pantomimen-Tanz, den es zu verurteilen gilt, vom kosmischen Tanz, der mit philosophischer und theologischer Einsicht einhergeht. Aber die scharfen Dichotomien werden immer wieder durchbrochen: Philon kennt die Theater-, Tanz- und Musikszene auffällig gut: sieben Schritte beobachtet er nicht im kosmischen Tanz, sondern auf dem Parkett hienieden. Musik und Tanz können vom Wesentlichen ablenken, gehören aber doch zur Grundausbildung. Wer nicht tanzen kann, ist ungebildet. Die Nachtfeier der Therapeuten steht im Widerspruch zu den Symposien, aber auch sie ist auf ihre Art „bakchisch“. Und Moses tanzt gleichsam mit den Grazien. Er tanzt noch immer, in der Reihe der Reigentänzer am Äther. Philons Bemerkungen zum Tanz sind vielfältig, gelegentlich auch explizit widersprüchlich. In beiderlei Hinsicht steht der Philosoph Philon dabei nicht zuletzt in griechischer, vor allem auch platonischer Tradition. Im Kontext des jüdischen Hellenismus und der Verortung des Judentums innerhalb der Oikumene erhält Philons Diskurs über den Tanz dabei ein eigenes, noch zugespitzteres Gepräge. Darin mögen sich nicht zuletzt auch die Mehrdeutigkeiten und die Vielzahl von Bezügen widerspiegeln, wie sie sich in der imperialen Kultur Alexandriens in römischer

64 Phil. Virt. 73–76 (Übers. L. Cohn 1910, leicht angepasst). Cf. zu dieser Stelle den Kommentar von Wilson 2011, 183–188.

65 Phil. Spec. Leg. 1,37.

66 Cf. Phil. Mos. 2,288–291.

67 Cf. Phil. Sacr. 8.

68 Wolfson 1948; Niehoff 2018.

Zeit durchweg ergaben.⁶⁹ Philon tanzt in vielerlei Hinsichten auf mehreren Hochzeiten. Auch in seinen Ausführungen zum Tanz.

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‘Making the God Present within Himself’ *Pantomime Dance and Devotion in Fourth-century Antioch*

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Abstract: This chapter interprets a remark in the speech *On behalf of the Dancers* by Libanios (4th c. CE) in the light of its contemporary cultural context. Comparing the effect of watching the dance to that of gazing on statues of the gods, Libanios claims that the dancer is more effective in that his activity does not involve “imitating in stone” but “makes present in himself”. The chapter considers the evidence for the contemporary understanding of pantomime as a means not simply of representation but of “presentification”. Even though this function is not explicitly attributed to the dance elsewhere, comparable claims about the dancer “becoming” his subject can be found in other authors of the Imperial period. The chapter argues further that the characteristic medium of the dance, bodily *mimesis*, lay behind the idea of “making present”.

The quotation in my title comes from the speech *On Behalf of the Dancers* in which the fourth-century orator and teacher Libanios defended pantomime dancers and their art.¹ The speech is a testament to the continuing role played by the pantomime in fourth-century Antioch, long after it was first introduced to the Greek East through the medium of the Imperial festivals, themselves Romanised versions of Greek *agones*.² Comparing the art of the dancer to that of the sculptor, Libanios claims that while the latter represented the gods, the former made them present, in a striking formulation that raises many questions. Given that the pantomime embodied characters that not only had a literary existence but were also, in many cases, divinities receiving cult, to what extent was pantomime perceived as connected to that cult? To what extent was the dancer thought to channel or embody forces that were held to be active in the world? More practically, to what extent could the dancer and/or his audience be thought to be involved in an act of devotion?

1 Libanios, *Or.* 64 in *Opera* ed. Förster. Translation in Molloy 1996.

2 On this process see Robert 1930, Slater 1995 and 1996, Strasser 2004, Webb 2011 and the brief overview in Webb 2008, 24–43; Graf in this volume.

These questions were live ones in the context of Libanios' life which spanned most of the fourth century CE, making him a witness to the religious and cultural transformations that took place as the traditional worship of the pagan gods came under sustained attack from preachers and from legislation.³ "Christian" and "pagan" in this context by no means constituted monolithic blocks in simple opposition: Libanios, a committed pagan, counted members of both communities among his pupils and among the addressees of his speeches. Conceptions of both religions varied widely, as we see from the mixed response to the Emperor Julian's short-lived attempt to reinstate pagan cults and from the energy that John Chrysostom and others devoted to persuading their audiences to accept their particular definitions of Christian piety and of acceptable behaviour.

Oration 64, "On Behalf of the Dancers" features in Libanios' lengthy corpus of letters and speeches dealing with the politics and society of his day⁴ alongside practice speeches related to his teaching. Against the background of (mostly, though not exclusively, Christian) critiques of all types of theatrical shows, this was a live topic. This speech, however, was presented as a response not to Christian attacks against pantomime and other theatrical arts, but as a refutation of an earlier speech, now lost, by the second-century sophist Aelius Aristides.⁵ From the fragments quoted by Libanios it seems that Aristides addressed his speech to the contemporary inhabitants of Sparta, perhaps, as Bowersock suggests, in response to their adoption of pantomime in their festivals. Whatever the immediate context, Aristides' speech shows that pantomime, the dance form shaped by Greek dancers in Rome, was seen as a foreign phenomenon by Greeks as well as by Romans. In his response, possibly composed in 361,⁶ just as Julian came to power, Libanios presents a wide variety of defences of the pantomime and its performers, emphasising among other things its connections to classical Greek culture.⁷ Towards the end he turns to the artistic merits of the dance, outlining the rigour of their training in terms that assimilate it to athletic training (*Or.* 64.103–105), and praising their ability to "show" one figure through another, by suggesting the presence of a second character through their movements.⁸ He compares the dancer's ability to suggest whole scenes peopled with characters to the effect of a painting (*Or.* 64.116) and, immediately before this, he compares it favourably to sculpture, particularly the cult statues (*agalmata*) of the gods:

Ἀλλὰ μὴν, εἴ γε τὸ βλέπειν εἰς ἀγάλματα θεῶν σωφρονεστέρους ἀπεργάζεται τῇ θεᾷ, τὰ πάντων οὗτός σοι δίδωσιν ἐπὶ τῆς σκηνῆς ὄραν οὐκ ἐν λίθῳ μιμούμενος, ἀλλ' ἐν αὐτῷ παριστάς.

3 On the complex religious context of fourth-century Antioch see Soler 2006.

4 On Libanios see Van Hoof 2014; Criboire 2013.

5 On this lost speech and its context see Bowersock 2008.

6 See below on the dating and the evidence of Libanios' Letter 615.

7 See Haubold/Miles 2004.

8 Webb 2017, 274.

What is more, if gazing at statues of the gods makes people more moderate through the act of looking, he [the dancer] allows you to see the characteristics of all of them (or of everything) on the stage, not imitating them in stone but making them present within himself.⁹

Libanios' argument moves from statues of the gods – and the effect of engaging visually with them through the sense of sight – to the dancer, who makes visible in a way that is doubly different to statues of the gods: where the statue is made from hard stone the dancer's material is his own body, where the statue represents (the thought implies this sense of the verb *mimeisthai*) the dancer "makes present within himself."

In building this contrast, Libanios plays on two parallel uses of the preposition *en* ("in"): the sculptor imitates or represents his subject "in stone" (*en lithōi*) – using the preposition in a sense that is close to the instrumental¹⁰ – while the dancer makes everything present (*paristēmi*) "within himself" *en heautōi*. This second use of the preposition *en* can be taken in two ways: one possible interpretation is that the dancer is his own medium, in which he works just as the sculptor works with stone; the other is that he causes the entity to be present within or inside himself, the more usual locative sense of *en*. The use of the verb *paristēmi* (to "make present") instead of a verb implying artistic representation supports the latter interpretation. The passage thus sets up a series of contrasts: between the stone of the statue and the dancer's body, between "mere" representation and presentification and between the beneficial effect of statues on the spectator and the, *a fortiori*, still more beneficial effect of watching the dance.

In this chapter, I will explore the implications of this short passage for our understanding of dance as an art and, potentially, as a devotional practice, linking it to developments in fourth-century Antioch. Though it is important not to place too much weight on this single brief quotation, it is worth looking at its implications within its religious, cultural and intellectual context. To address these questions, I will look at the characteristics of pantomime that underlie this passage as well as the ideas of statues that inform the comparison and the wider ideas of divine presence, as revealed in the writings of some Neoplatonic philosophers, that Libanios mobilises here.

The speech within Libanios' works

First of all, it is important to situate speech 64 within the context of Libanios' work. Arguing against existing speeches by orators from the past was a common exercise: the

9 Libanios, *Or. 64, On Behalf of the Dancers* 116 (this and other translations from Libanios are my own).

10 Kallistratos uses the expression "the devices (*mēchanēmata*) of art in the stone" in his description of a statue of Narcissus (*Ekphraseis* 5.3). However, he speaks of statues being made *ek lithou* "from stone" twice at 1.2 and 5.1.

first-century rhetor Theon, whose work was still being used in Late Antiquity, mentions it in his *Progymnasmata*¹¹ and Libanios discusses the practice in his letters. In one (*Letter* 615 = 530W) he talks about two speeches that he has composed arguing against Herodotos and Aelius Aristides respectively.¹² It is impossible to be sure whether he is referring to our speech but, whatever the case, the letter illustrates the background to its composition, as well as providing the potential date of 361.

As has often been noted, the defence of the pantomime in this speech contrasts with Libanios' criticisms of the theatre, spectacles and dancers elsewhere in his work. In one of several speeches on the riots that broke out in Antioch in 387 he places the blame at the door of the dancers' fans.¹³ It is not necessary to suppose a change of heart on the orator's part, resulting from this unrest. As Dorothea French has shown, in the aftermath of the riots, Libanios adopts a rhetorical strategy that draws on the negative associations attached to dance and dancers and allows him to transfer responsibility onto a group of outsiders.¹⁴ Libanios is adopting the position that fits the needs of the moment (the *kairos*) when a negative portrayal of dancers serves the worthy cause of deflecting the wrath of the Emperor.

This background is vital for any reading of the speech. It is, as has often been pointed out, a rhetorical exercise in which Libanios is performing his own role of persuasive speaker, able to assemble a rich array of arguments. It can therefore be defined as an example of metapersuasion: a display of the possible strategies that the readers were supposed to evaluate, even to find their own objections to. In consequence, it is probably best to think of the arguments presented in the speech as "positions" or "stances" rather than as personally held "views".¹⁵ So we can read his speech *On Behalf of the Dancers* as a demonstration of how to argue such a case. Libanios' technique involves, among other things, pointing out inconsistencies within the opposing argument or between Aristides' own practice and his speech and, as mentioned above, finding classical Greek precedents for the dance.

These arguments also needed to be plausible for Libanios' audience and, as Haubold and Miles (2004) have argued, the speech is far from being disconnected from the social and cultural life of Antioch: Libanios engages in contemporary debates about the theatre, particularly regarding its impact on the audience. One consistent position

11 Theon, *Progymnasmata*, ed. Patillon/Bolognesi, p. 112. This section of the text exists only in the Armenian translation dating from the fifth or sixth century. As Heath 2003 points out, the existence of this translation shows that Theon's text was still in use at this period.

12 615.3.2: ἐγὼ δὲ δύο λόγους, ὧν ἓν τῷ πρὸς Ἡρόδοτον, ἓν δὲ τῷ πρὸς Ἀριστείδην μάχομαι, πέπομφα (cf. the mentions of contests (*hamillai*) with Demosthenes in letters 243 and 283).

13 Libanios, *Oration* 19.28. See Casella 2007.

14 French 1998. See also Quiroga Puertas 2008 on these speeches.

15 Compare Libanios' practice in his collection of model *Progymnasmata* where he argues for and against the plausibility of the same story and provides model encomia and invectives of the same character. See Gibson 2008.

concerns the impact on the viewer, Libanios argues that if the theatre has any lasting effects on spectators these are beneficial: people gain knowledge about gods (*Or.* 64.112) and are made more mentally acute by the demands of a dance that required a single performer to evoke the unseen (i. e., for instance, the other characters implied by the gestures of the solo dancer as mentioned at *Or.* 64.113, or the thoughts and emotions of the character).

The comparison between the dancer and the sculptor is part of the praise of the qualities of the dance and dancers that concludes the speech in sections 102–120, following the sustained defence against charges levelled by Aristides that the dancers harm the audience and the city and that they were immoral in their personal life. This section in praise of the dance is the source for several often-quoted remarks, alongside the one that interests me here: Libanios speaks about the dancers' rigorous training (103–105), the healthy diet and the self-discipline required (106–107), and their beneficial psychological and intellectual impact on their audiences (108–118). In this last part, Libanios works mainly through analogies with established arts, appropriating their cultural prestige for the dance: like classical poetry, dramatic or otherwise, the dance instructs audiences in the deeds of gods and heroes, it can console them through witnessing the sufferings of others, it develops their intellectual acuity through the interpretative demands it makes on the audience (113), like rhetoric it can provide consolation (115).

The comparison with sculpture follows that with rhetoric and leads immediately into the comparison with painting mentioned above. Where the previous comparisons allowed dance a share in some of the qualities and powers of the other arts, dance is said not just to be equivalent to painting and sculpture but to surpass their effects. Whereas the dancer comes a close second to the orator at *Or.* 64.115, here he is given first place over the painters and sculptors (116): "even the best sculptor would cede the first prize to the dancers in a contest concerning beauty of this type."¹⁶ Each time, however, the efficacy of the art in question is attributed to the dance that equals or surpasses them so that it becomes a distillation of the essence of all.

Pantomime and sculpture

In the case of the comparison between dance and the visual arts, Libanios was drawing on a rich theoretical and practical background. Dance, painting and sculpture all used the shape of the human body to express states of mind and actions through postures and frozen gestures.¹⁷ That this affinity may have existed in practice and that these pos-

16 Libanios, *Or.* 64.116: κἂν τὸν ἄκρον ἀγαλματοποιὸν εἶξαι τῶν πρωτείων ὀρχησταῖς ἐν κρίσει τοῦ περὶ ταῦτα κάλλους.

17 In Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 3.10.1–8 Socrates explains to a painter and then to a sculptor how their arts are able to represent a character's *ethos* through the visible characteristics of the body.

tures (*schēmata*) also functioned within the dance, as in sculpture, to identify a character through a characteristic pose is suggested by two often-cited passages. One is Plutarch's discussion of *schēmata* in which dancers adopted still poses, comparable to the visual arts (*graphikōs*).¹⁸ The other occurs a little later in Libanios' own speech *On Behalf of the Dancers* (*Or.* 64.118), where dancers are said to come to a stop in a particular pose from which 'an image (or 'likeness') emerges' (*eikōn apantai*).¹⁹ The similarities do not stop there and the analogy between dance and sculpture, which both offered views of the human body in the round, was particularly acute. The claim that statues were "endowed with breath" (*empnous*), "ensouled" (*empsuchos*) or capable of movement was ubiquitous in ancient writing on sculpture and, here, the dancer did indeed embody the ideal that sculpture was said to aim for, but that it could never literally attain.²⁰ What is more, as Ismene Lada-Richards has pointed out, the terms in which sculpture itself was discussed were sometimes borrowed from the discourse on pantomime. She notes how Kallistratos in his ekphraseis of statues emphasizes their coming into being, the way in which the bronze is said to adopt the shape of the character's body (3.1–2), and how in the description of Skopas' Bacchante, the stone is said to play the role, or put on the costume (*hupoduomai*) of the dead animal she carries (2.4).

This cross-medial discourse may reflect, and may have shaped, the ways in which spectators responded to both arts. Discussing Classical Greek sculpture, Jeremy Tanner has emphasized the embodied experience of the viewer, informed in the Classical context by their participation in dance.²¹ Late Antique spectators may have had less lived experience of such participation,²² but they were versed in watching the live dancing body with great attention and this intensive practice potentially had an impact on the way statues and other works of figural art were viewed and vice versa.²³

A further point of contact between statues and dancers, underlined by Ismene Lada-Richards in her reading of Kallistratos' ekphraseis, lies in the idea of shaping and modelling that is evident in Libanios' account of the dancers' arduous training during which the young boys' bodies were, he claims, bent around like a willow branch (*lugos*)

18 Plutarch, *Table Talk* 747B. See Schlapbach 2018, 42–50 for an in-depth discussion of the passage as a whole.

19 For discussion of the links between sculpture and the dance see Lada-Richards 2003 and Garelli 2007, 351–396. The analogy between pantomime and painting is also alluded to later in Nonnos, *Dionysiaka* 19.216–217.

20 See Squire 2010 on the series of epigrams on Myron's cow that play on this tension.

21 Tanner 2006, 25. Hölscher 2018, 233–237 discusses the interaction between schemata in ancient social life and visual arts. See also Catoni 2008.

22 Though the Church Fathers often complain about dancing by non-professionals at social gatherings, see also below p. 130 on allusions to group dance in religious contexts in Libanios' speeches. Basil of Caesarea, *In Ebriosos*, PG 31.445B speaks disapprovingly of women dancing at martyrs' tombs.

23 See Webb 2017. Statues from different periods of Antiquity were still visible in the major cities of the Empire.

and shaped as if they were made of wax (*Or.* 64.104). In the same passage, Libanios describes these bodies as *hugroi*, “liquid” or “pliant”, the same adjective used by Kallistratos of the bronze that adapted itself to the characteristics of Eros.²⁴ Wax and willow also exemplify the multiply pliable nature of the accomplished dancer’s body: not only could he adopt poses that were beyond the capabilities of the layman, as Galen points out,²⁵ but he was in a constant state of flux as he slipped from one character to the next, like Proteus, as the defender of pantomime in Lucian’s *On the Dance* remarks. As Lada-Richards points out, Kallistratos’ ekphraseis of statues transfer this pantomimic flux to the material of the statues that is said to adopt the shape of the character. Conversely, the body of an athlete could be thought of as being formed like iron as it is worked by a craftsman (Hawhee 2004, 92 quoting the Hippocratic *Regimen*, 1.13) As Hawhee points out, the standard term for the athletic trainer, *paidotribēs*, literally designates someone who “rubs” and “wears down” the body to form it into a new shape. And it is precisely this term that Libanios uses in his account of the dancers’ training (*Or.* 64.104) when he talks about the dance masters who take the young boy and bend him into shape.

This network of metaphors underlines the similarities between the honed human body of the dancer or athlete and the statue of wax or bronze. Against the background of this fundamental kinship, Libanios’ choice of stone as a foil to the dancer’s body serves to maximise the distance between the two arts: in contrast to molten bronze or soft wax, stone needed harsh treatment (Romm 1990) and did not lend itself to being remoulded or remodelled. So it is not surprising that comparison with “stones” was among the insults directed at dancers: Libanios himself compares a hypothetical gluttonous dancer to a stone (*Or.* 64.106) while the authors of epigrams play on the paradox of the stone-like dancer.²⁶ So, his choice of stone as the material for the notional sculpture that is inferior to the dancer is far from accidental but carefully designed to represent the polar opposite of the dancer’s lithe liquidity.

Statues and dancers, then, were the subject of comparisons in both directions. The dancer is the ideal of a certain notion of sculpture which praises the art for producing figures that are both “ensouled” (*empsychos*) and “endowed with breath” (*empnous*) exemplified in the Pygmalion story. Seeing the living, breathing dancer transition constantly between the fleeting, static *schēmata* and the movement and actions of the dance could easily be compared to witnessing a statue come to life before remoulding itself into a different figure. Libanios’ *a fortiori* argument appeals to these ideas, and to his audience’s experience of seeing the dancers on stage in order to claim the superiority of the dancer over the sculpture.

24 Kallistratos, *Ekphraseis* 3.2.

25 Galen, *De motu musculorum* 2.7.

26 *Greek Anthology* 11. 254–255. See Garelli 2007, 353 and 414–416 (with the Greek texts) and Schlapbach 2018, 195–200 on the relationship between these epigrams and the discourse on sculpture.

Mimesis and making present

Libanios goes further though in claiming that, while the sculptor merely (the adverb is *mine*) imitates (*mimeomai*), the dancer causes the character to be present (*paristēmi*), to whom is left unsaid but it seems safe to assume that we are to think of the audience within the theatre.²⁷ Libanios plays on one sense of the term *mimesis* and its related verb, using it here in the sense of the copy that is ontologically secondary to its prototype. Part of his strategy in this speech is to consistently downgrade *mimesis*, insisting on its temporary, derivative and therefore harmless nature. For example, when defending the pantomimes against the charge that seeing these male dancers perform the nodding head gestures associated on stage and in life with women, he argues that if seeing a mere imitation is harmful, a fortiori, men should not look at the women in their household performing these movements every day.²⁸ Many in his audience would have been aware that precisely this advice was given by some Christians²⁹ but, more to the point here, they would surely also have been aware that Libanios was deliberately leaving aside other conceptions of *mimesis* which attributed to the mimetic act the power to transform the individual who engaged in it or with it.

This idea, or fear, that the imitator will be assimilated to the prototype lies behind the rejection of *mimesis* in Plato's *Republic* 3, 395d–e³⁰ and is echoed in Christian sources on the proper deportment expected of the believer, particularly in warnings against taking part in pagan rites which will automatically alter the participant's identity.³¹ These warnings in turn correspond to a belief that gestures and bodily *hexis* are not just signs of social and religious identity, or of moral qualities, but that they are also constitutive. In this sense, the relationship of *mimesis* to its prototype is far more profound than that of secondary copy to its model. One of the best examples of this understanding of *mimesis* as transformative is to be found in another set of texts about theatrical practice, the stories of martyr-mimes who become Christian simply by acting out and speaking the words of Christian baptism.³² In the world of the stories, this miraculous conversion is confirmed through the actors' martyrdom. To take up Libanios' idea, the mimes "make present" an actual baptism ceremony along with all its powers through their performed, playful simulacrum.³³ So, although his statement claims that *mimesis* is second best to "making present", his account of what makes the pantomime superior

27 Cf the passage on painting that follows.

28 Libanios, *Or.* 64.62–63; see Webb 2008, 156–159, 187–189.

29 John Chrysostom, *On Vainglory and the Education of Children*, ed. Malingrey, l. 773.

30 The model of *mimesis* used in the discussion of poetry and its performance here is thus different from that used in the discussion of painting in *Republic* 10. See Halliwell 2002, esp. 48–61.

31 See Webb 2008, 208–209.

32 See Webb 2008, 116–128.

33 See Webb 2008, 158–160, and White 2015, both with further bibliography.

seems to be based, at least partly, on familiar ideas about the transformative power of *mimesis*.

The implications of this transformative *mimesis* for pantomime were huge: the identity of the dancer whose task it was to constantly metamorphose from one character to the next was a perennial problem in the written discussions of the dance. One response was to claim that the dancer was merged with the character. Thus, the author of a well-known epigram from the very beginning of the pantomime states that the spectators of a dancer playing Dionysos “seemed to see Iobacchus himself” (αὐτὸν ὄραν Ἰόβακχον ἐδόξαμεν).³⁴ Lucian’s speaker in *On the Dance* states, at the end of a short list of the different roles that a dancer could play in a single performance, “all this is one man” (or “one man is all these things”), assimilating the dancer and his roles entirely.³⁵

However, just as the claims that statues could breathe and move were in knowing tension with the knowledge shared by author and reader that statues do neither (in normal circumstances),³⁶ the claims about the dancers’ identity with their roles contrasted with other presentations of the dance that emphasised the essential duality of the dancer in the dance. The most radical and polemical statements of this duality are to be found in the Church Fathers’ contrasts between the interior and exterior of the dancer, as in Tatian’s account of the dancer as one who “is one thing on the inside (*esōthen*) while he deceptively pretends to be what he is not on the outside (*exōthen*)”.³⁷

Inside and outside and the dancer

It is noteworthy that Libanios does not use the language of identity (his dancer is not superior because he *becomes* something other) but the language of containing and incorporating (*en heautōi*). Here, he seems to be appealing to another set of common ideas about the dancer that figure him as a vessel, or as contained within a different entity. A recurring theme in different types of discourse about the pantomime is the distinction between inner and outer, appearance and being. This understanding of the pantomime dancer as essentially and fundamentally hybrid can give rise to negative interpretations, as in Tatian’s complaint, and is frequently presented in gendered terms, as in the complaints about men who try or pretend to be women.³⁸ A different perspective on the idea is to be found in an epigram from Rome for an anonymous

34 *Greek Anthology* 16.289 (Xenophon of Smyrna). Cf. 16.290.

35 Lucian, *On the Dance* 67: πάντα ταῦτα εἰς ἀνθρωπὸς ἐστίν. Very similar questions were raised by statues themselves, although unlike the dancers they did not represent an array of different characters, another way in which sculpture and dance were similar. See Gordon 1979 on the identification of the deity with his or her statue.

36 Squire 2010.

37 Tatian, *To the Greeks* 22.1: ἔσωθεν μὲν ἐστίν ἄλλος, ἔξωθεν δὲ ὅπερ οὐκ ἐστὶ ψεύδεται.

38 See, for example, Amphiloichius of Iconium, *Iambi ad Seleucum*, ll. 90–99.

dancer, probably dating to the Imperial period.³⁹ This dancer is said to have “felt [or experienced] along with [*sumpaschō*] the characters/masks that he set in motion.”⁴⁰ Here, the dancer is distinguished from the mask which in turn is identified, thanks to the polysemy of the term *prosōpon*, with the character as a whole.⁴¹ As the dancer moves the physical mask, he “sets in motion” the character along with that character’s experiences and emotions (*pathē*) in which he shares (*sun*). The dancer is thus simultaneously identified with the character and distinguished from the mask/character on which he acts. Moreover, he is both agent, as he works upon the mask, and patient, as he shares the experience (*pathos*) of the subject. The dancer’s inherent duality is explored here, unusually, from the perspective of someone with close contact with the dancer and his technical expertise.

From another perspective altogether, the author of the commentary on the *Book of Isaiah* attributed to Basil of Caesarea,⁴² uses the dancer moving on stage as an analogy for the demon possessing and moving human beings just as the dancer sets in motion his mask. The similarity with the epitaph for the anonymous dancer is striking, except that here there is no “feeling with” or *sumpatheia*. Instead, this dancer-like demon is a pure agent and introduces an alien emotional or moral state into the human-mask. In all these passages, despite their differences, there is a distinction between the external form (the mask, the human body) and the internal entity or force that moves it (the dancer or the demon). These ideas, which morph and take on different implications in different texts and contexts, provide the background to Libanios’ argument.

To return to the contrast between sculptors and dancers, Libanios deliberately creates a contrast between stone statue and lithe dancer, between *mimesis* and making present. He therefore leaves aside, for the sake of his argument, the idea that the cult statue might itself be animated and serve as a container for the divinity or that it might have a role in divine epiphany.⁴³ In order to do this, he reduces the function of the *agalma* to that of a likeness, a primarily aesthetic object for contemplation. This was

39 Kaibel, *Ep. Gr.* 608. See Garelli 2007, 441–444.

40 Line 3: *συνπάσχω κείνους [οἷς] περ κεινέιτο προσώποις*. The text of the epigram is clearly corrupt at this point as the hexameter verse is one syllable short. The addition of [οἷς] in front of “περ” was suggested by Osann and has been adopted by the later editors. I understand the line as showing a case of hyperbaton *συνπάσχω κείνους [τοῖς] προσώποις οἷς κεινέιτο*.

41 The almost total absence of depictions of masked dancers from the visual arts (one exception being the Noheda mosaics in Spain) suggests that, on putting on the mask, the dancer is thought to “put on” the appearance of the character. On the mask, see also Slaney in this volume.

42 Ps.-Basil, *Commentary on Isaiah*, PG 30.605A. *Καὶ ἐπειδὴ οἱ ὄρχησται, ἄλλοτε ἄλλα πρόσωπα ἔχοντες, τὴν σκηρὴν καταλαμβάνουσιν, οὕτως οἱ δαίμονες, ὡς προσωπεῖοις ἡμῖν κεχηρημένοι, νῦν μὲν ὄρχουνται τὸν θυμούμενον, νῦν δὲ τὸν ἐπιθυμοῦντα καὶ περὶ τὴν τῶν σαρκῶν ἀπόλασιν ἐπτοημένοι, ἄλλοτε τὸν ψευδόμενον· καὶ οὕτω γινόμεθα ποικίλα ἐνεργήματα δαιμόνων ὑποδεχόμενοι, κατὰ τὸ βούλημα ἐκείνων καὶ τὴν καρδίαν ἑαυτῶν καὶ τὰ τοῦ σώματος μέλη μετατιθέντες*. On the authorship of this commentary see Lipatov 1993 who argues for the attribution to Basil of Caesarea.

43 On epiphanies and the complex role of the visual arts see Platt 2011.

to focus on just one aspect of the complex discourse around cult-statues which, in the classical world, could be simultaneously representations distinct from the deity, known for their artistic merit, and sites of divine presence.⁴⁴ Libanios transfers this second function of cult-statues to the dancer but the success of his argument depends ultimately on the audience’s familiarity with its more usual attribution to the stone and metal bodies of statues.

“Making present” and Late Antique theurgy

I would like now to consider briefly a further potential ramification of Libanios’ remarks that emerges most clearly when we place the speech into its cultural and intellectual context. The idea of “making present” a divinity finds echoes in a set of contemporary ideas and practices current in Neoplatonic circles, represented in Antioch from the late third century and therefore certainly familiar to Libanios and his audience. These aimed at achieving union with the divine in various ways and were the subject (like pantomime) of arguments and conflicting views, particularly concerning the possibility of summoning divine presences.⁴⁵ Some theurgical practices were aimed at enabling the soul’s ascent (Johnston 1997) rather than the temporary descent to earth of a god or *daimōn*, but in the writings of theurgists contemporary with Libanios we find the idea that material objects, including “teletic” statues, served as a recipient (*hupodoche*) for the divine presence.⁴⁶ Writing after Libanios’ death, Proklos speaks of statues being literally *empsychoi*, “ensouled”, thanks to their resemblance to the god and to their participation in the network of vital forces that inhabit the universe.⁴⁷ Closer in time to Libanios, Iamblichos, who was active in the second half of the third century and the first quarter of the fourth, is said by a later source to have claimed that statues were filled with divine presence.⁴⁸

The existence of these beliefs and practices runs contrary of course to the contrast set up by Libanios between the dancer on the one hand and the “mere statue” on the

44 See Elsner 2000; Platt 2011.

45 See, in general, Dodds 1947; Johnston 2019; Janowitz 2010, 5–12. On the ancient and modern definitions of theurgy and theurgists see Johnston 2008, 450–451; Sheppard 1982. Among the principle sources on theurgy, Porphyry and Plotinos saw philosophy as the principle means of attaining union with the One while Iamblichos and Proklos held that the soul needed the help of rituals to regain its spiritual status.

46 On the *hupodoche* see Iamblichos 5.23 [233.2–234.4] cited by Johnston 2008, 460 and Plotinos, *Enneads*, 4.3.11. Johnston 2008 contains further illuminating discussion of receptacles (462–465) and teletic statues (453–454). See also Johnston 2019.

47 Proklos, *Commentary on Plato’s Parmenides* 4, 847 (Cousin). On animated statues in Proklos see Cox Miller 2011, 31–35.

48 Photios, *Bibliotheca* 215. See Dodds 1947, 64.

other, as his original audience would have been well aware.⁴⁹ But these ideas form an important backdrop to his claim: in the context of his argument, he leaves aside the idea that a statue might be inhabited by the divinity to focus on the potential of the dancer to make the divinity present within himself (*en heautōi*).⁵⁰ The idea that the human body itself, after intense preparation, could be a receptacle for an incorporeal or divine presence was also current in theurgic writings. Proklos speaks about such rituals as belonging to the earliest phase of theurgic practice⁵¹ and his statement is echoed by Neoplatonists contemporary with Libanios.⁵² These rituals involved intense preparation and purification. Against this background then, Libanios' claim was a reasonable one to make. It could have been understood literally by certain members of his audience while most would have recognised the thought-world in which such a claim was possible.

These ideas about the divine presence within material things, particularly things that bear a resemblance of some type to the divine itself, fit into the wider late antique discourse discussed above associating pantomime with possession. Whatever Libanios' own thoughts or beliefs on the subject, his remark activates this set of long-standing ideas about the permeability of the individual as well as contemporary ideas and practices involving the making present of divine or daemonic forces. As Sarah Johnston argues, although theurgy had its roots earlier in the Imperial period, it was in Late Antiquity, when the different levels of the cosmos were understood to be sharply divided, that it developed and attained importance. Libanios' remark on the pantomime can surely be related to this cultural and philosophical moment.

A religious dimension to pantomime?

I would now like to take a step further and to consider the extent to which these ideas can be used to argue for a religious dimension to the pantomime. It is important to note from the outset that pantomime in its Imperial manifestations was not part of formal ritual⁵³ and that its connections to traditional polytheism via the representation

49 Similarly, Criboire 2013, 226 notes that in his *Or.* 30.22–23 Libanios plays down the cult significance of the statue of Asklepios in Beroia for political and religious reasons. See also the remarks of Deligiannakis 2015, 180–181 on the variance between Libanios' remarks on the religious significance of statues in *Or.* 30 and the attitudes he expresses in other contexts.

50 The agency attributed to the dancer, and to the theurgist, distinguishes these ideas from that of *enthousiasmos* as defined in e.g. Plato, *Ion* 533e5, 535c2, 536b3 in which the human container is possessed by the deity. Both, however, share the idea that the human can serve as a vessel.

51 Proklos, *On Plato's Republic* 2.123. See Dodds 1947, 65–69. Johnston 2019, 715–716. Porphyry, *Life of Plotinos* 10 tells of the summoning of a visible manifestation of Plotinos' own indwelling spirit at a sanctuary. Text and translation in Dodds 1947, 60.

52 Porphyry, fr. 350 Smith, see Johnston 2008, 461; Dodds 1947, *ibid.*

53 See on this question the remarks of Soler 2006, 84.

of the gods were not a prime concern of Christian critics of the dance who chose to concentrate (as did pagan critics like Aelius Aristeides) on the moral impact of men playing female roles and on the damaging effect of bodily *mimesis* on practitioners and spectators alike.⁵⁴ However, this does not mean that theatre in general and dance in particular were totally secular (to use our terms) phenomena.⁵⁵ Libanios' remark in fact opens up various possible roles for the pantomime that I would like to explore by analogy with remarks by late antique authors about the significance of the anthropomorphic representation of the gods in statues.

The Neoplatonic discussions of the nature of the gods and of the various means of entering into contact with them address the question of how humans achieve knowledge of the divine and how anthropomorphic statues in particular can provide access to incorporeal beings. Porphyry explained that the appearance (*schēma*) of statues (*agalmata*) was communicated by the gods themselves.⁵⁶ He then claims that the divine forms in statues are visible manifestations of divine powers and these statues are available to be read – like books – by those who know how.⁵⁷ It may be that this type of idea lies behind Libanios' remark in our passage about statues of the gods making viewers more prudent or wise (*sophronesterous*): looking at images was a means of acquiring knowledge of these beings and, potentially, of assimilating oneself to them. If this is true of statues, as Libanios points out, how much more could a dancer, performing with his fluid body the typical gestures and actions associated with the god, fulfil this function for certain viewers?⁵⁸ He had in fact hinted at this type of function for pantomime earlier in the speech when he defended the dancers as engaged in *mimesis* (*mimoumenoi*) “of the characters [or natures] (*ēthē*) of the gods.” If we take the verb *mimeomai* here in its root sense of “acting like”, the implication is that – as Socrates claims in Plato's *Republic* – the imitator ends up by assimilating him or herself to the prototype. As this idea of *mimesis* as performative assimilation suggests, a book-like “reading” of the type Porphyry speaks of was not the only way in which statues (and, by extension, dancers) could be thought to convey information or to engage the pagan viewer.

54 Lada-Richards 2007, esp. 64–78; Webb 2008, esp. 197–216.

55 Soler notes Libanios' claim at *Or.* 64.50 that dancers dedicated their hair to Dionysos though this is in a series of allusions to older periods and may not be a reference to fourth-century practices. Inscriptions (*I Aph* 8.89, 97 and 98) giving lists of the Muses, found on the stage of the theatre at Aphrodisias and dated between the third and fifth centuries may also be a trace of cult practices involving performers. See also Roueché 1993, 31–37.

56 Porphyry, fr. 316–318 Smith. See Johnston 2008, 463. On Porphyry's lost treatise see Miles 2015 and Deligiannakis 2015, 176–177.

57 Cf. Miles 2015, 87. Johnston 2008, 465 explains that “statues [...] provide an avenue through which humans, trapped in the material world, can worship entities who are immaterial.”

58 See Webb 2017 on the embodied knowledge shared between the dancer and his audience.

A passage from the Emperor Julian's *Letter 89* to the High Priest Theodore, written in the Spring of 363,⁵⁹ in which he sets out the basic tenets of his ideal pagan religion, hints at a direct corporeal understanding available to the viewers of statues.⁶⁰ In the second part of this letter, he tries to reconcile the conception of the highest level of gods as incorporeal beings with the existence of anthropomorphic statues. He states that the pagan faithful should look at sanctuaries and images of the gods as if they were seeing the gods present (*parontas*) before them, while warning against understanding these as the gods themselves. Addressing the paradox involved in the existence of statues of incorporeal (*asōmatoī*) beings he explains that these supreme divinities recognised that the embodied human condition demands that the worship (*latreia*) given to the gods must also be carried out in a bodily manner (*sōmatikōs*), and therefore revealed a lower category of celestial gods, through statues.⁶¹ Julian places a special emphasis here on the ritual care (*therapeia*) devoted to these statues which bound the worshipper and the divine recipient suggesting that the ritual acts involved a form of embodied knowledge of the divinity.⁶² Julian himself was dismissive of the contemporary theatrical shows, which he described in the same letter (304b) as "licentious" (*aselgēs*) and a corrupt version of the pure classical theatre, but this understanding of *agalмата* as evoking an embodied response leaves space for a similar understanding of the embodied work of the dancer as a response in itself that can evoke a further response in the viewer. Away from the stage, Libanios himself hints that group dances might have been a part of the worship (*therapeia*) at Antioch when he claims that Julian's death occurred as he was participating in dances (*orchēseis*) for the Nymphs in the suburb of Daphne.⁶³ Karin Schlapbach's analysis of the dance in the *Acts of John* shows how

59 On the letter and its transmission see Elm 2012, 321–326.

60 On Julian's familiarity with theurgy see Tanaseanu-Döbler 2013, 136–148.

61 Julian, *Letter 89b*, 293, see Johnston 2008, 464; Deligiannakis 2015, 178 (exploring the connection between Julian's thought and that of his contemporary Salloustios; Tanaseanu-Döbler 2013, 144–145. In Julian's system an intermediate class of heavenly bodies exists between the *agalмата* and the highest deities. These heavenly bodies have no needs and therefore cannot themselves be the subject of embodied forms of worship.

62 Wynn 2013, 90 argues that "a person's religious or spiritual life may be realised not simply in what they think in some relatively abstract sort of way, but also in their bodily demeanour, and in the sensory phenomenology of their experience, in so far as bodily demeanour and phenomenology both constitute ways in which we can recognise and appropriately acknowledge material expressions of a spiritual reality." Though he is talking about bodily responses to sites understood as sacred and their cognitive nature, "bodily demeanour" can encompass actions directed at a deity (as in the *therapeia* mentioned by Julian) and *mimesis* of the deity. Wynn's remarks *ibid.*, 80–81, about the characteristics of sacred sites and the "strain upon the senses" that they create are also germane to the experience of the spectator in the theatre at all periods.

63 Libanios, *Or.* 17.22: καὶ ὁ μὲν ἔκειτο, ἡμεῖς δὲ ἐν Δάφνῃ τὰς Νύμφας ἐθεραπεύομεν ὀρχήσει τε καὶ ταῖς ἄλλαις χάρισι εἰδότες ὧν ἐπεπόνθεμεν οὐδέν. See Soler 2006, 37. Here, the use of the term *orchēsis* makes clear that Libanios is referring to some type of dance. In another passage cited by Soler 2006, 35, *Or.* 18.125, Libanios refers to devotees *choreuontas* around altars which may also be an allusion to group dancing or simply to group participation in the rite.

such active participation could bring about a shared spiritual experience, allowing the dancers to gain an embodied understanding of Christ's passion – his *pathos*.⁶⁴ Such participatory group dances are a very different phenomenon from the spectacle of the pantomime but the example serves to show how dance, and the physical experience it embodied, could be firmly tied to devotion.

My suggestion that watching pantomime may have been in some way a religious experience for some viewers is very much in the domain of the hypothetical. But the context in which Libanios was writing was of a nature to encourage this type of response to the pantomime. With the closure of temples and the ban on performing rituals in front of statues, the living statues of the pantomime dance, still sanctioned by the authorities in the name of entertainment, could well have served as substitutes for some. In his study of religious practice and attitudes in fourth-century Antioch, Emanuel Soler has argued for just this type of transfer of religious meaning onto activities and festivals that previously had not in any strict sense been part of the traditional cult.⁶⁵ Similarly, George Deligiannakis (2015) has recently suggested that the suppression of official cult activities encouraged the development of private devotional acts involving statues, including theurgic practices.⁶⁶ The kinetic *mimesis* of gods and heroes that characterised the pantomime from its very beginnings in Augustan Rome, just as they characterised the mimetic dances of the Hellenistic period and beyond, would always have provided opportunities for this type of devotional viewing but the circumstances in which Libanios was writing were particularly conducive to realising this potential.

Conclusion

Libanios' claim that the dancer can "make the god present in himself" may be a passing comment within a rhetorical exercise that relies for its impact on a very partial comparison with the art of sculpture but it held potential resonances for the late antique audience. This gestural art had always blurred the boundaries between performer and character as the phenomenal body of the dancer brought into being the character through a process of co-creation with the audience who applied their own knowledge to perceive the figures taking shape through the movement of the dance.⁶⁷ The fact that

64 Schlapbach 2018, 154–166.

65 Soler 2006, 87–90.

66 Zubko 2014 observes that devotional viewing of dance is one of the possibilities available to contemporary diasporic audiences of Indian dance. Comparisons between pantomime and contemporary Indian dance forms have to be made with great care as each dance form has its individual, and complex, history but both have in common the fact that the dancers embody divinities who are also part of cult. Zubko's article also illustrates the potential of dance to convey abstract theological ideas.

67 On the audience's role see Webb 2017.

these characters had their independent existence within Graeco-Roman culture and religion made it possible to think of the dancer as summoning them onto the stage from a geographical and metaphysical elsewhere.⁶⁸

As we have seen, Libanios' remark activates a series of widespread ideas about the identity of the pantomime and about the permeability of the body in general. Libanios' claim that the dancer "makes present" the characters he plays goes far further than the remarks about the identity of the dancer and his part referred to above or than any simple claim for the superiority of dance over sculpture. The active – or rather reflexive – role that he attributes to the dancer who "makes present in himself" is, interestingly, closer to the anonymous epigram's analysis of the dancer's art as "setting in motion" the character/masks than to the statements of identity or difference that characterise the perspectives of spectators such as Lucian, Tatian or the epigrammatists. Within the intellectual and religious context of fourth-century Antioch it also serves to assimilate the dancers' skills to those of the theurgists. Here, Julian and Porphyry point towards the ways in which the kinetic mimesis of the dance *could* offer an enhanced and embodied understanding of divinities and an opportunity for devotional experience. This may well have been the case throughout the history of Roman pantomime, from its very beginnings in Augustan Rome, but the religious, political and intellectual context of fourth-century Antioch was particularly propitious to this understanding and use of pantomime.

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68 The closest parallel is perhaps in the epigram on Pylades by Antipater of Thessalonica, *Greek Anthology* 16.290 line 2, where the dancer is said to have brought (ἄγω) Bacchantes from Thebes onto the Italian stage. Here, the idea of the alien character of pantomime in Augustan Rome merges with the idea of transporting entities from one ontological level to another (the Thebes in question being the city of the myth rather than the Roman city). That Pylades' action surpasses the normal boundaries of time and space is suggested by the statement in the following line that these figures were thus introduced to humans (ἀνθρώποις) among whom they aroused a "delightful terror" (τερπνὸν δέος). See Perris/Mac Góráin 2020, 48, who note how the epigram "shuttles between the world of *Bacchae* and the pantomime's world", and Garelli 2007, 165–166.

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Part II: Spectacle Culture

Envisioning and Reenacting the Chorus in Republican Tragedy

The Cases of Naevius' Lycurgus and Ennius' Eumenides

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Abstract: The *Lycurgeia* and the *Eumenides* of Aeschylus provided the models for Naevius' *Lycurgus* and Ennius' *Eumenides* respectively. The plays were among the most re-performed Aeschylean ones, which means that Naevius and Ennius had excellent chances to know them not only from reading but also from attending spectacles in South Italy, where by the 3rd century BCE a vibrant and significantly Hellenised theatre culture was flourishing. This chapter discusses correspondences regarding choral imagery and performance between the Aeschylean models and their Republican reinterpretations. In particular, the chapter makes a case for some parallelisms between the choral performances which marked the beginning and the end of the *Eumenides* tragedies by Aeschylus and by Ennius.

Introduction: Re-performing Aeschylus in South Italy

Starting with Livius Andronicus, Roman playwrights embarked in the major project of romanising a selection of Greek tragedies and comedies.¹ It was in this context that Naevius adapted *Edonians*, the first play of the *Lycurgeia* tetralogy by Aeschylus, into *Lycurgus*, and that Ennius adapted Aeschylus' *Eumenides* into a homonymous work. The two Aeschylean models displayed a wealth of references to off- and on-stage choruses which, according to my argument, shaped not only the choral imagery but probably also the choral performances in the Roman remakes.

In reinventing choruses which had been first staged 220 to 300 years before, Naevius and Ennius could rely not only on full texts but also on Hellenistic reperformances. Aeschylus produced the two trilogies in question toward the end of his long career:

¹ I would like to thank Zoa Alonso Fernández, Lauren Curtis, Andreas Heil, Karin Schlapbach, Walter Stockert and Alexander W. Ungar for helping me improve this chapter.

the *Oresteia* in 458 BCE and the *Lycurgeia*, of unknown date, at a time when he already used the stage building (see fr. 58 Sommerstein), that is, presumably after Sophocles' first victory at the City Dionysia in 468 BCE.² Naevius, who lived ca. 270–200 BCE, had to be familiar with Aeschylean reperformances not only because he (supposedly) was from Campania, which in his day vibrantly mixed local, Greek and Roman performance cultures,³ but also because he served in the war in Sicily, the stronghold of Aeschylus' fortune.⁴ Ennius was born ca. 239 BCE in the partly Hellenised town of Rudiae (in Southern Apulia, close to today's Lecce);⁵ his *Eumenides* can be dated any year between 204, when he moved to Rome, and 169 BCE, when he died, because he continued to produce tragedies until the end of his life.⁶

What happened with Aeschylus' plays in the time from the fifth to the early second century BCE, and what do we know about their reperformances in South Italy during this period? Aeschylus himself initiated the tradition of reperforming tragedy, which is interesting to notice at a time when classical scholarship is in the process of assessing the importance of reperformances not only for the survival but also for the making of ancient poetry.⁷ At the invitation of the tyrant Hieron, he brought to Syracuse *Persians* (probably around 470 BCE)⁸ and then, possibly, *Eumenides* too – that is, if the knowledge which Epicharmus of Syracuse shows of this tragedy is due to local reperformance.⁹ In 455 BCE, one year after Aeschylus' death, Athens passed a law to allow re-staging of Aeschylean plays at the city's expense. Aeschylus also continued to be staged outside Athens, and particularly in Sicily, where he had worked and died, and in theatre-crazy South Italy,¹⁰ for which archaeology documents a lively Aeschylean performance tradition during the fourth century BCE (see below).¹¹ Reperformances of Aeschylus continued through the Hellenistic period, and Hellenistic scholiasts who

2 See West 1990, 29–30.

3 See e.g. Morgan 2012.

4 Gell. *NA* 17.21.45.

5 Rudiae was located in the region of the Messapians (a Iapygian tribe). Ennius' mother tongue belonged to the Oscan group; in addition, he received a Greek literary education and was fluent in Latin: on Ennius' trilingualism see Gell. *NA* 17.17.1. By 204 BCE Ennius was in Sardinia, where he made the acquaintance of the quaestor Marcus Porcius Cato (later known as Cato the Elder) and eventually moved with him to Rome, where he started his literary and theatrical career.

6 For a chronology of Ennius' life see D'Anna 1994.

7 See e.g. Spelman 2018 and the essays collected in Hunter/Uhlig 2017.

8 The scholia to Aristophanes, *Frogs* 1028 say so and cite Eratostenes, *On comedies* in support. Some scholars think it likely that, on that occasion, Aeschylus also re-staged *Glaucus of Potniae*: see e.g. Sommerstein 2008a, 10.

9 A scholion to *Eumenides* 626 says that Epicharm parodied Aeschylus' unusual verb *τιμαλφῆω*, which occurs at *Eum.* 15, 626 and 807. See Csapo/Wilson 2020, 355–364 for ancient sources regarding Aeschylus in Sicily.

10 Smith 2017; Csapo/Wilson 2020, 403–428.

11 See Hanink/Uhlig 2016.

comment on him show interest in stage-related aspects.¹² To make a long story short, although Aeschylus was less often staged than both Sophocles and the much beloved Euripides, his later plays had better luck than the earlier ones. S. Nervegna has recently argued that, by the third and second centuries BCE, *Eumenides* and *Edonians* were the two most popular tragedies of Aeschylus, a conclusion which is of special relevance for the present purposes.¹³

Choral imagery from Aeschylus' *Edonians* to Naevius' *Lycurgus*

L. Curtis has shown how Augustan poets would reactivate in their own works that which has been called the Greek choral imagery, that is, poetic references to actual, supposed and mythical choruses and choral dances.¹⁴ The pioneers of Roman theatre seem to offer the earliest evidence of this literary practice, as we will observe in the example of Naevius' *Lycurgus*.

Aeschylus' *Lycurgeia* tetralogy included *Edonians*, *Bassarids*, *Youths* and the satyr play *Lycurgus*. The first play, *Edonians*, stages the arrival of Dionysus and his male and female followers in Thrace, where they are opposed by Lycurgus, king of the Edonians. Lycurgus (like other mythical characters) is cruelly punished for resisting Dionysus: driven mad by the god, he kills his own son (or wife, or both) after mistaking him for a vine. A similar plot pattern emerges for *Bassarids*, in which Dionysus punishes Orpheus, a former worshipper of Dionysus who had eventually opted for Apollo instead. O. Taplin has tentatively related two Apulian kraters from around the 350s BCE to reperformances of Aeschylus' *Edonians*, which would indicate that the play was still being staged in South Italy by the middle of the fourth century BCE.¹⁵

Only a few fragments of *Edonians* survive; strikingly, most of them attest to a stirring choral imagery and remark on aspects such as the exotic performances and the startling looks and costumes of Dionysus and his followers.¹⁶ Fr. 57 Sommerstein is especially compelling in this regard:

12 See examples in Falkner 2002. Montanari 2009 and Nervegna 2017 offer surveys on ancient scholarship about Aeschylus. The interest which Aeschylus' scholiasts take in performance is unusual: for a comparison see e.g. Schironi 2020.

13 Nervegna 2017, 120. In the same volume, Harrison 2017 provides a well-documented survey of the reception of Aeschylus in the Roman Empire.

14 Curtis 2017.

15 Taplin 2007, 68–71. The two vases show Lycurgus in the act of striking one of his relatives with a double axe.

16 E.g. fr. 58 ἐνθουσιᾶ δὴ δῶμα, βακχεύει στέγη, "Truly the house is possessed – the building is in bacchic frenzy!"; fr. 59 ὄστις χιτῶνας βασσάρας τε Λυδίας / ἔχει ποδήρεις, "One who wears Lydian tunics and fox-skin mantles down to his feet"; fr. 60 τίς ποτ' ἔσθ' ὁ μουσόμαντις, <–U> ἄλλος ἀβροβάτης, / ὄν σθένει < >; "Who on earth is this musical prophet, another

fr. 57 Sommerstein

σεμνάς Κοτυτοῦς ὄργι' ἔχοντες

ὁ μὲν ἐν χερσὶν
βόμβυκας ἔχων, τόνου κάματον,
δακτυλόθικτον πίμπλησι μέλος,
μανίας ἐπαγωγὸν ὁμοκλήν,
ὁ δὲ χαλκοδέτοις κοτύλαις ὄτοβει

ψαλμὸς δ' ἀλαλάζει·
ταυρόφθογγοι δ' ὑπομκῶνται
ποθεν ἐξ ἀφανοῦς φοβεροὶ μῖμοι,
ἦχῶ τυμπάνου δ', ὦσθ' ὑπογαίου
βροντῆς, φέρεται βαρυνταρβῆς

Practising the holy ecstatic rites of Cotyto ...

One man holds in his hands
a pair of pipes, fashioned on the lathe,
and plays out a fingered melody,
a loud cry that brings on frenzy,
while another crashes the bronze cymbals

... and the twang of strings resounds;
terrifying imitators of the voice of bulls
bellow in response from somewhere out of sight,
and the fearful deep sound of the drum
carries to the ear like thunder beneath the earth
(trans. Sommerstein 2008b)

The fragment describes, with anapaests possibly chanted by the chorus of Edonians, an offstage bacchic ritual: Dionysus' devotees histrionically imitate (cf. μῖμοι) the deep bellows of bulls while staying "out of sight", an invisible chorus "bellowing in response"¹⁷ to the thunder-like sounds of drums.¹⁸

This bacchic performance is explicitly described as offstage, and there is no evidence that others were shown on the stage either; at any rate, the play title *Edonians* suggests that the (main?) chorus were not bacchantes but Edonian citizens (possibly consultants of the king, as in *Persians*).¹⁹ In *Edonians*, ecstatic rituals might have remained invisible to the spectators and only been reported by eyewitnesses, as is the case in Euripides' *Bacchae* – a play which was certainly indebted to the *Lycurgeia*.²⁰ Indeed, *Edonians* was a likely source of inspiration for the richly visual and kinaesthetic descriptions through which Euripides conjured up offstage maenadic performances,²¹ not least because *Edonians*' colourful descriptions of bacchic attires and performances were quick to find their way into literary tradition: it was this play that Aristophanes, in 411 BCE (six years before *Bacchae*), paraphrased to portray effeminate Agathon with his flamboyant costume and props (*Thesm.* 95 ff.). It is not surprising, then, that Nae-

<effeminate (?)> who walks with delicate tread, whom < > by force?" (text and trans. Sommerstein 2008b).

17 See LSJ s. v. ὑπομκῶμαι.

18 Cf. fr. 23 Sommerstein from *Bassarids*, where a speaker feels threatened by a charging bull. On bacchic dancing see also Graf in this volume, pp. 88–89.

19 No source mentions that Aeschylus resorted to a second chorus in *Edonians*.

20 See recently Lamari 2018.

21 For the ways in which visual and kinaesthetic vocabulary helped the theatre spectators envision offstage action see Budelmann/van Emde Boas 2020; Olsen 2021.

vius' *Lycurgus* is receptive to the bacchic imagery of *Edonians*, as a number of fragments illustrate.²²

In particular, three fragments from *Lycurgus* allow us to glimpse the ways in which the choral imagery of Aeschylus was reused: fr. 19 Schauer, 27 Schauer and 30–32 Warmington speak of a bacchic chorus acting like cattle, which is curiously reminiscent of the bull-like chorus of *Edonians*. Let us have a closer look at these fragments. The first describes the Bacchantes as bellowing and crawling on all fours, clearly at some point in the play when the chorus has been already seized by the king's men:

Fr. 19 Schauer (= 29 Ribbeck, 46–47 W):	Lead you them
<i>ducite</i>	thither, the bellowing quadrupeds with sing-
<i>eo cum argutis linguis mutas quadrupedis</i>	ing tongues (my trans.)

Some of the scholars who have noticed the similarity with *Edonians* understand *quadrupedis* as referring to the prisoners' fettered hands and feet,²³ but this does not explain why the prisoners are said to bellow (*mutas*). Nonius, who quotes the fragment, remarks that *mutus* here is an onomatopoeic equivalent for *mugitus*, 'bull's bellow', which reminds one of the "terrifying imitators of the voice of bulls" of *Edonians* (see above).²⁴

Similarly, fr. 27 Schauer compares the Bacchantes' chorus with cattle, *pecua*:

Fr. 27 Schauer (= 45 Warmington):	
<i>sine ferro ut pecua manibus ad mortem meant</i>	without goad, like cattle they go to death
	hand-guided (trans. Warmington 1936)

Here, not only *pecua* but also *manibus* may contribute to the notion of a chorus which acts and moves like quadrupeds: the ablative poses a challenge to the interpreters (so much so that an emendation into *mansueta* has been proposed),²⁵ and is usually understood as indicating the hands of the prison wardens who hand-guide the Bacchantes

22 E. g. fr. 28 Schauer (= 21 Ribbeck, 25 Warmington): *alte iubatos angues in sese gerunt*, "high on their person bear they crested snakes"; fr. 40 Schauer (= 46 Ribbeck, 39 Warmington): *pallis patagiis crocotis malacis mortualibus*, "with gowns and golden edgings, with soft saffron dresses, and clothes of death"; fr. 43 Warmington (= *incerti nominis* 57 Ribbeck): *diabathra in pedibus habebat, erat amictus epicroco*, "slippers he had upon his feet, was clad in saffron-tinted frock" (trans. Warmington 1936). See Schiesaro 2016, 30 for elements of "a grammar of bacchic themes (which) spans a large number of dramatic texts and fragments."

23 See Schauer 2012 *ad loc.* for references.

24 Nonius p. 14 Lindsay (= 9.16–19 Mercier): *mutus onomatopoeia est incertae vocis quasi mugitus. nam mutus sonus est proprie, qui intellectum non habet*, "mutus is an onomatopoeia of a vague utterance, as it were a 'moo'" (trans. Warmington). In fact, the *mutus* sound is typical of those without understanding" (my trans.). The second example given by Nonius, however, does not necessarily support this meaning of *mutus*: Non. p. 15 Lindsay = 9.20–21 Mercier, *item ad maestitiam mutam infantum quadrupedum*.

25 The emendation is rejected by the majority of the editors, with a partial exception in a footnote in Warmington 1936, *ad loc.*

to their death. However, if *manibus* indicated the hands of the Bacchants themselves (“without goad, like cattle on their hands they go to death”), this might be another reference to the Bacchants’ crawling like cattle on their fours, comparable to *quadrupedis* in fr. 19 Schauer.

The description of the Bacchants as *quadrupedis* appears to be contradicted but may actually be confirmed by our third fragment, which describes them as two-footed animals:

Fr. 30–32 Warmington (= 18 Schauer):	Go, others of you, lure them up on high
<i>alii</i>	to lofty glades, ... wherein these two-footed
<i>sublime in altos saltus incicite ...</i>	birds in flaxen toils may leave the light of day
<i>ubi bipedes volucres lino linquant lumina</i>	(trans. Warmington 1936)

Lycurgus here orders his men to lure the Bacchants to some high glade in order to minimise their chances of escape; hence these lines were uttered before fr. 19 Schauer, where the prisoners are brought to the king. There is scholarly consensus that it is the Bacchants who are compared with birds – as in Euripides, *Bacchae* 748–750. Two questions arise, though: how can we reconcile the two-footed Bacchants with the four-footed ones? And why, actually, does Lycurgus say that birds have two feet?

Since Lycurgus is, by this point of the play, determined to seize the Bacchants, he – and the theatre audience with him – must have already been told about their imminent approach (fr. 36 Schauer)²⁶ and about their behaviour as four-footed animals (fr. 30 Schauer).²⁷ I think that in fr. 30–32 Warmington, Lycurgus calls the Bacchants two-footed in reaction to such reports. He maintains that the Bacchants are like animals, but specifies that they have two feet as a contemptuous allusion to their (merely) human nature: these “birds” do not have two wings, as one might expect, but two feet (*bipedes volucres*), and once lured up to some high glades they will be caught precisely because they cannot fly. For Lycurgus, the Bacchants are pretenders: they may have *acted* like animals, but such histrionic tricks will not help them escape the ambush.²⁸

Thus far, I have assumed that, in *Lycurgus*, the animal-looking movements of the Bacchants were reported and commented upon but not necessarily performed on the stage, in which case *Lycurgus* would follow the tradition, established (probably) by Aeschylus’ *Edonians* and followed by Euripides’ *Bacchae*, of not staging Bacchic rituals.

26 Fr. 36 Schauer is thought to be uttered by a messenger, along a similar plot pattern as in Euripides’ *Bacchae*.

27 Fr. 30 Schauer (= 22 Ribbeck, 26 Warmington) *quaque incidunt, omnis arvas opterunt*, “whatever they step into they crush down all the fields” (trans. Warmington, slightly modified).

28 One last remark regarding the crawling of Dionysus’ followers concerns fr. 38 Schauer (= 40 Warmington), where the speaker, who is probably one of Lycurgus’ servants, says that the fear of the advancing Dionysus caused the body to forsake the standing upright position and to bend double: *iam ibi nos duplicat advenientis timos, pavos*, “Then and there the fear and dread of (his) coming bended and doubled us” (trans. Warmington, slightly modified).

However, fr. 35 Ribbeck may put things in a different perspective. A speaker who appears to act as the chorus leader addresses the Bacchantes directly, as if they were on the stage, and invites them to dance *Bacchico cum schemate*:

Fr. 35 R (= 33–34 W, 32 Schauer) <i>pergite,</i> <i>thyrsigerae Bacchae, Bacchico cum schemate</i>	On, on! you Bacchantes, bearing sacred wands, with Bacchic posturing (trans. Warmington 1936)
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The fragment has been compared to the remains of Accius' *Bacchantes* and to Ennius fr. 122–124 Jocelyn, which reports on "an unknown gathering of girls ... leaping up in a brisk and bacchic measure (*Bacchico ... modo*)."²⁹ However, the fragment from Naevius' *Lycurgus* is no report but addresses the Bacchantes directly, which seems to indicate that this bacchic chorus might actually perform on the stage.³⁰ If that is so, then the play's frequent remarks on bacchic performance could refer to staged rather than imaginary choruses.³¹ This scenario invites us to reconsider the issue of the chorus in Republican tragedy.

The chorus in third century BCE tragedy

The study of choral performance poses different methodological challenges than that of choral imagery. For Republican tragedy, many fragments attest to literary re-uses of choral imagery, which is not surprising since "translating" (*vertere*) – however creatively – Greek models into Latin was the programmatic goal of Republican playwrights.³² Choral dance, on the other hand, is a more controversial issue, hard to broach in normal circumstances. In what follows, I will argue that favorable circumstances are given for Ennius' *Eumenides*, this meaning that the play is not representative of our average chances of saying anything about choral performance in Republican tragedy, but

29 See Alonso Fernández 2013 on theatrical maenadism in Rome, and Graf in this volume, pp. 88–89, on bacchic dancing.

30 It is true that, in poetry, words referring to performance must not always be taken at face value, as they can conjure up performances which are not actually taking place (see e.g. Henrichs 1996). However, Naevius fr. 35 R is not a case of choral projection into imaginary realms, but presents an actor who – in a play of Bacchic subject – urges the chorus to perform in a Bacchic fashion.

31 A performing chorus of Bacchantes would point more to *Bassarids* than to *Edonians*, because the very title *Bassarids* seems to indicate that the chorus consisted of the Thracian women who were devotees of Dionysus (see Sommerstein 2008b, 19–21). But of course, Naevius might have mixed elements from both these tragedies (which were anyway comparable in the Dionysian subject and in the plot development, as outlined above), for example by drawing the characters from *Edonians* and the bacchic chorus from *Bassarids*.

32 Feeney 2016, 122–151 has re-thought the translation project with which Latin literature begins from engaging perspectives such as the (geo-)political aspects of the Roman assimilation of Greek and Sicilian theatre forms. On cultural aspects of translation in the Greek and Roman world see Bettini 2012.

exceptional, as exceptional was the role, looks and stage agency of the chorus in the Aeschylean model.

Before coming to the chorus of *Eumenides* it makes sense to briefly recapitulate the state of the art about tragic choruses in Ennius' day. Today's scholarship is in the process of reassessing the importance of music and dance in post-classical theatre.³³ L. Jackson, for instance, has recently reconsidered evidence about the chorus in fourth-century BCE drama and challenged the common view regarding its decline.³⁴ Still, little is known for certain about the presence and use of choruses in Hellenistic tragedy, meaning old and reperformed or newly composed tragedies staged in Greek-speaking regions and in Rome during the third and second centuries BCE.³⁵ Some titles and fragments of lost plays indicate that, at least in tragedy, choruses existed and partook in the action staged.³⁶ That the Roman theatre probably lacked a performance space specifically reserved for the chorus (prominent spectators could, on occasion, sit in the orchestra) is not in itself an argument for the non-existent or diminished role of the chorus: for example, in the fifth century BCE the theatres of chorus-based spectacles such as Attic tragedy and Old Comedy saw the chorus and actors share the performance space, while the semi-circular orchestra reserved for chorus members alone was introduced afterwards. In thinking about the chorus of Republican tragedy, plots may turn out to be more helpful than archaeological evidence:³⁷ since Republican remakes programmatically aligned with the plots and characters of the Greek models, it is fair to assume that remakes of Greek tragedies which originally centered on the chorus would hardly do without one. To quote Jocelyn, "classical tragedy differed from comedy in that the chorus sometimes had a role integral to the action and it was almost impossible for Latin adapters to remove it in these cases."³⁸

Two fragments from Ennius' *Medea* (CV and CX Jocelyn) indicate that a female chorus featured in this adaptation of the homonymous play by Euripides. In Euripides, the chorus of Corinthian women sympathises with Medea but it does not directly impact the plot development, and is not nearly as active a play character as most of Aeschylus' choruses. If Ennius had a chorus in adapting Euripides' *Medea*, he had many more reasons to have one in adapting Aeschylus' *Eumenides*, in which the chorus was a key, active character and informed the plot in many ways.³⁹ Presumably, choral performances and dances in particular continued to be important on post-classical

33 See e.g. Moore 2016; Griffith 2019; Jackson 2020.

34 Jackson 2020.

35 Dumont 1997; Hose 1998; Le Guen 2007, 109; Griffith 2019.

36 Hose 1998 (especially 126–129) has argued for an active role of the chorus in Republican tragedy, though he seems to rely on the fact that, in Attic tragedy, the chorus would perform in an orchestra which was spatially distinct and separated from the actors' stage.

37 Cf. Cowan 2013.

38 Jocelyn 1967, 19.

39 Käppel 1998a, 232–240; Käppel 1998b, especially 80–84.

and early Roman stages for plays where the Greek models had dramaturgically and/or spectacularly relied on them. This was possibly the case in Aeschylus' *Lycurgeia* tetralogy, as we have seen above, and it was most certainly the case in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*.

As observed above, during Ennius' period, *Eumenides* was among the best known and most re-performed tragedies of Aeschylus. A tradition of reperformances of this play seems to stretch from fifth-century BCE Attica until third-century BCE Apulia. Of the six vases which O. Taplin believes to display scenes from Aeschylus' *Eumenides*, five were produced in the course of the fourth century BCE in various Apulian towns – that is, at places close to Ennius' birthplace.⁴⁰ Not only common sense, but also the theatrical costumes and stage elements depicted indicate that these paintings were inspired by local reperformances. Remarkably, the paintings always represent the Erinyes, which seems to indicate that the chorus was very much present in reperformances of this period and region. To pick out just one example, an Apulian krater from ca. the 350s BCE displays a chorus of black Erinyes (cf. Aesch. *Eum.* 52, μέλαιναι) asleep and lying around a little temple, with Orestes in the middle at the *omphalos* and the priestess fleeing in terror.⁴¹ The chorus was such an essential component in reperformances of *Eumenides* that not even later parodies omitted it. In the fourth century BCE, Timocles staged *Orestautokleides*, a comedy rich in paratragic allusions in which pederast Autokleides, who passed himself for Orestes, was surrounded by eleven sleepy old women who put him on trial. Their presence “suggests familiarity with Aeschylus' *Eumenides* as a performance script.”⁴²

We know from Aristotle (*Poet.* 1456 a25–32) that, starting from the last decades of the fifth century BCE, tragedians who, like Euripides and Agathon, experimented with the so-called New Music began to replace traditional choral performances with a new sort called *embolima*, which were no longer related to the tragic plot. It is probably because of such independence from the plot that choral songs could eventually be bypassed in play scripts and substituted by the placeholder “of the chorus” (ΧΟΡΟΥ, sc. ΜΕΛΟΣ).⁴³ In post-classical reperformances of fifth-century tragedies, choral performances might have been turned into *embolima* whenever the chorus was not closely involved in the dramatic action. But this is not the case of Aeschylus' *Eumenides*, in which the chorus constantly interacts with the actors and which, in fact, makes true

40 See Taplin 2007, 58–67. The Hellenization of Southern and Central Apulia seems to have been more conspicuous than that of Northern Apulia: see Todisco 2012.

41 Apulian calyx-krater, ca. 350s BCE (Saint Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum St. 349): see Taplin 2007, 65: https://books.google.at/books?id=tfxGAgAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false.

42 Nervegna 2017, 120. Cf. Rosenbloom 2017, 61–64 on visual and staged allusions to reperformances of Aeschylus in comedy.

43 Jackson 2020, 3–12 shows how Aristotle's testimony and the scribes' practice of skipping choral parts have somehow shortcut into the view that, after the fifth century BCE, choruses became marginal to stage performance.

Aristotle's wish for the chorus to participate in the action no less than the actors themselves. It is the chorus who speaks with the ghost of Clytaemnestra, pursues and threatens Orestes, confronts Apollo, argues with Athena, undergoes a radical transformation and, finally, takes the city under its protection. Some of these key events, such as the threatening of Orestes and the final blessing of the city, take place through and during choral performances. It is hard to imagine how Ennius could possibly skip such choral performances or replace them with intermezzi *ad libitum* without modifying the Aeschylean model very deeply, that is, without betraying the agenda of Republican tragedy, which was to romanise Greek models while keeping them well-recognisable.

In discussing the chorality of Ennius' *Eumenides*, I will rely on the premise that in this play, like in the homonymous play by Aeschylus, the chorus consisted of Furies who developed into Eumenides in the course of events. This metamorphosis and the subsequent presence on stage of a chorus of Eumenides are implied by the very title *Eumenides*, since titles in the plural still referred to choruses in Greek and Latin tragedies of the Hellenistic period.⁴⁴ The play title might have been given not by Ennius but by a later grammarian,⁴⁵ but even in this case the grammarian probably relied on a text which featured the Eumenides in some important capacity. Aeschylus had staged the metamorphosis of the chorus by means of contrasting performances and dances: as we will consider below, his spectators could actually see how the Erinyes changed into Eumenides from the different ways in which the chorus members acted, danced and were costumed during performances which turned out to be memorable and much reenacted. Later playwrights who adapted Aeschylus' *Eumenides* did so in the context of this particular chorus' long-lasting reputation for a sensational scenic presence, and of the corresponding expectations of the theatre-goers. I will also argue for a basic correspondence between Aeschylus' and Ennius' *Eumenides* with regard to the character of the choral performances that marked the starting and the ending points of the metamorphosis from Furies into Eumenides. By 'correspondence' I do not mean that choral performances staged centuries apart from each other actually looked similar, but that both Aeschylus and Ennius designed performances by the Furies and by the Eumenides to be mutually complementary out of dramaturgic necessity: in both plays, the Furies had to embody their bloodthirst and lust for violence, while the Eumenides had to display their new benevolent nature. In the Greek as well as the Roman version, the contrast between these opposite kinds of choral performances was essential to represent a key event of the plot, namely the metamorphosis from demons into goddesses. The following section considers how the surviving evidence underpins this view.

44 Le Guen 2007, 95.

45 See Jocelyn 1967, 58–63.

Choral performance from Aeschylus' to Ennius' *Eumenides*

One fascinating segment in the performance history of *Eumenides* allows us to glimpse how choral and anti-choral models were being passed on and negotiated in the migration of Attic tragedy from 458 BCE Athens, to fourth-century BCE theatre-mad Apulia and to early second- to first-century BCE Rome.⁴⁶ It will appear that, in all these different contexts, the chorus of *Eumenides*-plays would threaten and harass Orestes not only with words but also in bodily-encoded forms, such as physical proximity to the actor, gestures addressed against him and dance movements.⁴⁷

The plot of Aeschylus' *Eumenides* consisted of two interrelated storylines: one centered on the trial of Orestes, the other on the metamorphosis of the chorus. The latter storyline was narrated not only in word but also in song and dance (*choreia*), and the dramatic text makes it manifest that there was a sharp contrast between the choral performances which Aeschylus choreographed for the first and second halves of the play – and of the *exodos* in particular.⁴⁸ In a nutshell, the first ones are described as animal-looking, ruthless and disruptive, while the *exodos* is said to be a well-ordered procession of goddesses.⁴⁹

Let us observe how the dramatic text reflects and helps track the metamorphosis. Until the victory of Orestes is proclaimed at lines 752–753, the performances of the Erinyes strike as deliberately anti-choral. Considering the cultural meaning of the Greek chorus as expression of social harmony, these should be called, actually, not choral dances but rather group movements. It is significant in this regard that, contrary to the custom of referring to dramatic choruses in the singular, Apollo constantly addresses the Erinyes-chorus in the plural:⁵⁰ to the eyes of the internal spectator – and certainly to the eyes of the external spectator too – the Erinyes did not embody the unity of an ideal-typical chorus but a chaotic hoard of individuals. Socially as well as

46 See below on Figure 1 (a fourth-century BCE Apulian vase), Ennius fr. 53 Manuwald and Cicero's testimonies on the *Eumenides* of Ennius. More generally on tragic choruses in the fourth century BC see Jackson 2020, 51–111.

47 We do not know whether these body renderings of choral violence translated into body contact between the chorus and the actor (either direct contact or contact mediated by the weapons which the Erinyes/Furies brandished), but either way members of the chorus probably entered what experts of body language call the 'personal space' of Orestes, by which I mean the space immediately surrounding the actor which ancient spectators would regard as sensitive to the character's safety.

48 The chorus of *Eumenides* is the most studied Aeschylean chorus. For a survey of modern approaches to it see e.g. Easterling 2008. Henrichs 1994 and Easterling 2008 have considered the duality of this chorus and the ways in which such duality was possibly reflected in the stage performance. On visual aspects of the Erinyes/Furies see Frontisi-Ducroux 2006.

49 Easterling 2008, 220: "[T]he logic of the *Eumenides* could be based on foregrounding first the function of the Erinyes at 1–777, then the polarity between Erinyes and Semnai Theai / *Eumenides* from 778 to 1020."

50 Cf. also how the Erinyes speak about themselves, e.g. *Eum.* 585 πολλὰί μὲν ἔσμεν "we are many."

choreographically, the Erinyes experimented with centrifugal dynamics instead of obeying the centripetal logics of the chorus.

The first and second plays of the trilogy already anticipated the anti-chorality of the Erinyes, for example when Cassandra describes them as “a unison cacophonous chorus” (χορὸς ξύμφοθoγγος οὐκ εὐφωνος, *Agamemnon* 1186–1193) and then re-labels this non-chorus as a “revel-band” (κῶμος) of a considerably more disorganised nature.⁵¹ At *Eumenides* 143–177, the first performance of the Erinyes confirms Cassandra’s words: over three pairs of strophes and antistrophes, the text indicates that the chorus makes a show of dismaying anti-chorality. Immediately after this dance, the internal spectator Apollo – an excellent judge of choral matters – profusely remarks on the bestial and disgusting look of the dancers, all dressed in black (l. 52), and adds that they should withdraw without the sympathy of any gods, like “a herd tended by no herdsman”:

Aesch. *Eum.* 196–197
χωρεῖτ’ ἄνευ βοτῆρος αἰπολούμεναι·
ποιόμνης τοιαύτης δ’οὔτις εὐφιλῆς θεῶν.

Off you go, and wander like a herd with no
herdsman! None of the gods is friendly to
a flock like you! (Text and trans. Sommer-
stein 2008a)

The comparison with scattered animals which are not tended by any herdsman suggests that the chorus leader does not properly lead or unify the chorus at this point. This matches well a much later testimony, according to which this very chorus entered the stage “in a scattered fashion” (σποράδην), and while this information cannot be taken at face value it is significant that the wild stage entry of the Erinyes in 458 BCE remained famous down to the Byzantine period:⁵²

Vita Aeschyli 9: τινὲς δὲ φασιν ἐν τῇ ἐπιδείξει
τῶν Εὐμενίδων σποράδην εἰσαγαγόντα τὸν
χορὸν τοσοῦτον ἐκπλήξει τὸν δῆμον ὡς τὰ μὲν
νήπια ἐκψύξει, τὰ δὲ ἔμβρυα ἐξαμβλωθήναι.

Some say that in the staging of *Eumenides* the
chorus, which entered the stage in a scattered
fashion, impressed the people so much that
little children lost consciousness and unborn
ones were miscarried. (My trans.)

Crucially, the disruptive, ferocious look of the choral dancing in the first half of Aeschylus’ play is reflected not only by the reactions of internal and external spectators, but also by frequent remarks of the dancers themselves. For example, in the so-called Binding Song (*Eum.* 307–396), the Erinyes proudly comment on their dance as follows:

51 See Simas 2020 for other ways in which Aeschylus prepares the audience for the apparition of the Erinyes on stage.

52 Hanink 2010 has re-appraised the *Lives* of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides as documents of the perception and reception of the three tragedians in the time preceding the composition of these writings.

Aesch. *Eum.* 307–310

ἄγε δὴ καὶ χορὸν ἄψωμεν, ἐπεὶ
μοῦσαν στυγεράν
ἀποφαίνεσθαι δεδόκηκεν

Come, let us now join in dance,
since we have resolved to display
our horrifying artistry (text and trans. Som-
merstein 2008a)

and

Aesch. *Eum.* 368–376

δόξαι δ' ἀνδρῶν καὶ μάλ' ὑπ' αἰθέρι σεμναὶ
τακόμεναι κατὰ γᾶς μινύθουσιν ἄτιμοι
ἀμετέραις ἐφόδοις μελανείμοσιν
ὄρχησμοῖς τ' ἐπιφθόνοις ποδός·
μάλα γὰρ οὖν ἄλομένα
ἀνέκαθεν βαρυπετῆ
καταφέρω ποδός ἀκμάν,
σφαλερὰ καὶ τανυδρόμοις
κῶλα, δύσφορον ἄταν.

Men's conceit of themselves, however proud
while under the bright sky,
dwindles and melts away into worthlessness
when beneath the earth,
thanks to our black-garbed assaults
and the angry dancing of our feet;
for I give a great leap
and then bring down my foot
from above with a heavy crash,
a leg to trip even a runner
at full stretch and cause unendurable ruin.
(Text and trans. Sommerstein 2008a)

Thus, up to a point in the play the stage movements of the chorus looked wild and disorganised; in particular, the chorus leader (the “herdsman” of *Eum.* 196) did not lead the dance properly, which was likely to produce scattered formations and other choreographic renderings of disorder.⁵³ Such anti-chorality translated into a spectacularly dispersed if not anarchic choreography instead of the expected, well-ordered formations symbolizing choral – and social – unity.⁵⁴

By the end of the play, however, the angry demons have turned into benevolent goddesses. Aeschylus makes this metamorphosis splendidly visible in the *exodos* (see lines 1004–1047), which the chorus performed in such neat formation and heavenly order that this again looked not so much like a typical theatre dance as like a real-life procession (see below). The goddesses, by now no longer black but draped in purple robes (line 1028), melodiously sing hymns and blessings. The two most disturbingly anti-choral traits of the initial dances, namely the lack of chorus leadership and the angry quality of the movements, are now turned into their very opposite. The chorus is led by no less a leader than Athena, who by making the chorus members partake of the civic and social harmony of the *polis* also educates them in the values of chorality. Thus,

53 Csapo/Slater 1994, 14 translate *σποράδην* as “in separate groups spaced at intervals”, Burges Watson 2014 as “one by one”, whereas such translations do not really bring to the fore the chaotic movement quality which the choral fragmentation implies.

54 Cf. Easterling 2008, 225: “The combination of hunting-dog language and their uncanny ‘wingless flights’ mark [the Erinyes] as both beastlike and godlike; their movements in performance may help to integrate these associations.”

the same chorus that had rushed onto the stage with disorienting dispersal now leaves it in a display of geometrical order and forming – as usual in processions – one single or two parallel rows.⁵⁵ It has been pointed out that the exit of the Eumenides must have reminded the Athenian audience of the two most solemn processions they could attend in real life, namely the Panathenaic procession and the procession in honour of the Eumenides themselves.⁵⁶ By juxtaposing choral performances with opposing connotations, Aeschylus made dance convey two different though related narratives: the mythical, about the metamorphosis of the Erinyes into Eumenides, and the political, about Athens' successful transition from the social threat of splintered individual forces into the firmly regulated cohesion of the *polis*.

About 250 to 290 years after Aeschylus' *Eumenides*, Ennius staged his own remake, apparently taking the model quite seriously.⁵⁷ Only a few fragments from Ennius' *Eumenides* survive, their exact number varying from edition to edition. Unlike Aeschylus, Ennius is not credited as the composer and choreographer of his plays,⁵⁸ but must nevertheless have been in the position to supervise stage-related aspects and make relevant decisions. The next pages will argue that Ennius too, like Aeschylus, made the metamorphosis of the chorus visible through contrasting choral performances: before the metamorphosis, the chorus acted as threatening demons, whereas after it, as blessing goddesses.

Choral performances of the violent type are documented by Cicero and by one fragment from Ennius' *Eumenides*. Cicero often had stage situations in mind when referring to Orestes (for example, when he referred to the friendship of Orestes and Pylades and to trials for matricide), but it is usually hard to say which plays he was thinking of because Orestes was one of the most frequently staged characters of Republican tragedy.⁵⁹

55 Sommerstein 2008a, 482 note 198 attempts a description of the actual arrangement of the dancers. Cf. Bierl 2011.

56 See e. g. Easterling 2008, 233; Sommerstein 2008a, *ad loc.*

57 From Scaliger onwards, scholars have been comparing the extant fragments of Ennius' *Eumenides* with passages in Aeschylus' homonymous play, thereby emphasising the closeness of Ennius to the model. There is scholarly consensus that Aeschylus' *Eumenides* was the model for Ennius (see Jocelyn 1967, 283; Degiovanni 2008, 403). The hypothesis of Aeschylus' *Eumenides* says that this was the only play (of the three classical tragedians?) to have presented this particular story (παρ' οὐδετέρῳ κείτῃ ἢ μῦθοποιῖα). Be that as it may, plot similarities between the *Eumenides* of Aeschylus and Ennius can be observed in spite of the few fragments that survive from the latter.

58 See the sources quoted in Jocelyn 1967, 46 note 5; cf. Hall 2002, 24–26. Things may be somehow different for music: in Ennius' day, there circulated musical notations which concerned tragedies of the fifth century BCE or reperformances thereof. For example, the *Pap. Vind. G 2315*, dated to the end of the third century BCE, contains musical notation for Euripides' *Orestes* 338–343.

59 Possible candidates would be tragedies by Pacuvius (*Chryses*, *Doulorestes*, *Hermiona*), Atilius (*Electra*), Accius (*Erigona*, *Agamemnonidae*, *Aegisthus*, *Clytaemnestra*), Livius (*Hermiona*, *Aegisthus*), Naevius (*Iphigenia*), the *Orestes* of an anonymous author (cf. Donatus, *Gramm.* 4.375.25), and of course Ennius' *Eumenides*.

However, three of Cicero's mentions of stage Furies have been convincingly related to the *Eumenides* of Ennius:

Cic. *S. Rosc.* 67: *nolite enim putare, quem ad modum in fabulis saepe numero videtis, eos qui aliquid impie scelerateque commiserint agitari et perterreri Furiarum taedis ardentibus.*

For do not believe, as you often see it in plays, that they who have done anything impiously and wickedly are really driven about and frightened by the Furies with burning torches. (Trans. Yonge 1913–1917, modified)

Cic. *Pis.* 46: *Nolite enim putare, patres conscripti, ut in scaena videtis, homines consceleratos impulsu Deorum terreri Furiarum taedis ardentibus.*

For think not, o conscript fathers, that, as you see on the stage, wicked men are, by the instigation of the gods, terrified by the blazing torches of the Furies. (Trans. Yonge 1913–1917)

Cic. *De legibus* 1.40: *Itaque poenas luunt, non tam iudiciis [...] at eos agitant insectanturque Furiae, non ardentibus taedis sicut in fabulis, sed angore conscientiae fraudisque cruciatu.*

They therefore must bear the punishments, not so much those inflicted by courts of justice [...], but the Furies harass and pursue them, not with burning torches as in tragedies, but with remorse of conscience and the torture of guilt. (My trans.)

All these passages speak of Furies who pursue matricides with blazing torches on the tragic stage (*in fabulis [...] videtis, in scaena videtis*). In his commentary on Ennius' tragic fragments, H. D. Jocelyn has ruled out the possibility that Cicero, in these three passages, refers to Ennius' *Alcmeo*, firstly because in this play the Furies' attack upon the matricide is not staged but reported in a lyric speech addressed to a maiden (*virgo*), and secondly because Alcmeo's own words make it clear that "the demons are figments of the hero's imagination and could hardly have been represented on the stage" (fr. XV.21 Jocelyn = 13.1 Manuwald, *sed mihi neutiquam cor consentit cum oculorum aspectu*).⁶⁰ While Cicero may be here referring to other theatre works that in his day staged Furies with torches, his familiarity with Ennius leads Jocelyn to conclude that the three passages probably refer to Ennius' *Eumenides*.

Aeschylus does not mention blazing torches in connection with the Erinyes' threats against Orestes,⁶¹ and we do not know when and by whom torches were first used on the stage in this context. Iconography up to the fifth century BCE shows the Erinyes holding serpents rather than torches,⁶² and Aeschylus has been observed to rely on well-established iconographic vocabularies regarding female monsters for his poetic and stage construction of the Erinyes.⁶³ Cicero's testimonies do not prove, actually,

60 Jocelyn 1967, 186 and 284 (with bibliographic references).

61 He only mentions blazing torches toward the end of the play, when the Eumenides are escorted to their new underground chambers (*Eum.* 1005: πρὸς φῶς ἱερόν τῶνδε προπομπῶν, 1022: πέμπω τε φέγγει λαμπάδων σελασφόρων).

62 See LIMC s. v. Erinyes.

63 Simas 2020.

that Ennius used torches either: since Ennius' tragedies were frequently re-staged in the first century BCE, what Cicero describes could have been staged by Ennius himself, by a first century BCE playwright who re-staged Ennius, or by both. Interestingly, though, there is evidence that blazing torches had been included in theatrical renderings of the Erinyes in Apulia by the fourth century BCE, and that eventually torches – possibly under the influence of such theatrical renderings⁶⁴ – would find their way into the iconography⁶⁵ and literature relating to the Erinyes.⁶⁶ An Attic *pelike* dating to around the 370s–360s BCE exhibits the earliest image of this new prop of the Erinyes:⁶⁷ the vase is considered to represent a reperformance of Aeschylus' *Eumenides* and displays two stage Erinyes who threaten Orestes with long blazing torches, whose flames cannot harm the Erinyes themselves (one of them nonchalantly holds a hand by the fire) but certainly frightens Orestes (Figure 1).

Trendall and Webster, with the tentative support of Taplin, think that the Erinyes of this vase are dancing.⁶⁸ As a matter of fact, they wear ankle-long costumes which elegantly swirl as if tossed by dancing feet. The *pelike* suggests that it would be possible for Ennius to draw inspiration from a staging tradition of *Eumenides* featuring choral dances during which the Erinyes threatened Orestes with blazing torches.

With or without torches, Ennius' Furies (like Aeschylus' Erinyes) staged their lust for violence and acted in ways which were terrifying enough to be reperformed in the terms used by Cicero (cf. *terreri*, *perterreri*). Yet, the Furies could only do so during the choral performances that preceded their metamorphosis into Eumenides. This is not only suggested by the plot of the Greek model but, as I would like to argue, also confirmed by a surviving fragment from Ennius' *Eumenides*, in which a speaker – generally identified with Minerva – proclaims that Orestes has prevailed and orders the chorus to withdraw:

Fr. 53 Manuwald
dico vicisse Orestem; vos ab hoc facessite

I say that Orestes has won; you, withdraw
from him. (Trans. Goldberg-Manuwald 2018)

64 See Gianvittorio-Ungar/Schlapbach 2021 for how embodied, iconographic and literary renderings of the mythical repertoire influenced one another.

65 Examples are an Apulian *oenochoe* dating from the end of the fourth century BCE (Napoli, Museo Archeologico Nazionale 8232) and an Apulian crater dating 360–350 BCE (Napoli, Museo Archeologico Nazionale 80854). The LIMC entry on the Erinyes repeatedly remarks upon the influence of stage Erinyes on iconography.

66 Examples are Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 10.684 f.; Seneca, *Thyestes*, which speaks of (offstage) Furies/Erinyes brandishing torches (ll. 78–80, 250–252) and of a (onstage) Fury brandishing serpents (ll. 96 f.); Aelian *VH* 9.29.

67 LIMC s. v. Erinyes, 841 notices on this *pelike*: “Dans un un seul cas (45), les E. portent un long péplos et c'est aussi, sur ce même document, que les torches apparaissent pour la première fois comme attribut.”

68 See Taplin 2007, 60.



Figure 1 Detail of an Attic *pelike*, ca. 370s–360s BCE (Perugia, Museo Etrusco-Romano, unnumbered). Drawing by Alexander W. Ungar. See Taplin 2007, 60: https://books.google.at/books?id=tfxGAgAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false.

Scaliger associated the fragment with line 741 of Aeschylus’ *Eumenides*; Ribbeck, Warmington and others with lines 752–753 of the same tragedy.⁶⁹ However, at these places Athena only proclaims that Orestes is acquitted of charges, without mentioning the chorus’ withdrawal. There is no place in Aeschylus where Athena says both these things: that Orestes has won *and* that the chorus should go away:⁷⁰ hence the stage instruction “you, withdraw” (*facessite*) marks a point of departure from Aeschylus. Ennius is here adapting the model to his own stage purposes.

What stage situation could possibly require the withdrawal of the chorus? It is fair to assume that fr. 53 Manuwald followed a choral performance in which the Furies had physically threatened Orestes, because Minerva’s point was to protect Orestes from them, and her order to withdraw implies that chorus members were close enough to the actor to pose a threat. Summing up, a combined reading of Cicero’s testimonies and fr. 53 Manuwald gives reason to think that Ennius, like Aeschylus, staged choral performances which displayed violent acts or threats by the Furies against Orestes and took place before the metamorphosis into Eumenides.

69 See Jocelyn 1967, 286.

70 In locating Ennius’ possible source for this line, editors seem to have accorded more importance to Orestes’ acquittal than to the reference to the stage movements of the chorus.

As considered above, Ennius' Furies should be supposed to undergo the metamorphosis which Aeschylus encoded in both the text and the performance, and which Ennius' very title *Eumenides* implies. In Aeschylus, the new nature of the chorus became visible in the well-ordered procession with which the chorus left the stage. We do not know how Ennius concluded his play, but one disputed fragment may be relevant in this regard:

Fr. ad. 52 Schauer (= Warmington

157–161):

*caelum nitescere, arbores frondescere,
vites laetificae pampinis pubescere,
rami bacarum ubertate incurvescere,
segetes largiri fruges, florere omnia,
fontes scatere, herbis prata convestirier.*

The sky to shine, the trees to put forth leaves,
joy-making vines to sprout with fresh young shoots,
their branches to bend down with grapes abundant,
the growing cornfields to bestow their harvests,
all things to bloom, the springs to bubble, meads
to be overclothed with grasses. (Trans. Warmington
1936)

Editors such as Ribbeck, Hermann, Vahlen and Warmington have ascribed these lines to Ennius' *Eumenides*, holding that Minerva uttered them on behalf of the chorus at some point not far from the end of the play. The reason for this attribution is the resemblance with Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 903–909:

ὄποια νίκης μὴ κακῆς ἐπίσκοπα,
καὶ ταῦτα γῆθεν ἔκ τε ποντίας δρόσου
ἔξ οὐρανοῦ τε· κἀνέμων ἀήματα
εὐηλίως πνέοντ' ἐπιστείχειν χθόνα·
καρπὸν τε γαίας καὶ βοτῶν ἐπίρρυτον
ἄστοισιν εὐθενοῦντα μὴ κάμνειν χρόνῳ·
καὶ τῶν βροτείων σπερμάτων σωτηρίαν.

Such as are appropriate to an honourable victory,
coming moreover both from the earth, and from the
waters of the sea, and from the heavens; and for the
gales of wind to come over the land breathing the
air of bright sunshine; and for the fruitfulness of the
citizens' land and livestock to thrive in abundance,
and not to fail with the passage of time; and for the
preservation of the human seed. (Text and trans.
Sommerstein 2008a)

The attribution of the above quoted fragment to Ennius' *Eumenides* has become unfashionable, however, and TrRF edit it as *fragmentum adespotum* (in the first volume, edited by M. Schauer). Scepticism goes back to Jocelyn, who felt that the similarities to the Aeschylean passage were too superficial and that, at a more fundamental level, “[t]he story of the transformation [...] from Ἐρινύες to Εὐμενίδες [...] does not seem a likely theme for the early second century Rome stage.”⁷¹ In fact, Jocelyn judged that the final scene of Aeschylus' *Eumenides* “could have been omitted” by Ennius altogether.⁷²

These arguments are questionable. Firstly, the surviving evidence of Republican theatre is not such to safely assess which themes suited it and which did not. The degree

71 Jocelyn 1967, 285, with reference to N. Terzaghi, ‘Sulla tecnica tragica di Ennio’, *SIFC* 6, 1928, 184 (*non vidi*).

72 Jocelyn 1967, 284.

of “domestication” of the Greek originals was constantly renegotiated on the Roman stages,⁷³ and even if we assume that Ennius preferred to spare the Roman audience the praise of Athens,⁷⁴ this does not mean that he had to skip the chorus’ metamorphosis as well: Ennius could still exploit the huge theatrical potential of the metamorphosis without going into the specifics of Athenian politics. Secondly, the similarities between fr. ad. 52 Schauer and Aeschylus, *Eum.* 903–909 do not seem to be too superficial after all, meaning not much more superficial than other cases of free adaptation of Greek models. Finally, the notion that Ennius’ *Eumenides* did not feature any Eumenides at all would leave two important questions open, namely first, why would Ennius choose Aeschylus’ *Eumenides* as his model if he was not interested in the key theme of the play, and secondly, why would Ennius’ play be called *Eumenides*.⁷⁵ If, as these points suggest, Ennius did bring a chorus of Eumenides onstage, it makes sense to tentatively ascribe fr. 52 ad. Schauer to the end of this play, as many editors have done.

The assumption that these lines come from the final part of Ennius’ *Eumenides* has interesting implications at the level of stage performance: Minerva’s blessings would indicate not only that the angry demons have meanwhile turned into benevolent goddesses, but possibly also that by now Minerva herself acts in the capacity of chorus leader, which is just what Athena did by the end of Aeschylus’ play. Such firm chorus leadership would suggest that, in Ennius as in Aeschylus, the chorus underwent a metamorphosis from Furies who act according to their own instincts into Eumenides who follow organisational principles and chorus leadership – that is, a metamorphosis from anti-chorus to chorus.

Conclusion

By the third and second centuries BCE, an eclectic and deeply Hellenised theatre culture flourished in Southern Italy, where Naevius and Ennius were born. The models of Naevius’ *Lycurgus* and Ennius’ *Eumenides* were, respectively, Aeschylus’ *Edonians* and *Eumenides*, which were among the most reperformed Aeschylean tragedies in the post-classical period and which Naevius and Ennius probably knew not only from reading but also from the stage.

The chapter has argued that Republican adaptations of Greek tragedies could re-interpret choruses and choral performances, especially when these (as in our case studies) were exceptionally prominent in the originals. There are interesting correspondences in the chorality of Aeschylus’ plays on the one hand and Naevius’ and

73 Feeney 2016, 139–146.

74 Hose 1998, 132.

75 Although ‘Eumenides’ is sometimes used in Latin to refer to Furies (e.g. Seneca *HF* 87), in the majority of cases the word indicates the Furies’ well-minded *alter ego*.

Ennius' reinterpretations on the other. At the literary level, the chapter has observed resonances in choral imagery: for example, *Edonians* describes the offstage performance of a bacchic chorus as bellowing and imitating bulls, and Naevius' *Lycurgus* refers to a bacchic chorus as bellowing and acting as four-footed cattle. At the level of stage performance, I have argued for a probable parallelism between the choral performances that mark the beginning and closing sections of Aeschylus' and, according to a combined reading of fragments and testimonies, also of Ennius' *Eumenides*. Following this argument, both the Athenian and the Republican versions of *Eumenides* staged the metamorphosis of the chorus from furious demons into blessing goddesses by means of contrasting choral performances: before the metamorphosis, the chorus members physically threaten Orestes and obey their bloodthirsty instincts rather than organisation principles; after it, the chorus acts benevolently and obeys Athena/Minerva as their chorus leader, who guarantees the good order of the choral exit. While we will never know how the tragedy of Ennius was staged, a cross-examination of the fragments and testimonies regarding it and of the Aeschylean model can at least reveal what this theatre work could hardly do without, namely a dancing chorus.

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Roman Comedy and the Final Dance

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Abstract: Dance pervaded Roman theater, and in Plautus' *Persa*, *Pseudolus*, and *Stichus* characters refer explicitly to their own dancing very near the end of the play. Of the remaining twenty-three extant plays of Plautus and Terence, twenty include scenes of lively motion performed in accompanied meters either in their final scenes or just before, or at the moment of the play's climactic crisis or its resolution. These scenes of lively motion near the ends of plays often share metrical features with the scenes of explicit dance, and some plays may include metatheatrical allusions to a final dance. It therefore seems very likely that Roman comic playwrights almost always made a point of including an exuberant dance at a significant moment at or near the ends of their plays.

We are justified in assuming that a great deal of dance occurred during the original performances of Plautus and Terence, although characters in Roman Comedy only refer explicitly to their own dancing in three scenes. Dance was central to Roman theater even before the rise of pantomime in the late first century BCE.¹ A frantic character in Plautus says that his heart *coepit artem facere ludicram atque in pectus emicare* ("began to practice the performer's art and jump up and down in my breast", *Aul.* 626–627),² and another refers to the jumping of *ludii barbari* ("barbarian [i. e., Roman] performers", *Curc.* 150). Livy describes the development of theater at Rome as a progression of dance performances: imported Etruscan dancers who moved without words, local youths who imitated the Etruscans and added words, *saturae* danced to the *tibia*, and then Livius Andronicus, whom Livy claims danced his *cantica* more energetically because he had someone else sing them (7.2.4–9).³ Explaining the relationship between habitual activity and dreams, Lucretius reports that those who have spent many days in the theater see dancers not only in their sleep, but even when they are awake (4.978–

1 Cf. Taladoire 1951, 1–13; Dupont 1993, 199; Schimmenti 2011; Moore 2012, 105–106.

2 Text and meters of Plautine polymetric passages are from Questa 1995. Texts of the non-polymetric parts of Plautus are drawn from Leo 1895–1896.

3 For an assessment of the considerable controversies surrounding the sources, meaning, and trustworthiness of this passage, see Oakley 1998, 40–72.

980).⁴ Suetonius seems to associate dance specifically with Republican comedy when he reports that the dancers of pantomime once performed in comedy (cited in Diomedes *De poematibus* 14.5).⁵ Aristides Quintilianus calls the comic actor Roscius, a contemporary of Cicero, an ὀρχηστής (dancer, 2.6.73).

Our evidence strongly suggests that in Roman Comedy meters other than iambic senarii were almost always accompanied by the *tibia*.⁶ Such meters make up over 63% of the extant corpus of Plautus and Terence.⁷ Ancient descriptions of Roman theatrical performance indicate that much of its accompanied movement was done rhythmically.⁸ Cicero, for example, seems to take for granted that rhythmic movement was a normal feature of Roman acting when he writes about the fastidiousness of audiences: *histrion si paulum se movit extra numerum [...] exsibilatur, explodit* (*Parad.* 3.26: “if an actor moves a little bit outside of the rhythm, [...] the audience hisses and drives him off the stage”). It is extremely probable, therefore, that many accompanied scenes in the extant plays where the text calls for motion, especially energetic motion, were originally performed as dance.

In my *Music in Roman Comedy* I proposed that dance occurred throughout the plays of Plautus and, to a lesser extent, Terence in three forms: lascivious “cinaedic” dancing, gestural dance, and dance involving more elaborate movement of the feet.⁹ My aim in this essay is less ambitious. I will argue that whether or not dance was as abundant in Roman Comedy as I have suggested, a standard feature of the genre was lively dance at or near the ends of plays. Sometimes this dance took the form of a dance finale, immediately before the epilogue, or a near finale slightly earlier. More often the playwrights used their final dances to mark the moment in their plays where the climactic crisis of the plot occurs and/or is resolved. Almost all these dance scenes show clear evidence that they are an expansion of, or even a new addition to, what Plautus and Terence found in their Greek originals.

Such an association between dance and the ends of plays is not surprising. Theatrical – especially comic – traditions throughout the world have placed a high value on dance endings. One thinks, for example, of the jigs that often followed Elizabethan and Jacobean plays, the hilarious dance that ends Molière’s *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, the act-ending dance numbers of many American Musicals,¹⁰ and the plays of the Japanese *kyōgen* tradition that end in celebratory dances.¹¹ The appeal of dance finales to ancient audiences is clear from the dances in the final scenes of Aristophanes’ *Wasps*

4 Cf. Taylor 1952, 147–148.

5 Cf. Wiseman 2014, 262–272.

6 Moore 2008.

7 Moore 2012, 380.

8 Moore 2012, 118–119.

9 Moore 2012, 105–134.

10 See, e.g., Gennaro/Wolf 2015, 155–156.

11 E.g., *Ima Mairi*, *Kane No Ne*. See Kenny 1968, 101, 132 and *passim*.

(1484–1537) and *Thesmophoriazusae* (1186), Menander’s *Dyskolos* (955–958), and the so-called “Charition” mime (*POxy.* 3.413). The astrologer Firmicus Maternus reports that in the fourth century CE cinaedic dancers always went around imitating the ends of old comedies (*cinaedos* [...], *qui veterum fabularum exitus in scaenis semper saltantes imitentur*, 6.31.39).

It is no coincidence, therefore, that each of the three scenes in Plautus where characters state explicitly that they are dancing is a final or penultimate scene.¹² The last scene of *Stichus* is a series of exchanges leading to dance done in imitation of *cinaedi* or *Ionici*, erotic dancers who appear to have been popular throughout the Greco-Roman world.¹³ As the slaves Stichus, Sangarinus, and Stephanium celebrate, Stichus and Sangarinus ask if Stephanium will dance for them. She agrees, on the condition that the accompanying *tibicen* is given something to drink first. The *tibicen* drinks, after which not Stephanium, but Stichus and Sangarinus themselves dance. They then boast of their skill and dance some more before Stichus delivers the epilogue (abbreviations at the ends of lines identify meters):

Sangarinus: <i>age, iam infla buccas, nunciam aliquid suaviter.</i>	ia6
<i>redde cantionem veteri pro vino novam.</i>	
<i>qui Ionicus aut cinaedicus, qui hoc tale facere possiet?</i>	ia8
Stichus: <i>si istoc me vorsu viceris, alio me provocato.</i>	ia7
San.: <i>fac tu hoc modo. Sti.: at tu hoc modo. San.: babae! Sti.: tatae!</i>	
	versreiz
San.: <i>nunc pariter ambo. omnis voco cinaedos contra.</i>	
<i>satis esse nobis non magis potis quam fungo imber.</i>	
Sti.: <i>intro hinc abeamus nunciam: saltatum satis pro vinost.</i>	ia7
<i>vos, spectatores, plaudite atque ite ad vos comissatum. (767–775)</i>	

Sangarinus (to *tibicen*): Come on now, puff up your cheeks and play something sweet. Give us a new song in return for old wine.

What Ionian or *cinaedus* is there, who can do things like this?

Stichus: If you beat me with that turn, challenge me with another.

San.: You do it this way.

Sti.: Then you do it this way.

San.: Babae!

Sti.: Tatae!

San.: Papae!

12 These scenes have been frequently discussed. See especially Petrone 1995, 175–177; Benz 2001; Dumont 2003; Habinek 2005, 117–118, 185–186; Alonso Fernández 2011, 357–363; Moore 2012, 106–112; and Richlin 2017, 49, 240–241, 285.

13 On these dancers see especially Tsitsiridis 2015; also Alonso Fernández in this volume.

Sti.: Enough!

San.: Now both of us together. I challenge all *cinaedi* to try to dance like us. We can't get enough, any more than a mushroom can get enough rain.

Sti.: OK, let's go away from here now; we've danced enough for our wine.

You, spectators, applaud and go to your own parties.

The dance scene of *Persa* is longer, at least in terms of dialogue.¹⁴ Toxilus has tricked the pimp Dordalus and is celebrating with his fellow slaves. When Dordalus himself arrives, the slaves torment him with dance. First Toxilus orders his under-slave Paegnium to play the *cinaedic* dancer. Paegnium obeys, bumping into or striking Dordalus as he does so.

Toxilus: <i>da illi cantharum, extingue ignem, si cor uritur, caput ne ardescat.</i>	ansys14
Dordalus: <i>ludos me facitis, intellego.</i>	cr3
Tox.: <i>vin cinaedum novom tibi dari?</i> ¹⁵ <i>Paegnium, quin elude, ut soles, quando liber locust hic. hui, babae! basilice te intulisti et facete!</i>	cr4 cr3 tr2
Paegnium: <i>decet me facetum esse; et hunc inridere lenonem lubidost, quando dignus est.</i>	ba4 ba2 bacol
Tox.: <i>perge ut coeperas! Pae.: hoc leno tibi!</i>	bacol bacol
Dor.: <i>perii! perculit me prope! Pae.: em, serva rursum!</i>	ba4
Dor.: <i>delude, ut lubet, erus dum hinc abest.</i>	ia4
Pae.: <i>viden ut tuis dictis pareo?</i>	
<i>sed quin tu meis contra item dictis servis atque hoc quod tibi suadeo facis? Dor.: quid est id?</i>	ba4
Pae.: <i>restim tu tibi cape crassam ac suspende te.</i>	bacol tr4^
Dor.: <i>cave sis me attigas, ne tibi hoc scipione malum magnum dem. Pae.: utere, te condono.</i>	ba4 bacol ba2
Tox.: <i>iam iam, Paegnium, da pausam.</i>	ba3^
Dor.: <i>ego pol vos eradicabo. Pae.: at te ille qui supra nos habitat, qui tibi male volt maleque faciet. non hi dicunt, verum ego.</i>	trsys8
Tox.: <i>age, circumfer mulsum, bibere da usque plenis cantharis.</i> (801a–821) tr7	

14 As Benz 2001, 211 points out, dance without words no doubt made up much of the stage time in each of these scenes, so they could have been considerably longer in performance than the number of verses they include suggests.

15 On the punctuation here, see Moore 2012, 108 n. 8.

Toxilus: Give him a drinking bowl, put out his fire, if his soul is burning, so his head doesn't catch on fire.

Dordalus: I see, you're making fun of me.

Tox.: Do you want a new *cinaedus* to be given to you? Paegnum, why don't you play the way you usually do, since there is a free place for it here. Wow, great! You've brought yourself in royally and cleverly!

Paegnum: It's right for me to be clever, and it's my desire to mock this pimp, since he deserves it.

Tox.: Go on as you started.

Pae.: This is for you, pimp!

Dor.: Ow! He almost knocked me over!

Pae.: All right, watch out again!

Dor.: Go on, mock me as you wish, while your owner's away.

Pae.: Do you see how I obey your orders? But why don't you obey my orders as well and do what I urge you to do?

Dor.: What's that?

Pae.: Get yourself a thick rope and hang yourself.

Dor.: Don't you touch me, or I'll give you a big beating with this staff.

Pae.: Go ahead. Use it, I grant you the favor.

Tox.: OK, now, Paegnum, give him a rest.

Dor.: By God, I'll wipe you out!

Pae.: No, the one who lives above us [scil. Jupiter] will wipe you out: he wants you punished, and he'll see to it that you are. That's not what they say: it's what I say.

Tox.: OK, bring around the honeyed wine. Give us something to drink, with full drinking bowls.

As soon as the drinks have been distributed, Toxilus and Sagaristio renew the aggressive dancing:

Sagaristio: *nequeo, leno, quin tibi saltem staticulum, olim quem Hegea* tr7

faciebat: vide vero, si tibi satis placet. Toxilus: me quoque volo reddere, Diodorus quem olim faciebat in Ionia.

Dordalus: malum ego vobis dabo, nisi abitis. (824–827)

Sagaristio: Pimp, I can't keep from dancing for you the pose that Hegea used to do once. See if you like it OK.

Toxilus: I want to offer up a pose too, the one that Diodorus used to do once in Ionia.

Dordalus: Get away from me, or you'll be sorry.

Hegea and Diodorus are not otherwise known, but they are almost certainly Ionic or cinaedic dancers familiar to Plautus' audience.¹⁶

The third obvious dance scene is a reperformance, as Pseudolus, after deceiving his owner Simo and the pimp Ballio, repeats step-for-step a drunken dance he has just performed at a party indoors:

<i>sed postquam</i>	ba4
<i>exurrexi, orant med ut saltem.</i>	ba3
<i>ad hunc me modum intuli illis satis facete,</i>	ion4^
<i>nimis ex disciplina, quippe ego qui</i>	ionsys10
<i>probe Ionica perdidici. sed palliolatim amictus</i>	
<i>sic haec incesi ludibundus.</i>	
<i>plaudunt, "parum" clamitant mi ut revertar.</i>	bacol ba2
<i>occepi denuo, hoc modo: nolui</i>	cr4
<i>idem; amicae dabam me meae</i>	cr3
<i>ut me amaret: ubi circumvortor, cado:</i>	cr4
<i>id fuit nenia ludo.</i>	an4^
<i>itaque dum enitor . . . prox! iam paene inquinavi pallium.</i>	tr7
<i>nimiae tum voluptati edepol fui!</i>	crcol crcol
<i>ob casum, datur cantharus, bibi.</i>	
<i>commuto ilico pallium, illud posivi;</i>	ba4
<i>inde huc exii crapulam dum amoverem. (Pseudolus 1273–1282)</i>	

But after I got up, they beg me to dance. Here's how I moved for them, really smartly, very much according to form, because, you know, I've learned Ionic dancing very well. But merrily I moved forward like this, my garment wrapped around me. They applaud. "Encore!" they shout, demanding that I come back. Finally, I began again like this: I didn't want to do the same thing. I was handing myself over to my girl so she could make love with me. When I turn around, I fall: that was curtains for my performance. And so, when I try to get up: phth! Then I almost dirtied my cloak. I really gave them a lot of fun! Because I fell they gave me the drinking bowl. I drank. Right away I change my cloak, and put the other one away. Then I came out here to sober up.

Pseudolus' reference to Ionic dance and his use of the ionic meter reveals that he is performing the same type of lewd dance alluded to by Sangarinus when he compares himself to *Ionici* and by Toxilus when he dances as Diodorus did in Ionia.¹⁷

All these moments where dance is explicit in the text, then, occur as part of a play's final celebration after all problems of the plot have been resolved. Pseudolus dances

16 Cf. Fraenkel 2007, 381. For a modern interpretation of this scene and its dances, see Cohen et al. 2012.

17 On the ionic meter and lascivious dance, cf. Bettini 1995.

alone, but each of the other dances involves competition or struggle: Stichus and Sangarinus trying to outdo each other, Paegnium, Sagaristio, and Toxilus abusing Dordalus, and Sagaristio and Toxilus competing with one another.

The three dance scenes, like all final scenes in Roman Comedy, are in accompanied meters. The dances of Paegnium, Pseudolus, and Stichus and Sangarinus share further metrical features.¹⁸ Each is polymetric and is framed by meter changes. The meter changes from iambic senarii to an iambic octonarius when Stichus and Sangarinus begin dancing: that is, music starts for the dance. When they have finished dancing, the meter changes again, this time from versus reiziani to iambic septenarii. Pseudolus frames his dance, described primarily in ionics and cretics, with bacchiacs. Paegnium starts dancing immediately after a move from anapests to cretics, and when Toxilus has asked him to stop the meter changes from bacchiacs to trochaics. His last insult to Dordalus probably includes one last abusive move, after which Toxilus changes the subject, and the meter becomes trochaic septenarii.

Meter changes also mark different moves within the dances themselves. In *Stichus* a change to an iambic octonarius marks the initial dance, and requests for additional steps bring an iambic septenarius and then versus reiziani. Paegnium changes from bouncy cretics to bacchiacs, Roman Comedy's slowest meter, for what were probably sensuous grinding moves directed at Dordalus, then to iambs as he mockingly pretends to obey Dordalus, then back to bacchiacs for more grinding, and finally to trochaics as he disobeys Toxilus. Pseudolus, after marking the end of his first dance performance with bacchiacs, sings cretics for his encore and his first fall, ends that action with anapests, then uses a trochaic septenarius for his attempt to get up and more cretics for his second fall.

The dances of Sangarinus and Toxilus differ from the others in two respects. First, their dances are a renewal of dance within the same accompanied scene as the earlier dance of Paegnium. Second, these dances occur within a passage of seventeen consecutive trochaic septenarii, demonstrating that dance can occur not only during polymetric passages, but also when a single meter remains throughout. Indeed, the trochaic septenarius, the meter most often used to end Roman comedies, seems especially well suited to dance. As Immisch has pointed out, the meter's basic rhythmic pattern of eight units of three corresponds to a dance rhythm popular throughout the world.¹⁹ Aristotle claims that the trochaic tetrameter catalectic, the Greek equivalent of the trochaic septenarius, is suitable for ποίησις that is ὀρχηστικωτέρα (poetry that is more fit for dancing, *Po.* 1449^a 23). In Roman Comedy, trochaic septenarii often mark forward motion, either literally as characters move (as Pseudolus tries to do unsuc-

18 For Roman Comedy's meters and their effects, see Moore 2012, 171–236, and Moore 2016.

19 Immisch 1923, 29–30.

cessfully at the end of his dance) or figuratively as the plot advances (as when Toxilus renews the pouring of drinks after Paegnum's dance).

Some of the dancing in these scenes clearly occurs between sung verses. Stichus and Sangarinus boast of dancing they have already done and announce steps they will do. Toxilus and Sagaristio appear to introduce their dances and then perform them. Pseudolus and Paegnum, however, seem clearly to be dancing as they sing. The nature of Roman music, in which musical rhythm closely followed the quantitative patterns of meter,²⁰ would be especially conducive to such dancing while singing. Dance with song is also consistent with Livy's report that Livius Andronicus had someone else sing his *cantica* so that he could dance more energetically.

A look at the remaining extant Roman comedies suggests that the dance scenes in *Persa*, *Pseudolus*, and *Stichus*, while they are unique in their explicit acknowledgement of a particular type of dance, are probably typical in having climactic dances at or near the ends of plays. Twenty more of Plautus and Terence's twenty-six²¹ surviving plays contain a scene near the end of the play written in accompanied meter that seems to call for dance: an excited emotional entrance and/or a boisterous struggle. The text in these scenes, while never referring to dance explicitly, often does refer explicitly to rapid and excited movement. These scenes tend to share metrical features with the scenes where dance is named. All are in accompanied meters: ten polymetric, nine in trochaic septenarii, one in iambic septenarii. In seventeen scenes the beginning of dance seems to come at or very near a meter change (seven times at a move from unaccompanied iambic senarii to an accompanied meter, as in *Stichus*), and in eight the moments of dance, like those of Paegnum, Pseudolus, Stichus, and Sangarinus, appear to be framed by meter changes. In all the polymetric scenes we can see indications of metrical change accompanying different dance moves.

Eight Plautine plays besides *Persa*, *Pseudolus*, and *Stichus* contain moments suitable for dance in their final scenes. A still greater number of plays (twelve: nine of Plautus and three of Terence), seem to have what I call "crisis/resolution dances" somewhat earlier in the play: final dances in the immediate vicinity of the event or revelation that brings the plot to its crisis and/or untangles the plot's complications and brings about the denouement. The final dance near either the epilogue or the play's last major turning point was so much a standard feature of Roman Comedy, I suggest, that in two plays Plautus makes self-conscious allusions to it.

20 Moore forthcoming.

21 A twenty-seventh, Plautus' *Vidularia*, survives only in remains of its earliest scenes.

Dance finales and near finales

Plautus' *Bacchides* and *Casina* offer the greatest opportunities for exuberant and complex dance finales. Both include struggles suitable for competitive dance, and *Casina* also features emotional entrances.

As the end of *Bacchides* approaches, Nicobulus tells Philoxenus that both their sons have been seduced and are now in the home of the Bacchis sisters. The meter changes from anapests to trochaic septenarii as they determine to get the youths back by force and bang on the *meretrices'* door. Bacchis demonstrates how unconcerned she is by changing the meter to slow bacchiacs as she responds.

Philoxenus: <i>qui scis?</i> Nicobulus: <i>vidi. Phi. ei mi, disperii.</i>	an4
Nic.: <i>quid dubitamus pultare atque huc evocare ambos foras?</i>	tr7
Phi.: <i>haud moror. Nic.: heus Bacchis, iube sis actutum aperiri fores, nisi mavoltis fores et postes comminui securibus.</i>	
Bacchis: <i>quis sonitu ac tumultu tanto nominat me atque pultat aedes?</i>	ba4 bacol
Nic.: <i>ego atque hic. Bac.: quid hoc est negoti?</i> (1116–1121)	ba3

Philoxenus: How do you know?

Nicobulus: I saw with my own eyes.

Phi.: Oh no! I'm done for!

Nicobulus: Why are we waiting to bang on the doors and call them both outside?

Philoxenus: Let's do it!

Nic.: Hey, Bacchis! Order these doors opened up immediately if you don't want your doors and door posts smashed with axes.

Bacchis (entering with her sister): Who's that making such a racket, calling me and banging on the door?

Nic.: It's me – and this guy.

Bac.: What's all this about?

In the ensuing scene, as the two sisters, instead of producing the sons, seduce their fathers and lead them inside, meters change frequently. Often changes of meter seem to reflect new moves in recurring moments of competitive dance. Trochaic septenarii replace bacchiacs, for example, when the two sisters, after deciding to return indoors, turn back in response to a call from the old men (1141), then to anapests as the sisters move away from the men to plot their seduction (1149). Finally, after ninety-two verses, trochaic septenarii return for the epilogue, framing the dance scene (1207).²²

22 On *Bacchides'* final scene as a Plautine addition to his Menandrian original, see Lefèvre 2011, 120–121.

Casina has Roman Comedy's most raucous finale, almost certainly a scene of recurring dance. In attempting to rape the slave woman Casina, the unnamed *Senex* and his slave and co-conspirator Olympio instead get beaten by the *Senex*'s other slave, Chalinus, whom the *Senex*'s wife Cleostrata and her friends have disguised as Casina. Olympio enters first, terrified and unsure where to turn, and the meter changes from a colon reizianum to anapests for what was probably a dance (875). Olympio's dance may have been short, for he soon stops to explain what happened indoors (879). When the *Senex* in turn enters from the house, the meter changes from iambo-trochaics to aeolics (937). The *Senex* must have danced longer, as he continues for nearly twenty verses in various meters trying to decide which way to flee, until he is accosted by Cleostrata (954). Trochaic septenarii replace the polymetrics when Chalinus enters and addresses the *Senex* (963), and competitive dance succeeds the "panicked entrance" dance, as the *Senex* is caught between his wife and her friends on one side of the stage and Chalinus on the other.²³

No other play appears to have as complex a dance finale as *Bacchides* and *Casina*, but competitive dance seems likely in the final scenes of five additional Plautine plays. In *Asinaria*, Artemona has learned that her husband Demaenetus is partying with her son and the son's *meretrix*, Philaenium, whom Demaenetus wants for himself. In a scene in trochaic septenarii, she attacks her husband in a fury, with language that suggests boisterous movement, as she approaches him, he resists her, she grabs him and drags him from the banquet, Philaenium mockingly pursues him, and all leave the stage (920–925, 934, 936–941).²⁴

The final scene of *Curculio* begins as the pimp Cappadox enters, and the meter changes from iambic senarii to trochaic septenarii (679). Cappadox is promptly accosted by Therapontigonus, to whom he owes money, and Phaedromus. He refuses to stand still when Therapontigonus commands him (687). What follows, as the pimp is caught, held, dragged, and finally released, must have featured much lively accompanied movement and includes several specific references to energetic motion (693, 702, 707).²⁵

The final scene of *Miles Gloriosus* is the punishment of the soldier Pyrgopolinices, who has been caught in an attempt at adultery. Again, dance seems likely. Trochaic septenarii replace iambic senarii as Peripleptomenus and his slaves drag Pyrgopolinices onto the stage and threaten to castrate him. The language in what follows repeatedly calls attention to motion, including the lifting of Pyrgopolinices (1394–1395), the

23 On the final humiliation of the *Senex* as a product of Plautine workmanship, see O'Bryhim 1989, 100–103.

24 The on-stage banquet, with its large number of characters, is almost certainly a Plautine addition to his Greek original. Cf. Hurka 2010, 58–59; Franko 2004, 30.

25 Lowe 2011 makes a strong case that the entire final scene is an addition by Plautus to his Greek original.

cook's threatening waving of his knife (1398, 1400, 1406),²⁶ the beating of the soldier (1401, 1403, 1406, 1418, 1424), and finally his release (1425).

Although it includes fewer explicit references to motion, the final scene of *Truculentus* would also lend itself to competitive dance. In trochaic septenarii, rival lovers Stratophanes and Strabax compete for the affections of the *meretrix* Phronesium. She moves from one lover to the other (921) and embraces one while the other fumes and tries to pull them apart (924–927, 944), and the two men compete reciprocally in their threats and promises (944–959).

Epidicus, like *Casina*, seems to combine an excited entrance dance with competitive dance in its last scene. After learning that the woman he has illicitly brought into his owner Periphanes' home is in fact Periphanes' long-lost daughter, Epidicus leaves the stage, saying, *nimis longum loquor* ("I am talking too long", 665). The admonition, after a very short speech in a play that is uniquely compressed,²⁷ is a bit of metatheatrical irony: Epidicus, I suggest, is notifying the audience that it is time for the final dance. Continuing Epidicus' trochaic septenarii, Periphanes enters with his friend Apoecides at such a fast pace that Apoecides complains he has completely worn him out (666–674). The trochaic septenarii continue as Epidicus reenters. When Periphanes threatens him, he cheerfully insists that he bind him (675–695), introducing a comic inversion of the competitive dance one might have expected here. Finally bound, Epidicus cheekily admits his deceptions and tells Periphanes to enter the house (696–714). Inside, Periphanes learns the truth about his daughter, and when he returns he orders Epidicus unbound (721–722). Epidicus refuses to be released until Periphanes agrees to free and support him (723–731).

Poenulus, in a near finale,²⁸ appears to include another self-conscious allusion to the expected final dance. Hanno learns that he is the long-lost father of Adelphasium and Anterastilis and the uncle of Agorastocles (1076). Later, Hanno and Agorastocles decide to accost the two women before they reveal their parentage:

Hanno: *pergo etiam temptare?* Agorastocles: *in pauca confer: sitiunt qui sedent.* tr7

Han.: *quid istic? quod faciundumst cur non agimus? in ius vos voco.*

Ago.: *nunc, patruae, tu frugi bonae es. tene. vin ego hanc adprendam?* (1224–1226) ia7

Hanno: Shall I keep on making a trial of them?

Agorastocles: Make it quick. The audience is thirsty.

Han. Well, why don't we do what has to be done? (*to the women*): I call you to court.

Ago.: Now you're good, uncle. Hang on to her. Shall I grab this one?

26 Plautus almost certainly added the cook and his movement to his Greek original. Cf. Lowe 1985.

27 Cf. Moore 2001, 322–331.

28 This likely dance scene actually occurs at some distance from the end of the play as the text now stands, but a great amount of the final part of the play is later interpolations (cf. Maurach 1988, 210–213), and the scene is part of the celebration that occurs after the plot has been resolved.

By this point in the play, *Poenulus* is already longer than all but four other extant Roman comedies. It seems that Hanno, in response to Agorastocles' admonition that the play has gone on long enough, begins the long-awaited final dance of the play. He begins with trochaic septenarii, but Agorastocles changes the meter to iambic septenarii. More verses suited to competitive dance follow, as the men grab, pull, and push, and the women resist (1227–1243). The men then reveal the truth, after which dance seems to recur, as the four family members engage in a series of embraces (1259–1273). The embraces concluded, Hanno switches back to trochaic septenarii, framing the dance scene (1274).

Crisis/resolution dances

In twelve plays energetic scenes of accompanied motion – the last moments in the play where dance seems likely – occur somewhat earlier, in close proximity to the event that brings or resolves the climactic crisis of the plot. Several such scenes include emotional entrances by characters either responding to a crisis or responding in joy to news that brings resolution. In other plays the crisis and/or resolution occurs in conjunction with scenes that would probably include competitive dance.

Among the most elaborate crisis/resolution dances were probably those in Plautus' *Cistellaria*, *Aulularia*, and *Amphitruo*, in which characters enter, as Olympio and the *Senex* do in *Casina*, responding in a panic to what they have learned or experienced offstage. Plautus' *Trinummus* and Terence's *Eunuchus* appear to have scenes created at least in part specifically for the sake of including this kind of crisis/resolution dance.

Cistellaria shows the clearest evidence for a crisis/resolution dance in which accompanied movement responds to metrical changes.²⁹ Halisca enters in a desperate search for the basket that contains tokens proving the parentage of Selenium, and anapests replace the trochaic septenarii of the previous scene (671–672). She switches to slower bacchiacs as she tries to catch her breath (673–677), then returns to anapests for a plea to the audience, during which she probably moves towards them (678–679). More bacchiacs ensue as she carefully searches for the basket (680–687), then more anapests as she temporarily abandons the search to express her terror (688–689). She conveys her indignation at whoever took the basket in two cretic verses (690–691), then renews the search in bacchiacs (693–694). After an interruption by two eavesdropping characters (695–696), she concludes with more anapests, pursuing footsteps she has found (697–703). The eavesdroppers include Phanostrata, who will learn from Halisca

29 Cf. Zimmermann 2016, 322. For a metrical analysis of this scene, see Moore 2012, 287–292; for a sound recording demonstrating the effects of the meter changes in this passage, see Moore 2013b.

that she is Selenium's mother. When Phanostrata addresses Halisca the meter changes to an extended series of iambic septenarii, framing the dance scene (704).

Aulularia's crisis/resolution song is not as varied in meter as *Cistellaria's*, but it also must have included lively dance. Resolution of the plot can begin when Euclio finally meets Lyconides and learns that Lyconides has impregnated and wants to marry his daughter. Immediately before that meeting, Euclio enters, frantic because someone has stolen his pot of gold, and the meter changes from iambic senarii to anapests (713). In a long series of anapestic feet ending in catalexis, Euclio rushes on, changes directions erratically, reaches out to grab a hypothetical thief, pulls himself back because he does not know whom to grab, approaches the audience, and addresses a specific member of the audience (713–720). His failure to get any information from that spectator leads Euclio to despair, which he expresses with a new anapestic system (721–726). Lyconides, who has entered and sees Euclio, then changes the meter to trochaics, framing the dance scene (727).³⁰

The ultimate crisis of *Amphitruo* occurs when the title character, after scene after scene of being befuddled and humiliated, prepares to enter his home and kill anyone he meets (1048–1052). He is promptly knocked unconscious by a thunderbolt from Jupiter, at which point the meter changes from trochaic septenarii to iambic octonarii, and Bromia enters in terror. In a song primarily in iambic octonarii but with short sections of other meters, she reports in the most emotional language what has happened indoors: the birth of Hercules and his half-brother (1053–1071). Her excited accompanied entrance seems to call for dance, which would stop when Bromia sees Amphitruo lying unconscious in front of the door, at which point a trochaic septenarius frames the dance scene (1072). She then reports what Jupiter told her: that he is the father of Hercules and Alcumena is innocent.³¹

The plot of *Trinummus* reaches its crisis when Charinus, returning home from abroad, learns from his slave Stasimus that his neighbor Callicles has purchased from Charinus' bankrupt son the family home, where – as only Charinus and Callicles know – Charinus has hidden a treasure (resolution will come in the next scene, as Callicles reveals that he bought the house only to keep the treasure safe). The news comes at the end of Roman Comedy's longest *servus currens* scene (1008–1069).³² Stasimus enters in a frenzy, replacing iambic senarii with trochaic septenarii. Both he and the eavesdropping Charinus take repeated notice of his rapid movement, which is probably expressed in dance. After about twenty verses, the dance may have stopped as Stasimus delivers a long tirade against contemporary morals (1028–1054), resuming when he determines to go home and, in the stock manner of *servi currentes*, refuses to stop when his owner calls him (1055–1069). Stasimus in fact has no news: the *servus*

30 Cf. Moore 2012, 120–121.

31 Cf. Deuling 1994.

32 On the likelihood of dance in *servus currens* scenes, see Moore 2012, 122–124.

currens scene is a sham, included, I would argue, partly to bring to a climax the humorously excessive moralizing that has characterized much of the play,³³ partly to add the expected final dance just before the plot is resolved.

As might be expected, the more subdued Terence appears to place much less emphasis on dance in general and final dance in particular than does Plautus: three plays (*Heauton Timoroumenos*, *Hecyra*, *Adelphoe*) have no good candidates for dance anywhere near their final scenes.³⁴ *Andria*, *Eunuchus*, and *Phormio*, however, each seem to have short crisis/resolution dances. *Eunuchus* features a parodic variation on the character reporting a crisis. Midway through the play Chaerea rapes Pamphila, whom he thinks is a slave but is in fact a citizen. The slave woman Pythias, when she has learned of the rape, enters with a frantic song that probably included dance (643–656).³⁵ She echoes that song in a mock-frantic entrance as the crisis is being resolved, between the time that Pamphila's citizenship is proven and Chaerea's father agrees that Chaerea can marry her. Wanting to get back at Chaerea's slave Parmeno, who was responsible for giving Chaerea access to Pamphila, Pythias pretends that she is fleeing the house after learning that Pamphila's brother is about to mutilate Chaerea. As she does so she changes the meter from iambic senarii to trochaic septenarii, which continue as she play-acts for Parmeno, no doubt moving wildly and inspiring him to move as well (941–958). The deception of Parmeno, not required for the main plot, provides both extra humor and, it seems, a final dance.³⁶

Variations on the *servus currens* scene can also provide crisis/resolution dances when characters enter with joy at the news that resolves the plot, as in Plautus' *Captivi* and *Mercator* and Terence's *Phormio*.

The parasite Ergasilus brings the resolution of *Captivi*'s crisis when he enters with the news that Hegio's son has returned from captivity. He replaces iambic senarii with alternating sets of trochaic septenarii and iambic octonarii, in which he thanks Jupiter for his good fortune, reports that he is coming to bring good news to Hegio, and says he will throw his cloak over his shoulder *ut comici servi solent* (768–780).³⁷ Hegio then enters, unseen by and not seeing Ergasilus. In what may be a contrasting dance, he laments his fate in bacchiacs and then sees Ergasilus (781–789). Ergasilus picks up Hegio's bacchiacs as he encourages himself to move (790), but then in a long passage of trochaic septenarii he threatens various potential obstacles in the most vivid language and then bangs on the door (791–832). A move to iambs and cretics marks the mo-

33 Cf. Moore 1998, 81–89; Papaioannou 2016, 173–175.

34 It is tempting to see a self-conscious allusion to the lack of a final dance when, near the end of *Adelphoe*, Micio mockingly invites Demea to dance with his family in the future (753).

35 Cf. Moore 2013a, 107–110.

36 On Pythias' deception of Parmeno as a scene added by Terence for its own sake, see Lefèvre 2003, 118–120.

37 On the significance of Ergasilus' entrance within the musical structure of the play, cf. Marshall 2006, 209.

ment when Hegio calls to Ergasilus, and the parasite, fulfilling his duty as *servus currens*, refuses to turn around (833–836). A switch back to trochaic septenarii then frames the dance scene (838).

In Terence's *Phormio* Antipho has married Phanium against the wishes of his father, Demipho. When Antipho's slave Geta learns that in fact Phanium is the daughter of Demipho's brother Chremes (by a woman not his wife), he enters as *servus currens*, changing the meter from iambic octonarii to trochaic septenarii (841). He expresses his joy, puts his *pallium* over his shoulder, and refuses to stop when called (841–851). Terence appears in this play to have made a deliberate choice that his final dance be a crisis/resolution dance rather than a near finale. Armed with the news that Phanium is Chremes' daughter, the parasite Phormio refuses to give up money he owes Demipho. Demipho and Chremes grab him to take him to court, Chremes summons slaves, and Phormio struggles and calls out to Nausistrata, Chremes' wife (981–989). This struggle must have involved much exuberant movement, but it is written in unaccompanied iambic senarii.

The resolution of *Mercator* begins when Eutyclus learns that the *meretrix* Pasicompsa, who has been found by Lysimachus' wife in her house, was in fact purchased for Lysimachus' neighbor Demipho. Eutyclus almost certainly dances as he brings the news, singing a joyful monody in trochaic septenarii reminiscent of *servi currentes* (842 ff.). But in a humorous variation of the "good news" dance, more dance is likely from Demipho's son Charinus, who is in love with Pasicompsa and thinks he has lost her. Eutyclus' entrance interrupts a monody in which the despairing Charinus has determined to go into exile (830–863). Eutyclus cannot get Charinus to stand still (867–887). After he finally stops and Eutyclus tells him the truth, Charinus repeatedly renews his movement, feigning actions that undo or restart his trip to exile in response to the details Eutyclus gives him, allegedly mounting a chariot and then a ship, searching for Pasicompsa throughout the eastern Mediterranean, and finally returning (910–947).³⁸

The remaining scenes of energetic movement near the final crisis or resolution all include struggles suitable for competitive dance.

The turning point of *Rudens* occurs together with a slave's monody followed by what is probably competitive dance.³⁹ Gripus has found a chest in the sea: unbeknownst to him, it contains the tokens that will prove that Palaestra, the play's heroine, is the long-lost daughter of Gripus' owner, Daemones. Gripus thinks the chest must contain great treasure, so as he drags or carries the chest on stage he changes the meter from iambic senarii to polymetrics and sings a long monody in various meters, congratulating himself and predicting the glorious life he will live with his new wealth (906–937).

38 For a detailed discussion of the exile scene and its paratragic elements, see Augoustakis 2010.

39 On the importance of this song for the plot, see Law 1922, 54.

The monody is likely to have included some dance reflected in meter. In its opening, for example, Gripus sings bacchiacs while he struggles with the heavy chest (906–911). Dance, this time competitive dance, seems still more likely when Gripus' fantasies are interrupted by Trachalio, who grabs the rope tied to the chest that gives the play its name. Trachalio changes the meter from anapests to iambics. In a series of short alternating statements, Gripus and Trachalio argue, tugging back and forth on the rope as they do so (938–946). The tugging resumes later in the scene, almost leading to a fist-fight (1006 ff.).

A similar pattern marks the turning point of *Mostellaria*. Tranio's elaborate deception unravels when Phaniscus and Pinacium reveal to Theopropides the partying that has been going on in his house, which Tranio had persuaded him was abandoned. Phaniscus enters with a long "good slave" monody, for which he changes the meter from trochaic septenarii to some of Plautus' most complex polymetrics (858–882a).⁴⁰ Phaniscus, like Paegnium in *Persa*, seems to be a *puer delicatus* (890–895).⁴¹ Although there are no specific cues in meter or language, he may do some of the cinaedic dancing elsewhere associated with such roles. Phaniscus then prepares to go to the door of Theopropides' house and returns the meter to trochaic septenarii (883–884), but he is interrupted by Pinacium, who has followed him. The two slaves exchange banter in a scene that, with its back-and-forth and its emphasis on motion, seems to call for competitive dance. Pinacium cannot get Phaniscus to slow down, in spite of several imperatives and a switch from trochaics to bacchiacs (883–896). When Phaniscus finally does stop fleeing, he and Pinacium move together to knock on the door (897–898). The ensuing entrance of Theopropides and Tranio brings back trochaic septenarii, framing the dance scene (904).

The resolution of Plautus' *Menaechmi* begins with what must have been an animated group dance. Confusion between the two identical Menaechmus twins has led the father-in-law of one brother to think the other is insane. The father-in-law orders his slaves to seize Menaechmus in trochaic septenarii (990–994), but he soon switches to iambic octonarii, which continue as the slaves attack Menaechmus, Menaechmus cries out, and Messenio sees what is happening (995–1003). After Messenio exclaims in iambic quaternarii, he counterattacks in trochaics, which continue as he fights the slaves and drives them away (1007–1018). Movement is emphasized throughout. The father-in-law orders the slaves to lift Menaechmus and chastises them for hesitating (995). Menaechmus wonders why the slaves are running to him (997), surrounding him (998), and seizing and carrying him (999). Messenio comments on the carrying (1002, 1005, 1013), stresses his own movement towards Menaechmus (1009), and remarks on the flight of the slaves (1017) and the kick or similar punishment he gives to a

40 For a metrical analysis of this scene, see Moore 2012, 295–300.

41 Cf. Richlin 2017, 107–108.

final straggler (1018). 138 verses remain before the epilogue, during which time the two twins finally find each other. But it is Messenio's rescue of Menaechmus that resolves the plot and leads directly to that reunion.

The resolution of Terence's *Andria* is made possible when Crito arrives and reveals that Glycerium is an Athenian citizen and can marry Simo's son, Pamphilus. When Simo's slave Davos tells Simo, though, he does not believe him and has him carried off to be bound:

<p>Simo: <i>quid ait tandem?</i> Davos: <i>Glycerium se scire civem esse Atticam.</i> Sim.: <i>hem</i> <i>Dromo, Dromo.</i> Dav.: <i>quid est?</i> Sim.: <i>Dromo.</i> Dav.: <i>audi.</i> Sim.: <i>verbum si</i> <i>addideris ...!</i> Dromo.</p>	tr7
<p>Dav.: <i>audi obsecro.</i> Dromo: <i>quid vis?</i> Sim.: <i>sublimem intro rape hunc, quantum</i> <i>potest.</i></p>	ia8
<p>Dro.: <i>quem?</i> Sim.: <i>Davom.</i> Dav.: <i>quam ob rem?</i> Sim.: <i>quia lubet. rape inquam.</i> Dav.: <i>quid feci?</i> Sim.: <i>rape.</i></p>	
<p>Dav.: <i>si quicquam invenies me mentitum, occidito.</i> Sim.: <i>nil audio.</i></p>	
<p>Dro.: <i>ego iam te commotum reddam.</i> Dav.: <i>tamen etsi hoc verumst?</i> Sim.: <i>tamen.</i></p>	tr7
<p><i>cura adservandum vinctum, atque audin? quadrupedem constringito.</i></p>	ia8
<p><i>age nunciam: ego pol hodie, si vivo, tibi</i> <i>ostendam erum quid sit periculi fallere,</i> <i>et illi patrem.</i> (859–868)⁴²</p>	ia6

Simo: What is it he says?

Davos: He says he knows that Glycerium is an Athenian citizen.

Sim.: What the hell? Dromo! Dromo!

Dav.: What is it?

Sim.: Dromo!

Dav.: Listen to me!

Sim.: If you say one more word ... Dromo!

Dav.: Please, listen!

Dromo (*entering*): What do you want?

Sim.: Grab this guy, lift him up and take him inside, as fast as you can.

Dro.: Who?

Sim.: Davos.

Dav.: Why?

Sim.: Because I feel like it. Grab him, I say!

Dav.: What did I do?

Sim.: Grab him!

Dav.: If you find that I lied about any of this, kill me.

42 Texts of Terence drawn from Kauer/Lindsay 1958.

Sim.: I'm not listening.

Dro.: I'll see that you get moved.

Dav.: Even if this is true?

Sim.: Even if it is. See to it that he is bound and guarded, do you hear? Bind his hands and feet. Now listen to me: as sure as I live, by Pollux, today I'll show you what happens when you deceive your owner, and him what happens when he deceives his father.

In this boisterous scene of varied meters, dance seems very likely. Continuing a scene of trochaic septenarii, Simo calls for his henchman Dromo, who enters to iambic octonarii as Davos resists and perhaps begins to flee. A trochaic septenarius marks the moment when Dromo approaches and grabs Davos, an iambic octonarius the point where he carries him off.⁴³ The dance and music stop when Davos has been carried offstage, and Simo shouts after him in iambic senarii.

Conclusions

What do we know, then, and what can we surmise? We know that the three scenes where Plautus' characters leave no doubt that they are dancing all occur at or very near the ends of plays, serving as dance finales or near finales. Of the remaining twenty-three extant plays, eight include scenes of lively motion performed in accompanied meters in their final scenes or just before. In twelve plays such scenes occur somewhat earlier, but they accompany the play's climactic crisis or its resolution. Whether or not we would define the movement in such scenes as dance according to an emic definition – that is, whether the movement was performed in rhythm to song and/or instrumental accompaniment – cannot be proven. But in a theatrical tradition as steeped in dance as that of Rome, dance seems highly probable in such scenes; and it is significant that the twenty scenes of lively motion near the ends of plays often share metrical features with the scenes of explicit dance, and that some plays may include metatheatrical allusions to a final dance. It seems very likely that Roman comic playwrights almost always made a point of including an exuberant dance at a significant moment at or near the ends of their plays.

43 On Dromo's verses as an addition by Terence to his Menandrian original, cf. Lefèvre 2008, 126–127.

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Dance and the Senses at the *convivium*

ZOA ALONSO FERNÁNDEZ

Abstract: This chapter aims to delineate a system of sensorial parameters for defining the multiple effects that dance could generate in the synesthetic ambiance of a Roman dinner party, and to explore the impact this might have had when displayed in a literary text. Focusing on passages from comedy, satire, and other “low” genres that represent dance together with other “consumables”, such as food, perfumes, and sex, the piece reconsiders the cognitive and cultural role of the senses in experiencing a choreographic performance. Rather than reiterating the negative moral and aesthetic judgements implied in these texts, this approach tries to unpack the rich and complex sensorium of the *convivium*, while emphasizing the multilayered and deeply affective impressions of dance among audiences, spectators, and readers in ancient Rome.

Introduction

Performance practices create a plethora of unsuspected sensorial-perceptual realms.* As intertwining processes where the somatic, the physiological, and the neurological are constantly activated, the events in a performance reveal the many ways that sensation and experience relate to cognition, knowledge, memory, and aesthetic pleasure, hence informing – and being informed by – the cultural contexts in which they take place.¹ Physical performances, and of course dance as the quintessential medium of corporeality, are multi-sensory phenomena where attendants cannot, for the most part, dissociate one sense from the other. For instance, we can both see and feel movement, position, and shape; we are unable to separate the sonic and tactile effects of rhythm in percussion; we confound the haptic and visual properties of vibration and balance. In this way, the synesthetic potential of the dancer’s body generates a sort of magnetism that stimulates individual subjectivities while projecting – or subverting – the common ground of historically and culturally defined realities.

* I am deeply grateful to Karin Schlapbach for her invaluable feedback and support.

¹ Banes/Lepecki 2007. See also Di Benedetto 2010.

In recent years, scholars have stressed the intricate “performative” power of the senses. Arguing that the senses are cultural agents that transcend the purely somatic, André Lepecki and Sally Banes, among others, have explored the creative activation of perception in performance, looking for “the uses of alternative, or uncharted, senses” that fall outside Western classifications of the sensorium, and advocating for “new strategies to write about, and to rethink” such experiences.² In general, these critical theories have recognized the subjacent privileges that culture and politics have assigned to “certain modes of the perceptible while condemning other modes to the shadows of the imperceptible and the valueless”, thus reassessing “the aesthetic and cognitive premises regarding what is experienced sensorially in performance.”³

In parallel with these approaches, publications within the field of Classics have proposed interesting re-evaluations of the traditional means of conceptualizing ancient dance and the channels through which it was experienced and understood. One of the most pertinent advances in this area is the granting of significance to kinesthesia as the physical awareness of movement, which has been considered the “sixth sense” since Merleau-Ponty developed his phenomenological approaches to perception.⁴ But this is only one of the multiple realms that operate in the multifaceted experience of dance, which is not just an act of viewing and comprehending, but which, in the words of Anastasia-Erasmia Peponi, turns out to be “a real psychosomatic adventure.”⁵ To Ruth Webb, for example, Roman imperial pantomime was a synthesis of visual, sonic, and kinesthetic elements that enabled the dancer’s “phenomenal body” to connect to the bodies of the characters it impersonates, thereby providing a corporeal understanding of the dance which overlapped with the intellectual process of decoding and recognizing what it represented.⁶ Helen Slaney, for her part, frames pantomime as “almost wholly proprioceptive”, in that the dancer relied not only on visual and aural sensations, but also on the kinetic, haptic, and tactile, which are particularly useful in developing our understanding of the ancient choreographic exercise, as well as its mimetic possibilities.⁷ Similarly, in relation to Greek choral spectatorship, Sarah Olsen has elaborated on the notions of “embodied memory” and “kinesthetic empathy”, and their usefulness in explaining how the sensory responsiveness to others’ movement is a way to identify “closely and corporeally” with the dance.⁸ In the same vein, Karin

2 Banes/Lepecki 2007, 2. On critical trends against the hierarchies of the senses, see also Butler/Purves 2013.

3 Banes/Lepecki 2007, 2–3.

4 Merleau-Ponty 1945. On this, see Noland 2009, 1–17. See also Sklar 2008, Reason/Reynolds 2010; Foster 2011.

5 Peponi 2015, 211.

6 Webb 2018, 277. See also Webb 2008.

7 Slaney 2017. On the difference between tactile and haptic, with the latter more broadly referring to the experience of feeling with or through the body, see Purves 2013, 28.

8 Olsen 2017a, Meineck 2018, 120–153.

Schlapbach's cognitive approach to later ancient choral performances emphasizes the emotional and epistemic aspects that the chorus furthered as both a bodily and shared experience of a given community.⁹

Although diverse in content and approach, all these theories foreground the body and its physiology in the communicative act of dance, according to which, sensual stimulation – of both performers and audiences – instantiates a much more complex spectatorial journey, with important resonances in the realms of the rational and the conceptual that are, in turn, bidirectional. In advocating for an aesthetics of dance in antiquity, these theories rely, directly or indirectly, on an aesthetics of the senses that denies any abrupt separation between corporeal and intellectual perception, and so they contribute to acknowledging that such bodily practices were extremely significant cultural forces in the Greco-Roman world. In this essay, I subscribe to this idea, but I intend to concentrate on the cognitive dimension of corporeality and reclaim the somatic forces that lurk beneath Roman discourses on choreographic practice – that is to say, I will enhance the corporeal reverberations of written and mental representations of dance as perceived on a sensory base. To this end, my chapter will focus on literature: in particular, on a series of literary strategies whereby the text mediates between a dance and the reader precisely by means of the appeal to the senses, and where the creation of sensuous references transforms any suggested imaginative reactions into the embodied experience of witnessing dance.¹⁰

Dance is a recurring motif in ancient sympotic literature.¹¹ Similarly, a significant number of texts dealing with Roman dance alludes specifically to the setting of the *convivium*, as it featured all sorts of choreographic spectacles for the guests' pleasure and amusement.¹² As a space that represents, perhaps, the most evocative scenery to understand the complexity and richness of the ancient sensorium, the Roman dinner party provides a unique framework to explore the somatic effects of ancient dance practice while highlighting the synesthetic traces of an activity that overlapped with the other sensual acts of eating, drinking, viewing, smelling, hearing, laying, touching, and seducing.¹³ Moreover, given the tenacity with which Roman authors refer to the convivial world in varying degrees of metaphor, and the multiple elements within the

9 Schlapbach 2018, 123–166.

10 On the notion “imaginative suggestion” in choral dance, see Weiss 2018. On the relationship between dance and poetic discourse in Ancient literature, see Bocksberger 2017, Schlapbach 2018, Olsen 2020.

11 As Schlapbach (2011, 162) notices, “dance is both part of the dramatic action and a highly disputed subject of conversation.” On this, see also, Catoni 2010, i–xviii, Hobden 2013, 217–221, LeVen 2014, 244–282, Olsen 2020.

12 See Jones 1993, Dunbabin 2003 and 2004, Dupont 2005.

13 A paradigmatic portrayal of the Roman convivial synesthesia can be found in Seneca's description of pleasures in *The happy life* (*Dial.* 7.11.4), where he uses the expression *esse in voluptatibus* (“to be in the pleasures”).

dinner party they exploit to negotiate their own creative acts as writers,¹⁴ the sensory potential of the impressions that were lived – but also remembered or even expected – at a feast acquires a whole new level of affection that transcends the literary sphere, especially once it intersects with broader issues of culture and morality.

I propose to read a series of passages from Roman comedy, epigram, epistolography, and satire in order to ascertain the highly suggestive power of the senses in experiencing choreographic performance at the Roman *convivium* and to reconsider the impact this might have had when displayed in a literary text. By stressing the cognitive and cultural role of sensory perception, rather than insisting on the usually negative angles taken by the Roman moralizing discourses on convivial dance, I will critically analyze the tendency of these texts to represent dance practices and performers together with other “consumables” – such as food, perfumes, and sex – in ways that complicate the multilayered process of perceiving movement and choreography. On the one hand, this approach will help to outline a set of intersensory parameters emphasizing how deeply affective – and even coercive – impressions of dance were among the audiences and readers of the Roman dinner party: the appealing strength of these particular performances – the way they are described as capable of crisscrossing and penetrating the sensory lines of the “attendants” – discloses broader insights about the cultural construction of Roman dance and, in particular, about the ways Roman authors encouraged specific forms of spectatorship, telling their readers how to think and feel about their own experiences of corporeality.¹⁵

On the other hand, this exercise seeks to promote a more corporeal approach to the selected passages, thus highlighting reading as an embodied activity and the porosity of words as channels of somatic knowledge.¹⁶ When studying the representation of convivial dance in Roman writings, the activation of vivid and visceral sensations in the reader corroborates the importance of the literary work as an intermediary between embodied expression and perception. This can easily be applied to the genre of comedy, and to any other composition that was designed to be performed or read aloud – that is to say, to be perceived on different sensorial levels – but it is also possible to pay attention to the sensual mechanisms that are at work in all kinds of dance narratives and descriptions and the ways they operate in other literary genres precisely by bringing all the senses to the fore.¹⁷ The group of texts that I have chosen – all from genres that are conspicuously Roman or ‘Romanized’ – do not present long and articulated aesthetic discourses on dance apprehension, such as the evaluations we find in

14 Gowers 1993, Donahue 2017.

15 On this, see esp. Olsen 2020.

16 According to Olsen 2021, 77, reading “was not disembodied practice in the Greco-Roman world.” See Rimell 2002, Butler/Purves 2013, Telò 2018.

17 Purves 2013.

Greek sympotic literature,¹⁸ but their particular synesthetic treatment of dance, their obvious relation to the *convivium*, and the complicity they seek with their interlocutors invite the reader – ancient and modern – to be part of their subjacent atmosphere, fostering an embodied understanding of the written text. To read dance with the senses will thus illuminate how the Romans also sensed, rather than merely imagined, the dances they were reading.

Dance at the *comissatio*: a spectacle for the senses

Roman comedy provides an excellent landscape to start exploring the synesthetic experience of convivial dance, which can be perfectly extrapolated to later, non-dramatic writings of the imperial period. The irreverent, almost improvised character of Plautus' festive conclusions, in particular – at least in three of the comedies that have come down to us – situates the reader at the heart of an explosive revel full of vivid dialogues, acrobatics, music, and choreographic performance.¹⁹ In the final verses of the *Stichus*, perhaps the longest and most representative of these “Saturnalian” scenes, the deliberate inclusion of a drinking party right in front of the spectators paves the way for an intense metatheatrical moment to which the audience is summoned in various ways:²⁰

STICHVS. *age, mulsa mea suauitudo, salta: saltabo ego simul.*

SANGARINVS. *numquam edepol med istoc uinces, quin ego ibidem pruriam.*

STEPHANION. *siquidem mihi saltandum est, tum uos date bibat tibicini.*

ST. *et quidem nobis. SA. tene, tibicen, primum; postidea loci si hoc eduxeris, proinde ut consuetu's antehac, celeriter lepidam et suauem cantionem aliquam occupito cinaedicam, ubi perpruriscamus usque ex unguiculis. inde huc aquam.*

*Tene tu hoc, educe. dudum placuit potio:
nunc minu' grauate iam accipit. tene tu. interim,
meus oculus, da mihi sauium, dum illic bibit.*

ST. *prostibilest tandem? stantem stanti sauium
dare amicum amicae? eugae eugae, sic furi datur!*

SA. *age, iam infla buccas, nunciam aliquid suauiter.
redd' cantionem ueteri pro uino nouam.*

qui Ionicus aut cinaedicust, qui hoc tale facere possiet?

18 Peponi 2015, Schlapbach 2011 and 2018, Olsen 2021.

19 *Persa* (801a–827), *Pseudolus* (1273–1280a), and *Stichus* (754–775). On the plurality of meters and the musicality of these scenes, see Marshall 2006, 214, Moore 2012, 106–114, Moore in this volume.

20 On the “Saturnalian” characterization of these scenes, see Moore 2012, 110–112. On the Plautine convention of staging typically indoor scenes out of doors, see Lowe 1995. See also Chiarini 1983, 213–234.

ST. *si istoc me uorsu uiceris, alio me prouocato.*

SA. *fac tu hoc modo.* ST. *at tu hoc modo.* SA. *babae!* ST. *tatae!* SA. *papae!* ST. *pax!*

SA. *nunc pariter ambo. omnis uoco cinaedos contra.*

satis esse nobis non magis poti' quam fungo imber.

ST. *intro hinc abeamus nunciam: saltatum sati' pro uinost.*

uos, spectatores, plaudite atque ite ad uos comissatum.

STICHVS. Come on, my honeyed tenderness, dance: and I'll dance too.

SANGARINVS. By Pollux! I don't think you'll never outdo me in this: for I'll tingle as well.

STEPHANIVM. OK, then, but if I have to dance, then you give our piper something to drink.

ST. And to me too!

SA. Go on, *tibicen*; take this first. And after that, as soon as you have drunk this, just as has been your custom up to now, quickly take up some smooth and sweet cinaedic song by which we may prickle all over down to our fingertips. Pour some water here. Take this, you: drink. Before, he liked his drink, and now he takes it not reluctantly. Take it, you. Meanwhile, apple of my eye, give me a kiss while he drinks.

ST. Is this perhaps a whorehouse? For a friend to kiss his lover as they both stand upright? Well done! That's how it's given to a thief!

SA. Come on, blow up your cheeks! Play something sweet for us now. Give us a new song for the old wine.

What Ionian or *cinaedus* is there, who could do something like this?

ST. If you beat me with this turn, challenge me with another.

SA. You do it this way!

ST. And you in this way!

SA. Babae!

ST. Tatae!

SA. Papae!

ST. Peace!

SA. Now both of us together. I challenge all *cinaedi* to compete with us. We can't get enough, any more than a mushroom can get enough rain.

ST. Now, let's go inside; we've danced enough for this wine. You, spectators, applaud and go home to your own parties.²¹

In these lines, Plautus complements the conventional choreographic endings of Greek and Roman comedy with touches of early Italian drama, which enable a more participatory involvement of the audience in the theatre.²² The three characters on stage – the slaves Stichus and Sangarinus, and their lover Stephanium – have been granted per-

21 Plautus, *Stichus* 755–775. Unless otherwise indicated, translations are my own.

22 Moore 2012, 110. On the Greek Menandrian model of the play and the party motif, see Lowe 1995, 28–29.

mission by their masters to have their own party in the street while they celebrate at home, a peculiar theatrical occasion that allows the spectators to inhabit the fictional sympotic space of the play while experiencing their own impressions as Romans.²³ The low status of the revelers and their transgressive merrymaking promotes a fluid irreverent identification between actors and spectators, to the point that they are finally invited to keep celebrating after the comedy comes to an end (*ite ad vos commissatum*).²⁴ This climactic episode represents a transitional moment between the inside of the play and the here-and-now of the *ludi*, with reminiscences to the Menandrian endings in form of a *cena* and the traditional ritual mechanisms to “de-fictionalize” the plot, such as the call for applause.²⁵ However, it is precisely because of the explicit conviviality that Plautus succeeds in creating such an engaging theatrical world for the audience. As Alison Sharrock suggests, “by bringing the backstage to the front, the playwright not only ends with a bang, but also transcends the end. In a sense, we are watching something beyond the end, pretending that the stage world does *not* all evaporate the moment it leaves our sight.”²⁶ Certainly, with his final request to the audience, Plautus denies an open invitation to his own *comissatio*,²⁷ but the multiple stimuli he puts on display work on his spectators and readers in that he is “enticing us – vicariously allowing us – to join in”, at least on a certain perceptual level.²⁸

The banquet in *Stichus* reveals the immense synesthetic power of this kind of festive conclusion and how it constantly appeals to the senses, encouraging a corporeal connection – and, therefore, an array of bodily responses – with the witnesses of the scene. Here, the entire drinking party provides a wealth of sensorial praxes, in which the choreographic performance conjugates with the other elements – wine, food, sex, and music – that give meaning to the dramatic action,²⁹ but nonetheless the actual practice of dancing becomes perhaps the most conspicuous driving force in the process of attracting the audience, precisely because of its capacity to encompass all the other forms of corporeal discourse.

23 Or, what Dupont 2005, 42 considers “la Grèce interne de Rome.” On Plautus and the representations of Greek banquet as cultural mediation, see Petrone 2003. On the Greek notional setting of the play and the impact this might have had among slaves in the audience, see Richlin 2017, 241.

24 On comedy’s transgression against everyday sobriety, see Habinek 2005, 177–178. See also Moore 2012, 107 for the “slave on top” motif that pervades Roman comedy.

25 On these comic conventions and their dramatic functions in Plautus, see López Gregoris 2019. On the functional value of the banquet inside and outside the play, see Dumont 2003. On this scene as a *mise en abyme* of the *ludi scaenici*, see Vázquez 2016.

26 Sharrock 2009, 279.

27 On this invitation as a sort of “counter-invitation”, see López Gregoris 2019, 353.

28 Sharrock 2009, 279.

29 As Sharrock (2009, 277) claims “drinking, eating, dancing and sex: these are the goals of comedy, and they signify the End (both finish and purpose) more simplistically and straightforwardly than anything else.”

The climax begins when Stichus asks Stephanium to dance (*age, mulsa mea suav- itudo, salta: saltabo ego simul*) and he and Sangarinus challenge each other to an improvised competition of acrobatic performance. As Timothy Moore recognizes, the whole choreography “appears to stand in for sexual activity”;³⁰ as the text contains a series of overtones that are emphasized by the ambiguities of an elusive, undetermined vocabulary and the explicitness of the actors’ corporeality. The relationship between the dancing girl and her lovers, which begins with the supposed rivalry of the two males, ends in a shared experience where both of them decide to team up against any other possible adversary from the theater (*nunc pariter ambo. omnis voco cinaedos contra*), thus assuming that members in the audience might take on a much more interesting role than the simply voyeuristic one.³¹

In the performance, the actors move, kiss, and drink in highly expressive ways that are evidently visually attractive, executing a libidinous choreography of Ionian and cinaedic movements that combines with spectacular virtuosity (*babae! tatae! papae!*) and the all-embracing lasciviousness of the piper’s music as they seek the spectators’ kinesthetic stimulation.³² The song of the *tibicen* becomes, in turn, another essential feature in intensifying the metatheatrical weight of the moment, for every time he interrupts the flow of the narrative to drink his wine, the audience is pulled even further into the world of the play.³³ The potential use of aromatic effects might also increase the extra-dramatic stimuli, thus bringing the attendants a little closer to processing the event as a lived experience.³⁴ The theatrical setting itself provides an almost complete opportunity to assess the provocation of the senses in a highly choreographed party. However, it is in the text of the comedy that all these elements become entangled in a net of unexpected, overlapping metaphors that allow us to approach the action from alternative channels of perception, with a special emphasis on the haptic, the tactile, and the gustatory impressions that arise from attending convivial dance.

First, the theme of wine, which imbued the scene since the first time the *tibicen* was encouraged to drink, can be understood as a joke to dilute the characters’ activities in the blurry atmosphere of the party, stressing the liminal role of the piper as perhaps the only outsider who can really be part of the game – and, therefore, the one who best assists us in penetrating the play’s fictional lines. In this way, the repetitive use of imperatives to indicate drinking (*date; tene; tene; tene*) creates a strong impression

30 Moore 2012, 110.

31 On the slaves’ tensions between rivalry and egalitarianism, see Richlin 2017, 239.

32 On the paradigmatically lewd style of these dances and the idiomatic implications of the term *cinaedus*, see Habinek 2005, 177–178, Moore 2012, 111–112, Sapsford 2022.

33 Marshall 2006, 213–214 analyzes the whole *tibicen* section in accordance with the metrical structure. Interestingly, this is the only occasion where the play’s *didascalia* inform about the piper’s name, a certain Marcipor, slave of Oppius.

34 On multisensory stimulation in theatre and how it affects mimetic representation, see Di Benedetto 2010. On olfactory stimulation in Roman theatre, see Bradley 2015.

of saturation while keeping us alert to what occurs on stage, at least until Sangarinus urges the musician to blow up the cheeks (*infla buccas!*) so he can give them “a new song for the old wine.” This call, which refers to a recurring representation of the *tibicen* in comedy, encapsulates the two possible readings of the image – with his jowls filled with air or with the wine that he has been drinking³⁵ – and the assumption of the soaking and intoxicating effects of his music. Similarly, the unclearness of deictics (*inde huc aquam*) and indefinite pronouns (*nunciam aliquid suaviter*) complicates the flow of the dramatic sequence with the various rounds of drinking and music to the extent that, in the end, Stichus affirms that they have “danced enough for the wine” (*saltatum sati’ pro vinost*) – and not for the piper’s song, as we would expect –, so enhancing the characters’ inebriated state and the confusion in the audience’s sensorium.

At this point of the play, the fluidity of drinking has already overlapped with the performers’ own sense of movement, for Sangarinus assures “we can’t get enough, any more than a mushroom can get enough rain” (*satis esse nobis non magis poti’ quam fungo imber*). The apparently fortuitous and completely unrelated simile between the actors’ choreographic activity and the vision of a mushroom covered in rain intensifies the comic effect of their clumsy performance as if they were in fact referring to their own heavy drinking, hence confounding their avidity for dancing with a more expectable thirst for liquor. And yet, it seems clear that, with this senseless comparison, Sangarinus really means to reflect on their own performance – or, at least, on their sexual intercourse, considering the erotic connotations of the mushroom motif³⁶ – and to go beyond the initial logic of the discourse by appealing to the almost indescribable experience of being swamped with dance. With the image of the damp *fungus* – itself edible! – the playwright transforms the haptic feeling of being immersed in water into the more complex sensation of being saturated with movement, an impression which is not just kinesthetic, but which introduces the peculiar notion of dance as an item for human consumption: on the one hand, the characters on stage are literally consuming the dance they are practicing; on the other, it is exactly their dancing that spectators end up consuming as part of the cultural product of comedy.

At the end of *Stichus*, wine, dance, music, and sex are envisaged altogether as metaphors for one another, precisely because they all respond to the idea of feasting as a common ground, as is indeed the ultimate aim of the *comissatio*. Here, the recurring vocabulary of taste, which specifically recalls the “sweet” (*suavis*) qualities of the liquor, intersects with the more tactile images of softness and suppleness of the carnal pleasures to characterize, as a whole, the voluptuous landscape of consumption that

35 See also l. 724 and *Poenulus* 1416. We may even think of an explicit sexual implication of the image, with the *tibicen* actively participating in the characters’ intercourse.

36 On wine and fungi associated with sexual desire and *mollitia*, see Dupont 2015, 82.

Plautus puts on stage:³⁷ the dancing girl Stephanium is called “my honeyed tenderness” (*mea mulsa suavitudo*), the mellow song of the *tibicen* is, at the same time, *lepidam et suavem* (“smooth and sweet”), and while they drink, Sangarinus asks the girl for a *savium*, which is the sexiest of all kinds of kisses. In this scenery, the convivial binomial of drink and erotic appetite is infused with the explicitness of musical imagery and sound, and the sum of all this promotes an even more visceral way of perceiving the play’s choreographic finale. Indeed, from the very beginning, the dance of Stichus and Sangarinus is presented in the form of a powerful sensation of shivering that the characters experience after indulging in the pleasant stimuli of the *comissatio*. Sangarinus describes his part in the lover’s game with the verb *prurire* (“to itch”, “to tingle”) and he, again, insists in asking the piper to make them “prickle all over down to” their fingertips with his music (*ut perpruriscamus usque ex unguiculis*), an assertion that, in performance, would be deliberately accompanied by an effective act of corporeal mimesis.³⁸ From the textual point of view, the language in these expressions shows the dancers’ affectation as something that can be processed haptically in their whole bodies, encompassing internal and external feelings of touch, balance, mobility, and sense of space.³⁹ This kind of physiological effect is eminently instinctive and almost uncontrollable. It responds to the characters’ expectations of erotic pleasure, while representing an essential auto-suggestive mechanism that dictates the choreography and prompts the spectators’ engagement with the on-stage impressions: by synecdochally referring to these bodily reactions as a way to anticipate the very act of dancing, Plautus seeks to ensure the audience’s complicity with the scenic material – note the inclusive force of the first person plural *perpruriscamus* – and, in particular, an empathetic response from those who recall having experienced – or expect to experience – a similar sensation when attending a convivial dance.⁴⁰ From a cognitive dimension, the tremendous expressive potential of these sensual metaphors, as well as the bodily intimacy of the “close” senses at work in the text, emphasize the immediacy of the corporeal activity of dancing, and so the intense hand-to-hand choreographic encounter between the actors culminates with an idea of dance saturation that characterizes the actual performance they are carrying out.

At the theatre, the synesthetic depiction of a scene like this merges with the other dramatic strategies to ensure that the attendants are immersed in the ludic dimension of the party. The provocative sparkle of the lived experience, together with the very expressiveness of dance, guarantees the audience’s direct sensorial commitment to the

37 On the literalness of taste, see Korsmeyer 1999, 5–6. On the cognitive intersections between food and sex, see Probyn 2000, Davidson 1997, Rudolph 2018. On the poetics of sweetness, see Hitch 2018, 28–30. On gustatory softness, see Telò 2018.

38 On this, see Moore in this volume.

39 Purves 2013, 28.

40 On empathy and corporeal memory, see Olsen 2017a.

choreographic event, but it is through words that the playwright most clearly designs the experience of the actual performance. On the metatheatrical level, the actors mediate in urging the audience to bodily connect with the actions on stage. The traditional call for applause, for instance, as well as the invitation to keep rejoicing at home, are not merely conventional procedures for breaking the scenic illusion, but rather become effectual stage directions for orchestrating the spectators' kinesthetic involvement in the smooth transition between perceived and lived celebration. And yet, before this occurs, the density and richness of Plautus' imaginative poetics has already set in motion the process that sustains a sensual understanding of the choreography even among those who cannot witness the spectacle.

The provocation of the senses in a dance of the comic *comissatio* demonstrates the extent to which choreographically-activated perception can affect various levels of awareness, in both attending and reading the play. The actor's declamation is expected to occur in combination with an actual performance, which allows us to infer a wide array of spectatorial impressions in line with the extremely performative strength of the text. Of course, each form of media features its own set of mechanisms for generating sensorial experiences, but they all respond to the same aesthetic and cultural premises.⁴¹ In the following section, I will only focus on literary mentions or descriptions of convivial dance that do not presuppose or allude to a real choreography. In exploring a series of passages from other "low" genres in later periods, I will try to demonstrate that, in the absence of direct visual or kinesthetic input, Roman authors tend to appeal to their readers' imagination by using the same kind of multi-sensory stimulation that we have seen in Plautus. The readers, for their part, rely on their own previous experiences of dance apprehension and memory to bodily connect with these narratives, while the synesthetic confusion that characterizes these accounts reveals the intricacies of a long-lasting tradition of dance representation in literature and its indebtedness to the Roman convivial imagination.

Dance, food, and sex at the imaginary *cena*

Having explored the role of sensual stimulation in choreographic performances of the Plautine stage world, I now turn to what is arguably the best moment to understand the multi-sensory effervescence of the Roman dinner party, namely, the first two centuries of the imperial period, when the variety of dance genres and virtuosic spectacles at the *convivium* reached its cultural peak. I will begin with a letter that Pliny the Younger writes to his friend, the rhetor and professor Julius Genitor, and which elaborates on the kind of entertainments they expect to find at a proper *cena*:

41 See Di Benedetto 2010, 171.

Recepi litteras tuas quibus quereris taedio tibi fuisse quamuis lautissimam cenam, quia scurrae cinaedi moriones mensis inerrabant. Vis tu remittere aliquid ex rugis? Equidem nihil tale habeo, habentes tamen fero. Cur ergo non habeo? Quia nequaquam me ut inexpectatum festiuumue delectat, si quid molle a cinaedo, petulans a scurra, stultum a morione profertur. Non rationem sed stomachum tibi narro. Atque adeo quam multos putas esse, quos ea quibus ego et tu capimur et ducimur, partim ut inepta partim ut molestissima offendant! Quam multi, cum lector aut lyristes aut comoedus inductus est, calceos poscunt aut non minore cum taedio recubant, quam tu ista (sic enim adpellas) prodigia perpessus es! Demus igitur alienis oblectationibus ueniam, ut nostris impetremus. Vale.

I received your letter. You complained about how bored you felt at a banquet, however sumptuous, because buffoons, cinaedic dancers, and jesters ran around the tables. Would you relax that frown of yours a bit? Truly, I have nothing like that for my part, but I can put up with those who do. Why then don't I have them? For it does not amuse me in the least as extraordinary or fascinating when a dancer comes up with something supple, a buffoon with something saucy, or a jester with something foolish. I am not telling you about my mind, but about my stomach. And how many do you think there are who are upset by the kind of things you and I like and promote, finding them either improper or absolutely annoying. How many call for their shoes when a reader or a lyre player or a comic actor is brought in, or else lie back no less bored than you were when you had to endure those "monstrosities", as you call them! Let us then make allowances to other people's pleasures so that we may win them for our own. Farewell.⁴²

In this epistle, Pliny concurs with the addressee as he appears to have expressed his repulse towards a group of performers playing around the tables of a certain dinner party. The artists specialize in the low genres – or, what he calls, "monstrosities" – of buffoonery and cinaedic and burlesque dancing (*scurrae, cinaedi, moriones*), as opposed to the more elevated displays of readers, lyre players, and comic actors that Pliny and his friend would appreciate instead.⁴³ Pliny, in fact, tries to demonstrate a clear intellectual superiority on his part, as he insists on his role as promoter of these more appropriate entertainments, something which he shares with his friend and which makes them part of an elitist, isolated group of more refined individuals (*ea quibus ego et tu capimur et ducimur*).⁴⁴ Still, as David Urban points out, "rather than simply agreeing with his correspondent's complaints, Pliny instead counsels the rhetor on the advantages in tolerating other people's tastes."⁴⁵ In a clear move for self-definition, the author "deflects the potentially moralistic tone of the complaint toward the more neutral field

42 Pliny, *Epistles* 9.17.

43 On Pliny's characterization of these performers, see Goodey/Rose 2013, 34.

44 Although not necessarily equal in terms of social status, as Genitor is lower in rank. On this, see Gibson/Morello 2012.

45 Urban 2011, 145.

of personal aesthetic preferences”,⁴⁶ and establishes his own according to an inherent – even physiological – disposition: the penchant of the stomach.

By building his notion of taste upon the not necessarily dichotomic distinction between reason (*rationem*) and stomach (*stomachum*), Pliny is reinforcing the credibility of his almost innate attitude towards the right kind of pleasures at the banquet. Taste – and food, as its most direct material referent and counterpart – has long provided a provocative comparison for theories of aesthetic perception and discrimination of artistic qualities in the Greco-Roman mentality, not to mention the reverberations of this phenomenon in the socio-economic definition of groups.⁴⁷ In this case, however, the metaphor that Pliny uses about the *stomachum* reveals also a strong somatic conception of the perceptual processes of attending a performance. Overall, the letter identifies a series of corporeal reactions that portray and condition the attendants’ predisposition towards the show they are witnessing and which relate to broader moralizing discourses about the acceptance of Roman performance culture:⁴⁸ the image of Genitor’s frowning (*Vis tu remittere aliquid ex rugis?*), for example, permits the reader to visualize the professor’s enduring rebuff even after the party, while the “weariness” (*taedio*) of guests – as opposed to the artists’ bustling activity – is described as an unwillingness to rise up from the couch (*recubant*). Even the invitees’ call for their shoes anticipates an outward movement that could be seen, kinesthetically, as a totally unempathetic response towards the actors’ appearance in the room! Yet, together with all this, the author’s explicit mention of the stomach as an organ of art appreciation introduces an idea of performance consumption which is not unfamiliar to ancient thought.⁴⁹

For the most part, the visceral portrayal of Pliny’s inclinations has been interpreted as a mechanism to underplay the status of this kind of “unintellectual” *divertissement* that he and Genitor despise.⁵⁰ Certainly, the delights of the stomach had been already equated to the blisses of the dancing body in earlier texts that seek to denigrate dance materiality as a conspicuous symptom of an indecorous life.⁵¹ Cicero’s oratorical invective, in particular, accounts for these kinds of views, representing dancing together with other occupations that are “assistants of the pleasures” (*ministrae voluptatum*), such as

46 Urban 2011, 145. On Pliny’s optimistic, regret-free epistolary persona, see Hoffer 1999, 23.

47 Korsmeyer 1999. See also Gowers 1993, Rudolph 2018. Somehow, Pliny’s plea for tolerance could be seen as an anticipation of Pierre Bourdieu’s theories of taste (1984).

48 On this see Naerebout 2009, Alonso Fernández 2020, and above pp. 12–13. For Pliny, see the case of Roman matron Ummidia Quadratilla (*Epistles* 7.24), who owned a troupe of pantomimes for her personal delight, but did not allow them to perform in front of her respectable nephew.

49 For a similar expression, see Cornelius Nepos, *Atticus* 14. On the interplay between consumption and Greek poetry see Hitch 2018, Telò 2018. An epitome of this idea could be found in Philoxenus’ *Dinner Party* (PMG fr. 836).

50 Gowers 1993, 30 n. 136.

51 See, for instance, Plato *Republic* 404b–d on Syracusan cuisine and Corinthian girls; Aristophanes *Acharnians* 1093. On further associations, see McClure 2003, 107–136.

those of “fishmongers, butchers, cooks, poulterers, fishermen, and perfumers.”⁵² In our letter, however, it is not completely clear that Pliny is using the gustatory metaphor of the stomach simply to denounce the vulgar routines of cinaedic dancers and buffoons. Elsewhere in the *Epistles* (3.1), the author commends how at the house of his friend Spurinna the *cena* is “decorated” (*distinguitur*) with comedies, while the pleasures (*voluptates*) of the table are “seasoned” (*condiantur*) with letters.⁵³ The semantic interchangeability of these two images reveals, in fact, an insistence on the above-mentioned parallelisms between performing arts and the culinary sphere, but the allegory now specifically refers to the elevated kind of convivial amusements that Pliny admitted to liking best, that is to say, comedies and learned conversations (*studiis*).

All in all, the metaphoric overlap between nourishment and the other “consumables” of the dinner-party finds its own *raison d'être* in the very context of the *convivium*, where the sensual stimulation of food and wine, the soft textures of cushions, the clinking of glasses and cutlery, the perfumes, the lights, etc., all intersect with the stimuli produced by the spectacles that the guests enjoy from a very short distance. Thus, the convivial synesthesia we experienced as readers of Plautus' choreographic conclusion is acknowledged in Pliny's letter, since the performers are presented as “roaming around the tables” (*mensis inerrabant*),⁵⁴ indicating a spatial proximity between the plates and the entertainments that aligns all the pleasures of the dinner-party on the same level of awareness.⁵⁵

Music, dance, and convivial performance, are, therefore, items for human ingestion, just like the meals of the dinner are theatrical shows in their own right, edible displays that follow the same kind of performance conventions and seek to accomplish the same kind of goals. As Pliny knows well, there is no better place for self-presentation than the Roman *convivium*, so the choice of entertainment can say “as much about the host and his guests as any other aspect of the party”, starting with the food itself.⁵⁶ In the liminal sphere of the Roman banquet, feasting and festivity are part of the same experience, as they are both threads of the complex design of patronage, hospitality,

52 *Cetarii, lanii, coqui, fartores, piscatores [...] unguentarios* (*On Duties* 1.150). The passage follows Plato's *Gorgias*, 464b.

53 On culinary metaphors of seasoning for music, poetry, and rhetoric, see Plato's *Gorgias*, 462e–463e, Aristotle, *Poetics* 1449b, Plutarch, *Moralia* 697c, Quintilian, *Institutes of Oratory* 5.14.35. See Gowers 1993, 269.

54 As opposed to this, the entertainments included in Xenophon's *Symposium*, for example, are explicitly introduced “after the tables have been removed” (Ὡς δ' ἀφηρέθησαν αἱ τράπεζαι, 2.1), which provides – literally and metaphorically – a proper space for the sympotic discussion of dance. On this see Hobden 2013, 213–226 and Olsen 2020, 159–174.

55 See also Horace, *Ars* 374–376. On another vein, it is interesting to note how, in Macrobius' *Saturnalia* (3.14.3), a discussion about the sumptuous culinary luxuries of seafood is what prompts the most extended discussion on dance.

56 Dozier 2008, 85. On this see D'Arms 1990 and 1999, with a special emphasis on the question of equality and inequality at the Roman dinner-party.

and social relations.⁵⁷ The multi-media products of the *convivium* form, all together, one grand performance event, and the sensual involvement of the audience in this all-encompassing environment is always active and complete. A hyperbolic version of this fusion would be of course, the *Cena Trimalchionis*, an extravagant, absurd occasion on which living birds emerge from the stomach of a roasted boar, the slaves serve the table “dancing to the rhythms of music” (*ad symphoniam [...] tripudiantes*, 36.1), an “insipid clown” (*baro insulsissimus*) dances on top of a ladder (53.11), and a troupe of Homeric pantomimes (*homeristae*) gives way to a butcher who carves the veal in the shape of an enraged Ajax (59.7). At one point the narrator, Encolpius, actually says “you would think that that was a chorus of pantomimes and not the living room of a *paterfamilias*” (*pantomimi chorum, non patris familiae triclinium crederes*, 31.7). So, as Costas Panayotakis has shown in depth, at the house of Trimalchio dinner becomes theater and theater becomes dinner.⁵⁸

Returning now to Pliny’s convivial preferences: he had already asserted the imbrication of food and displays in the first book of his epistles, in a letter sent to Septicius Clarus, the dedicatee of his entire collection:⁵⁹

Heus tu! promittis ad cenam, nec uenis? [...] Paratae erant lactucae singulae, cochleae ternae, oua bina, halica cum mulso et niue (nam hanc quoque computabis, immo hanc in primis quae perit in ferculo), oliuae betacei cucurbitae bulbi, alia mille non minus lauta. Audisses comoedos uel lectorem uel lyristen uel (quae mea liberalitas) omnes. At tu apud nescio quem ostrea uuluas echinos Gaditanas maluisti.

Hey, you! So you promised to come to dinner and you never came? [...] I had arranged one lettuce per person, three snails, two eggs, and spelt drink mixed with honeyed wine and snow (for you will please count the latter too, and among the most expensive items, since it melts in the dish), besides olives, beetroots, gourds, onions, and a thousand of no less splendid delicacies. You would have heard comedians, a reader or a lyre player, or even all three of them (such is my generosity!). Instead you chose to go to some nobody’s house, where you could have oysters, sow’s wombs, sea-urchins, and dancing-girls from Cadiz.⁶⁰

In this text, the author reprimands his friend for not wanting to come to his dinner-party and going instead *apud nescio quem* to have “oysters, sow’s wombs, sea-urchins, and dancing girls from Cadiz.” As his host, Pliny would have offered Clarus not just a blander meal, but also the occasion to listen to a comic actor, a reader, a lyre player – or all of them at once! The casual style and teasing tone of this letter, which indicate a

57 A parallel to this can be found in early Tudor entertainment, as exposed in Cole 2007.

58 Panayotakis 1995. See also Jones 1993, and Rimell 2002.

59 Gowers (1993, 273) speaks of this letter as “a complement to the dedicatory epistle” and “a necessary ingredient of the epistles.”

60 Pliny, *Epistles* 1.15.

close intimacy between the author and the addressee,⁶¹ do not conceal the intricacies of Pliny's literary agenda – halfway between the real and metaphorical invitation to dinner⁶² –, nor the standards of his social position in life: he, and certainly a close associate like Clarus, would feel more comfortable at a simple *cena*, where the frugality of an exquisite meal is joined to the moderate entertainments he would have tastefully arranged. The extremely detailed list of the dishes, the calculated balance between modest and expensive goods, and the triple stake of his selection of amusements sharply contrast with the imprecision of the letter's final statement, where the seemingly elaborate plan of Pliny's dinner is abruptly neutralized by a luxurious amalgamation of items that Clarus would find at "some nobody's house."⁶³ More than a simple moralistic judgement, the degree of Pliny's scorn signifies at first sight – as it does in the epistle to Genitor – his own disregard towards these forms of "unsubstantial" pleasures one finds at the inelegant type of dinner-party that he and his circle depreciate. And yet the blending of flavors and textures that this final idea distills operates as a powerful narrative device in defining the reader's convivial impressions.

The brief catalogue that Pliny sketches in the last line of this letter contains up to three types of meals, but it includes, as well, a specific mention of *Gaditanae* among the lavish appetizers, that is to say, a group of women from Cadiz, who were famous for staging one of the lowliest dance spectacles in Rome in the early imperial period.⁶⁴ In this culinary snapshot, the author provides no clear description of the dancers' performance, but their sheer placement within the list of dishes suffices to create a wide variety of synesthetic sensations about their role at the dinner-party. Metonymically, the shapes of the seafood, together with the explicitness of the animal's womb, connote an image of the women's genitalia that invites the reader to perceive the dancers as edible items that are literally exposed for the guests' personal satisfaction.⁶⁵ The objectification of female bodies, the assimilation of the carnal pleasures to the materiality of nourishment – note, as well, the image's increasing semantic strength⁶⁶ – brings out predictable associations with sex as a form of convivial *divertissement*. Here, however, the ultimate designation of women as *Gaditanas* adds an extra layer of interpretation to the visual and gustatory metaphors that Pliny puts on the table, for it is specifically their dancing – and not just their flesh! – that characterizes them as objects for human consumption. Above all, the alluring exoticism of their performance gets mixed up with the strong savors and smells of the other ingredients, as they all produce an

61 On this complicity, see Hoffer 1999, 19–26.

62 Gowers (1993, 267–279) insists on the "convivial mood" of the epistle as represented in Pliny's facetious style.

63 Gowers (1993, 276–277), however, insists on the playful ironies of this itemized section.

64 Fear 1991; Blake 2021.

65 On "edible women", see Henry 1992. On seashells, oysters, and sea urchins as metaphors for female sexual organs, see Shaw 2014.

66 On Pliny's rhetorical use of these clauses, see Gowers 1993, 277.

intense impression among the diners. Their enticing choreography aligns with the aphrodisiac properties of the food, and it is not impossible to imagine a textural connection between the lure of their dancing and the elastic, dissolving consistency of the nibbles, particularly as it contrasts with the stiffness of hard shells and spines.

As has been widely acknowledged, the structure of Pliny's invitation to Clarus may well have been modelled on one of Martial's "dinner" epigrams (5.78), where the cultural opposition between simple and luxurious dishes and entertainments insinuates further connections between the writer's banquet and his literary style.⁶⁷ In Martial's poem, the dance of the women from Cadiz is meant to designate a "flamboyant" type of program that, at first sight, differs from what the poet provides with his oeuvre. Allegedly banished from his "little dinner" (*cenula*), the wanton spectacle of *Gaditanae* is at variance with the moderate sound of a small pipe that is the only admitted diversion of Martial's poetics, but the very detailed depiction of their lascivious performance exposes the irony of what the epigram provides in reality.⁶⁸ Specifically, Martial describes the dancers in haptic and kinesthetic terms, as the "piquant girls will endlessly wave their wanton loins with skillful shaking" (*puellae / vibrabunt sine fine prurientes / lascivos docili tremore lumbos*, 26–28). The shivering movements of female performers are, in fact, a recurring motif of ancient Greek and Roman literature, which is usually deployed to articulate ideas of agency and submission between these dancers and their audiences.⁶⁹ In the case of *Gaditanae*, Martial insists on presenting them as capable of asserting their influence over the audience precisely by using the stimulating force of their movements as embodied empowering tools. In these verses, the causative force of *vibrare* ("to wave") works in accordance with the active present participle *prurientes* (from *prurio*, "to itch", as we saw in *Stichus*) to produce an impression of control on the part of the *puellae*, whose wanton shaking is purposely defined as a "skillful" (*docilis*) corporeal activity with endless reverberations (*sine fine*).⁷⁰ In another epigram (14.203), the author resorts to the same kind of language to comment on the influential effect of their shuddering (*tam tremulum crissat, tam blandum prurit*), as an actively erotic performance capable of transforming the chaste Hippolytus into a lustful – physically excited – spectator. And this repetitive *topos* resonates similarly outside the corpus of Martial.⁷¹

67 Gowers 1993, 272; Gibson/Morello 2012, 82; Bracci 2014, 17. Other famous "invitation" poems can be found in the "low" genres of satire (Juvenal 11), epistolography (Horace 1.5), and epigram (Catullus 13). See also Horace, *Odes* 1.20; *Satires* 2.2; 2.6, and the Hellenistic letter to Piso by Philodemus (*Palatine Anthology* 11.44).

68 As Gowers (1993, 255) suggests, "Martial himself is Spanish and lascivious."

69 Webb 1997, Alonso Fernández 2015, Olsen 2017b.

70 Note, as well, the explicit mention to the women's "loins" (*lumbos*), with all the implications this culinary term may entail (ThLL 7.2, 1809, 26–36).

71 See also Martial 6.71, Ovid (*Amores* 2.4.23), and the *Carmina Priapea* (19 and 27): these two possibly referred to *Gaditanae*.

All in all, the sensual strength of these images demonstrates the crucial role of the dancers from Cadiz in determining their own poetic inclusion in spaces they do not belong. Despite the authors' rejection of their performance, it is the bodily appeal of their actions that forces Martial and Pliny to make them part of their imaginary dinners – even when they are not there! –, thus enriching the range of sensorial perceptions that ultimately characterize their literary plans: in Martial, this dance refers to the spiciness of his own poetry and the elusive ambiguities of his teasing, ironic style; in Pliny, it is just a subtle connection to a specific tradition of convivial poetry that will certainly not pass unnoticed by his educated readers and literary addressees.

In the context of this tradition, I propose to read one final text: a passage from Juvenal's eleventh *Satire*, which also elaborates on the dancing girls from Cadiz as an unacceptable kind of convivial entertainment, and which, in the vein of Martial 5.78,⁷² presents what is perhaps the most suggestive description of their choreographies:

*forsitan expectes ut Gaditana canoro
incipiant prurire choro plausuque probatae
ad terram tremulo descendant clune puellae,
[spectant hoc nuptae iuxta recubante marito 165
quod pudeat narrare aliquem praesentibus ipsis.]
Inritamentum veneris languentis et acres
divitis urticae, maior tamen ista voluptas
alterius sexus; magis ille extenditur, et mox
auribus atque oculis concepta urina movetur. 170
Non capit has nugae humilis domus. Audiat ille
testarum crepitus cum verbis, nudum olido stans
fornice mancipium quibus abstinet, ille fruatur
vocibus obscenis omnique libidinis arte,
qui Lacedaemonium pytismate lubricat orbem. 175*

Perhaps you're expecting melodies from Cadiz to start itching in choral dancing and the girls, acknowledged by the applause, to sink down with quivering haunches to the floor. [Young wives watch this reclining next to their husbands, though anyone would be ashamed to describe it in their presence.] It is the stimulus of the feeble desire, the sharp pruriency of the rich. Bigger, however, is the pleasure of the other sex: he tautens more, and soon flows the liquid gathered by ears and eyes. A humble house does not hold this nonsense. May he hear the clattering of shells with words that even the naked slave standing in the stinking brothel abstains from, may he enjoy obscene language and all the arts of pleasure, he, the one who spits out and lubricates the floor of Laconian marble.⁷³

72 On the concomitances between Martial's epigram and this satire, see Bracci 2014.

73 Juvenal, *Satires* 11.162–175. Latin text by Bracci 2014.

The sensual scene begins with a direct invitation to visualize an imaginary action (*expectes*), where the women from Cadiz, once again, start “itching” (*prurire*) with vibrant dancing. Immediately after that, a melodious choral performance allows us to perceive a now familiar chain of haptic and kinesthetic impressions that not only affect the male members of the audience, but also “the other sex” (*alterius sexus*).⁷⁴ The sonic atmosphere of the show is further enriched by the spectators’ applause – note, as well, the ironic alliteration of the passage’s opening section –, which implies another spur for the girls’ willingness to keep dancing. The author, then, concentrates on the audience’s erotic sensations: an old man’s “feeble” (*languentis*) sexual stimulus (*inritamentum*), the rich man’s “piercing nettles” (*acres urticae*) and, finally, a peculiar erection (*extenditur*) whereby the bodily fluids literally move (*movetur*) along with the steps of the dancing girls as desire is achieved by means of “ears and eyes” (*auribus atque oculis*). The synesthetic portrayal concludes with a cumulus of multi-sensory depictions of hearing (*audiat [...] crepitus cum verbis*), smell (*olido*), taste (*pytismata*), as well as sight and proprioception (*stans*), evidencing that it is the goal of the author to concentrate, specifically, on the public’s somatic responses to dance.

Unlike Pliny’s succinct allusion to *Gaditanae*, the verses of Juvenal thoughtfully expand on the idea of witnessing their show from a multiplicity of channels. In particular, the satire creates a level of sensorial confusion that has direct implications in the readers’ approach to the scene, with a final effect of dance saturation – not dissimilar from Pliny’s performance “ingestion” or Plautus’ mushroom motif – which is specifically achieved by means of empathetic – or rather, unempathetic – sensations on the part of the banquet’s imaginary spectators. In these lines, the author focuses on the ways the “itchiness” – the carnal vibration that was already the dancers’ trademark in Martial – operates in rendering a full and more complex engagement with the dancers’ performance, beyond the surface of the audience’s bodies. A cutaneous impression, and the palpable closeness of this reaction, transforms the initial poetic tactility into an array of other corporeal effects to the point that, in the end, it is impossible to discern between one sense and the other. Within the text, the audience’s kinesthetic involvement in the choreography implies a series of active comportments that transcend the conventional modes of dance spectatorship and enter the realm of sex. Outside the text, however, the performative potential of synesthesia works to create a negative feeling of fullness that summons the reader to distance herself from the scene. As a moralist, Juvenal exploits the convivial motif of the dancers from Cadiz in a clearly purposeful way, taking advantage of the satire’s generic prerequisite of an overloaded mixture of elements.

74 Although verses 165–166 are evidently spurious, there is no scholarly agreement on the necessity of the following lines (167–170). Whereas Courtney (2013, 450), chooses to delete the whole section, Bracci (2014, 180), prefers not to eliminate such a long block, recalling the strong “Juvenal-like flavor” of the images contained therein. For a thorough review of these textual problems, see Bracci 2014, with bibliography.

Aware of the agential power of sensory creation and transformation, the author relies on the essence of satire, with the aim of instructing his readers in how to perceive a performance like this. As a result, the active performance of Martial's *Gaditanae* gives way to a full display of spectatorial reactions that the author carefully choreographs in constructing the perfect somatic stimulus for the readers' counter-reaction. Once again, the dancers from Cadiz are decisively excluded from the poem's dinner-party, but their substantial traces of corporeality strongly reverberate in defining the satire's agenda. The moralistic standards of someone like Juvenal cannot escape the deeply affective appeal of dance language: he uses its narrative modes of signification to inform his own writing.

Conclusion

To read a banquet, eat a dance show, or perceive a word kinesthetically are all complementary actions that make us approach ancient literature with all the senses alert. The array of subjacent sensations we feel when exploring the written world of the Roman *convivium* connects us inevitably with the impressions we have in our literary and corporeal repositories of memory. The dances reviewed in this essay are mostly conceptualized in tactile and gustatory terms. They are nothing but convivial consumables, and apparently incompatible with other forms of intellectual or aesthetic pleasure, at least according to the ancient moralistic discourse . . . unless those pleasures can be found in the very act of reading about – and imagining – them. In order to fully accomplish this, however, it is essential to recognize the materiality and sensual effects of the dance as a corporeal activity and to keep tracking the cognitive premises that this entails.

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Toute peine mérite salaire *L'orchēstopalaistodidaktos Stephanos (P. Daris 7)*

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Abstract: Papyrus *P. Daris 7*, which reproduces the minutes of a local assembly (3rd century CE), features an *orchēstopalaistodidaktos* who complains that the high priest has not paid him the salary due for a performance at a festival. The word *orchēstopalaistodidaktos* is a hapax in Greek, but it refers to a choreographic practice, the *orchestopala*, attested in a few inscriptions, in particular a contemporary Latin epitaph from the Vatican necropolis. This article intends to present the cultural and socio-economic issues of this recent addition to our knowledge of dance in Roman Egypt, by reviewing the sources on the *orchestopala* and the methods of hiring dancers, and by addressing the question of the relationship between music and dance.

Comme l'épigraphie, la papyrologie nous donne parfois des « captures d'écran » (pour reprendre l'image de Fritz Graf, ci-dessus p. 85) de moments précis et d'individus du monde antique, en l'occurrence, l'*orchēstopalaistodidaktos* Stephanos qui réclame son salaire après une prestation orchestrale et musicale. De manière générale, les danseurs sont bien connus de la documentation épigraphique et papyrologique des mondes grecs, hellénisés et romains. Les données papyrologiques sur les artistes et les fêtes ont notamment fait l'objet de récentes synthèses, dans la continuité des travaux de F. Perpillou-Thomas.¹ Il faut d'abord citer le travail de M. Vesterinen, *Dancing and Professional Dancers in Roman Egypt*, à partir de l'ensemble des papyrus et *ostraka* publiés avant 2007. Sur les spectacles en général, on se reportera au recueil de sources, assorti d'une brève synthèse, de G. Tedeschi, *Intrattenimenti e spettacoli nell'Egitto ellenistico-romano*, publié en 2011.² Plus récemment, M. Terzidou a pour sa part fait un recueil commenté de tous les documents relatifs à la vie musicale en Égypte gréco-romaine.³ Si l'on peut toujours reprendre quelques points de détail, il paraît difficile d'al-

1 Perpillou-Thomas 1993 et 1995.

2 La plupart des sources avait déjà fait l'objet d'un examen dans Tedeschi 2002.

3 Terzidou 2013.

ler au-delà des principales conclusions avancées par ces auteurs sur la musique et la danse en Égypte romaine, sinon à la lumière de nouvelles découvertes.

C'est précisément le cas avec le papyrus relatif à l'*orchēstopalaistodidaktos* Stephanos, qui est venu apporter un nouvel éclairage sur certaines pratiques orchestrales en Égypte romaine, car il mentionne une spécialité jusqu'ici très peu représentée. Ce papyrus (16 × 28 cm), qui appartient à la collection particulière du papyrologue triestin S. Daris, présente un texte abîmé par endroits, ce qui ouvre la voie à quelques conjectures, mais dans l'ensemble il se déchiffre assez facilement. Il a été publié par son propriétaire à deux reprises, tout d'abord à titre individuel puis dans le cadre d'une publication de sa collection.⁴ Le texte en a été reproduit avec une traduction en italien par G. Tedeschi.⁵ À ma connaissance, il n'a pas été considéré dans les publications ultérieures, or il me paraît important de souligner ce que ce texte apporte à notre connaissance de la pratique orchestrale dans l'Égypte du III^e siècle de notre ère (datation paléographique) sur le plan de l'histoire culturelle, mais aussi de l'histoire institutionnelle et socio-économique, en complément des travaux menés par M. Vesterinen, d'autant que quelques autres documents papyrologiques ont été publiés depuis 2007. Je n'entends donc proposer ni une nouvelle synthèse sur la danse en Égypte romaine, ni un commentaire complet du papyrus, puisque les points institutionnels ont déjà été élucidés par S. Daris : il s'agit plutôt d'éclairer l'arrière-plan culturel de ce papyrus, à l'aune de ce que l'on savait déjà sur la vie de ces artistes, voire de décrypter ce qui y est sous-entendu.

Voici donc ce que l'on peut lire sur la *verso* de ce papyrus, le *recto* étant constitué de deux colonnes très mutilées, étant entendu que je reprends ici l'édition de S. Daris sans modification :⁶

Στεφάνου ὀρχηστοπαλαιστοδιδάκτου εἰσελθόντος καὶ λ[έγον-]
 τος τοῖς μισθοῖς πεπληρῶσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν ἄλλων ἐνάρχω[ν μὀ-]
 (ajouté à gauche : γα) νον δὲ τὸν ἀρχιερέα μὴ δεδωκέναι, ἐφώνησαν· τοῦ[ς μι-]
 σθοὺς αὐτοῦ, ἀρχιερεῦ, οὐκ ἔνι σέμμα δωρεάν· Διονυ[σόδω-]
 ρος ἔναρχος ἀρχιερεὺς εἶπεν· μαρτυρήσει ὑμῖν· ἐφώ[νη-]
 σαν διὰ μεσ· · ἀγορανομείτω, οὐκ ἔστι χρεία τῆ[ς ἀρ-]
 χῆς· τοῦ ἀρχιερέως ἀναστάντος \ καὶ / διὰ τῶν θεωμέ[νων]
 ἐλθόντος κατὰ μέσον τοῦ [θ]εάτρου, ἐφώνησαν· Ἴσ[ίδωρε]
 ἡ βία παρησία· τίς ὁ φθόνος τῆς εἰρήνης ; τὸν ἀ[να-]
 στάσεως ... [·] ωνι ἔχεις αὐτόν· στρατηγέ, εἰρ[η-]
 νεύουσαν ατῶσεν τὴν πόλιν μὴ δίχαζ[ε·]

4 Daris 2011 ; Daris 2015, n° 7.

5 Tedeschi 2011, n° 61.

6 Toutes les traductions sont miennes : j'ai conservé les mots grecs dans le cas de certaines institutions. Quant à la titulature impériale, je la donne en latin par commodité.

τίς ὁ φθόνος [τῆ]ς εἰρήνης ; καταγραφέσθω ἐπὶ [ἄλ-]
 λη ἡμέρα ἀσεβείας ἔγκλημα. τοὺς κυρίου[ς]
 κατέλιπεν ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς, συνεδρευόντων τῶν
 κυρίων αὐτὸς ἀνέστη· οὐκ ἔστι χρεία τῆς ἀρχῆ[ς].
 αἰρετίαν ἀφ' ἡμῶν ὁ αὐτὸς κατὰ θεωρίαν.
 μετ' ἕτερα λεχθέντα· ὁ πρύτανις εἶπεν· ε[.] [-ca.?-]
 τατε τῆ κρατίστη βουλή μετὰ τοῦ νομίμου [.] [-ca.?-]
 αὐτοῦ σκέψασθαι, τοὺς δὲ μισθοὺς Στεφάνου
 πάντως ὑπ' ἐμοῦ καὶ τοῦ στρατηγοῦ ἀπαιτηθήσε\τα/ι.
 ὡκεανὲ πρύτανι, ἀξία βουλή τῶν κυρίων,
 ἀγνὲ πιστὲ Ἰσίδωρε, εὐγενεῖς ἄρχοντες.⁷

Stephanos l'*orchēstopalaistodidaktos* est entré et a dit qu'il avait été payé pour les salaires par les autres *enarkhoi* et que seul le grand-prêtre n'avait pas donné (l'argent). Alors (les conseillers) ont dit : « il n'est pas permis que ses salaires, grand-prêtre, soient une couronne gratuite ». L'*enarkhos* Dionysodōros, grand-prêtre, dit : « il vous fera son témoignage ». Ils ont dit ... : « Qu'il fasse son office d'agoranome, il n'y a pas besoin de notre magistrature ». Comme le grand-prêtre s'était levé et était allé parmi les spectateurs au milieu du théâtre, ils ont dit : « Isidōros, la violence est liberté de parole ; qui est le meurtrier de la paix ? Le ... de la mise debout ... tu l'as : stratège, (il a excité ?) la cité alors qu'elle était en paix ; ne la divise pas. Qui est le meurtrier de la paix ? Que l'accusation d'impiété soit inscrite un autre jour. » Le grand-prêtre quitta les maîtres, et tandis que les maîtres tenaient conseil, lui-même se leva : « il n'y a pas besoin de notre magistrature. Le même homme a reçu de nous la faculté de choisir tout au long du spectacle ». Après d'autres propos, le prytane a dit : « au conseil qui a tout pouvoir selon l'usage d'examiner (son cas ?) ; les salaires de Stephanos seront réclamés complètement par moi et le stratège. Océan prytane, digne conseil des maîtres, vénérable et fidèle Isidōros, archontes bien nés ! »

Ce texte présente un vif intérêt : il s'agit en effet des minutes d'une assemblée, c'est-à-dire la retranscription presque littérale des propos échangés entre les membres d'une réunion locale dont il est impossible de déterminer la situation géographique précise, car le lieu de provenance du papyrus n'est pas connu. La scène se déroule dans le théâtre, comme le dit explicitement le texte, d'une agglomération urbaine qui doit être un chef-lieu de nome, une *mētropolis*, comme on le devine à la présence du stratège. Plusieurs personnages prennent tour à tour la parole : un certain Stephanos, défini comme *orchēstopalaistodidaktos*, le grand-prêtre Dionysodōros (on ignore quel culte il dessert), le stratège qui n'est pas nommé, un certain Isidōros qui est probablement le prytane, et l'assemblée qui est plus précisément un conseil (*boulē*).

7 Pour alléger le texte, je reproduis les appareils critiques papyrologiques en note : v.4. l. σ<τ>έμμα ; v.5. ὑμιν· papyrus ; v.8. ἰσ[ίδωρε] papyrus ; v.9. l. παρρησία ; v.13. l. ἔγκλημα ; v.14. l. κατέλειπεν, corr. ex κατέλιπεν ; v.17. l. μεθ' ; v.22. ἰσίδωρε, papyrus.

Une scène pittoresque d'administration locale

Précisons un peu le contexte, en reprenant les différentes étapes de cet événement qui nous plonge au cœur de la vie quotidienne de cette cité. La situation initiale nous fait découvrir un Stephanos qui se plaint de ne pas avoir intégralement reçu le salaire dû, précisant toutefois qu'il a touché ce qu'il devait des autres *enarkhoi*, les magistrats en charge du fonctionnement de la cité : c'est le grand-prêtre qui est en faute, et les conseillers d'énoncer une formule qui peut sonner comme un dicton (« la couronne n'est pas cadeau »), que l'on pourrait gloser en « toute peine mérite salaire ». L'évocation de la couronne souligne le lien avec le monde du spectacle et place le propos dans un contexte agonistique, familier de la culture grecque. Il s'ensuit une forme d'hésitation, car le conseil estime que ce n'est pas de son ressort, ce qui nous invite à nous demander pourquoi Stephanos a choisi de porter l'affaire devant lui : ce n'est visiblement pas la juridiction compétente dans ce cas de litige, aussi a-t-on l'impression que Stephanos a surtout voulu faire un coup d'éclat en public. Le grand-prêtre sait qu'il est en faute et il choisit de prendre la fuite, dans une sortie très théâtrale qui montre bien qu'il le prend comme un procès à son encontre : l'emploi du substantif « témoignage » renvoie à la procédure judiciaire.

De toute évidence, l'affaire suscite une gêne parmi les participants, qui s'adressent à Isidōros, là encore avec une formule gnomique : « La violence est liberté de parole. Qui est le meurtrier de la paix ? », soucieux qu'ils sont de préserver la paix de la cité, dont ils craignent qu'elle se divise. Il paraît étonnant qu'une simple affaire de non acquittement d'une dette ait des répercussions aussi graves, mais à moins qu'il n'y ait un autre litige complètement passé sous silence, les minutes plutôt bien conservées suggèrent que le refus du grand-prêtre de payer Stephanos met réellement en péril l'équilibre politique de la cité. La situation est assez lourde pour que le conseil demande au stratège de différer une accusation en impiété contre le grand-prêtre dont la sortie est critiquée : était-il considéré comme impie de ne pas verser les salaires dus ou y a-t-il une autre affaire impliquant le grand-prêtre à laquelle se seraient superposées les doléances de Stephanos ? Après l'examen d'autres sujets, le prytane donne tort au grand-prêtre et reconnaît que Stephanos doit être payé, lequel adresse ses remerciements au conseil et au prytane. L'histoire ne dit pas s'il a effectivement reçu le salaire dû et si le grand-prêtre a été reconnu coupable d'impiété.

Si l'on n'avait la certitude qu'il s'agit d'un document du greffe, on pourrait se croire dans un mime alexandrin : la scène a tout du pittoresque et elle est parsemée de gestes théâtraux, peut-être un indice que la politique tenait déjà en partie du spectacle.

La spécialité de l'*orchestopala*

C'est en tous les cas un homme de spectacle qui nous occupe ici, désigné comme ὀρχηστοπαλαιστοδιδάκτου. Dans la documentation dont nous disposons à ce jour, c'est un *hapax* : il s'ensuit que la signification de ce terme n'est pas sans poser certaines difficultés d'interprétation. Sur le plan purement linguistique, le mot est composé de trois éléments : ὀρχηστής (danseur), παλαιστής (lutteur) et διδακτός (apprenti)⁸. S. Daris élude un peu le sens du dernier terme en proposant de voir en Stephanos un « esecutore specialista di danza ginnica » (Daris 2015, 23). Quant à G. Tedeschi, il n'esquive pas la difficulté, mais il fait de διδακτός une forme active alors qu'elle est passive : « istruttore di danza ginnica » (Tedeschi 2011, 122). Διδακτός désigne en effet celui qui est instruit par le maître, le *didaskalos*. Les autres composés de ce type ne permettent aucune hésitation, ainsi αὐτοδιδάκτος ou μητροδιδάκτος.⁹ Mais il faut bien convenir que dans ce contexte, le sens d'apprenti est douteux : on voit mal en effet un élève se présenter ainsi devant un conseil municipal et d'autres arguments vont dans le sens plutôt d'une erreur de copie pour *ὀρχηστοπαλαιστοδιάσκαλος, un mot qui toutefois n'a aucune existence dans nos sources.

Si l'*orchestopala* n'admet aucun parallèle dans la documentation papyrologique, on peut s'appuyer sur quelques inscriptions pour mieux cerner cette spécialité, comme W. Slater l'avait fait en 1990,¹⁰ à l'occasion de la découverte d'une inscription dans la nécropole du Vatican. Le document le plus ancien de ce petit dossier est une inscription trouvée à Éphèse :¹¹

τοῦτο τὸ ἥρ[ῶόν ἐ]-
στιν ὀρχηστοπαλα-
ρίων πρασίνων·
ζώντων.

Cet *hērōon* appartient aux *orchēstopalarioi* verts : qu'ils vivent.

Ces artistes avaient visiblement maille à partir avec le monde politique, puisque le vert désigne traditionnellement la faction impériale dans des concours, notamment hippiques, et qu'ils avaient droit à un sanctuaire. L. Robert s'était livré à un premier exercice d'interprétation, d'autant plus délicat qu'il n'y avait alors aucune attestation de ce genre sur une inscription grecque. Selon lui, c'était « un autre genre de danses

8 L'emploi de cet adjectif verbal pour des personnes ne semble pas remonter avant la *Septante*.

9 Αὐτοδιδάκτος est un mot ancien, comme le montre son emploi dans *Odyssée*, XXII.347 ; μητροδιδάκτος était le surnom donné au petit-fils du philosophe Aristippe (cf. Strabon, 17.3.22 ; Diogène Laërce, II.8.83).

10 Slater 1990.

11 *I. Ephesos* 2796.

avec tours de force ».¹² Le mot lui-même interpelle, car s'il est constitué de racines grecques, il est clairement un décalque du latin *orchestopalaris*, qui admet une seule occurrence dans la tradition manuscrite. En effet, Julius Firmicus Maternus,¹³ un auteur du IV^e siècle apr. J.-C., mentionne des *orchestopalarii* dans une série de professions.

À ces deux témoignages s'ajoutent deux inscriptions latines, une de Bénévent en Campanie et l'autre de la nécropole du Vatican. La première est aujourd'hui perdue et elle est connue uniquement par voie manuscrite :¹⁴

(S)esterti / primus / Beneventi / studium or/chestopales / instituisti.

Sestertius, tu es le premier à avoir institué à Bénévent une école d'*orchestopalē*.

C'est là un des titres de gloire de Sestertius, *agnomen* de C. Concordius Syriacus, poète de rang équestre, décédé à 58 ans. Pris dans son sens premier, ce *studium* serait un établissement de formation à une discipline dont nous avons le décalque du grec en latin avec maintien du génitif grec. Il se peut toutefois qu'à Bénévent, *studium* désigne un *collegium*, c'est-à-dire un collège professionnel, sans que l'on puisse préciser leur périmètre d'action.¹⁵

Quant à l'inscription trouvée à la fin des années 1980 dans la nécropole du Vatican,¹⁶ qui a suscité l'intérêt de W. Slater pour ce dossier, elle donne quelques indications supplémentaires, le mot étant cette fois décliné à la latine :

*Aurelio Nemesio coiugi
carissimo bene merenti, qui
vixit annis LIII, menses VIII, diebus
XI, qui cum summa laude artis suae
musicae magister chori orchestopa-
lae et pantomimorum deservit. Hu-
ic Aurelia Eutyichiane uxor dedit
ac posuit.*

À Aurelius Nemesius, son très cher époux, qui l'a bien mérité, lui qui a vécu 53 ans, 9 mois et 11 jours et qui avec force louange pour son art musical, a servi comme maître de chœur d'*orchestopala* et de pantomimes. À lui, son épouse Aurelia Eutyichianē a donné et posé ce monument.

12 Robert 1929, 436 n. 2.

13 Julius Firmicus Maternus, *Mathesis*, VIII, 15, 2.

14 *CIL IX 1663 = ILS, 5179 = EAOR 3, 45*. Cf. De Carlo 2013, 288.

15 Torelli 2002, 269–270 n. 69. Ce *studium* a pu fonctionner comme le *collegium scabillariorum* de Pouzzoles (sur ce dernier, voir en dernier lieu Vincent 2016, 238–242).

16 Eck 1986.

Il faut insister sur le fait que Aurelius Nemesius est défini comme *magister chori*, qui en grec se traduirait par χοροδιδάσκαλος ou διδάσκαλος χοροῦ : c'est donc l'équivalent latin exact d'un mot grec qui serait *ὄρχηστοπαλαιστο(χορο)διδάσκαλος. Ensuite, la mention des pantomimes montre que ces disciplines pouvaient aller de pair, ou du moins qu'elles ressortent de la même formation et des mêmes spectacles.

Peu avant cette découverte, L. Robert écrivait que « pour l'orchestopale, il s'agit d'exercices d'agilité et de force, d'une combinaison de danse pantomimique et de lutte ».¹⁷ W. Slater a tenté de préciser le caractère de cette danse, en recourant à plusieurs témoignages littéraires évoquant des prestations mêlant danse et lutte, ainsi Pollux qui évoque « une danse de *kōmos* qui comporte du combat et des coups » (κωμαστική μάχην καὶ πληγὰς ἔχουσα).¹⁸ C'est pour lui l'indice d'une éventuelle connotation dionysiaque, ce qui pourrait être confirmé par un témoignage d'Athénée. Même s'il s'agit davantage de compilation érudite que de relation d'une expérience quotidienne, ce témoignage prend une résonance particulière du fait qu'il émane d'un Grec d'Égypte ayant vécu quelque temps avant Stephanos (Athénée XIV.631b) :

Ἔοικεν δὲ ἡ γυμνοπαιδικὴ τῇ καλουμένῃ ἀναπάλῃ παρὰ τοῖς παλαιοῖς. γυμνοὶ γὰρ ὄρχοῦνται οἱ παῖδες πάντες, ἐρρυθμοὺς φορὰς τινὰς ἀποτελοῦντες καὶ σχήματά τινα τῶν χειρῶν κατὰ τὸ ἀπαλόν, ὥστ' ἐμφαίνειν θεωρήματά τινα τῆς παλαίστρας καὶ τοῦ παγκρατίου, κινοῦντες ἐρρυθμῶς τοὺς πόδας. Τρόποι δ' αὐτῆς οἳ τε ὠσχοφορικοὶ καὶ οἱ βακχικοὶ, ὥστε καὶ τὴν ὄρχησιν ταύτην εἰς τὸν Διόνυσον ἀναφέρεσθαι. Ἀριστόξενος δὲ φησιν ὡς οἱ παλαιοὶ γυμναζόμενοι πρῶτον ἐν τῇ γυμνοπαιδικῇ εἰς τὴν πυρρήχην ἐχώρουσαν πρὸ τοῦ εἰσεῖναι εἰς τὸ θέατρον. Καλεῖται δ' ἡ πυρρήχη καὶ χειρονομία.

La gymnopédie ressemble à ce que l'on appelle *anapalē* chez les Anciens. En effet, tous les enfants dansent nus, exécutant des mouvements cadencés et des figures avec les bras, en douceur, de manière à représenter des scènes de la palestre et du pancrace, tout en bougeant les pieds en cadence. Des variantes de cette danse sont les oschophoriques et les bachiques, en sorte que cette danse renvoie également à Dionysos. Aristoxène dit que les Anciens s'exerçaient d'abord à la gymnopédie, puis passaient à la pyrrhique avant de se produire au théâtre. On appelle aussi la pyrrhique *cheironomia*.

C'est sans doute la description la plus proche des mouvements que faisait l'**orchēstopalaistēs*, même si Athénée parle de l'*anapalē* : l'imitation des « scènes de la palestre et du pancrace » constituait logiquement le cœur de la représentation. Sans doute W. Slater, qui indique en outre que la pyrrhique était peu à peu devenue une danse dionysiaque, a-t-il raison de voir dans l'*anapalē* un ancêtre de l'*orchēstopalē*, qui s'est sans doute développée conjointement à la pantomime, mais aussi à d'autres spectacles de l'époque

17 Robert 1981, n° 479.

18 Pollux IV.100.

hellénistique et romaine, comme ceux des bateleurs et autres hommes-forts.¹⁹ Cette danse devait intégrer des mouvements de lutte avec les bras (*cheironomia*) tout autant que des acrobaties susceptibles de provoquer l'admiration du public. La référence aux danses bacchiques invite aussi à voir dans ces danses un lointain souvenir du drame satyrique. Pour appuyer son argumentation, W. Slater ajoute encore au dossier deux inscriptions : une épitaphe d'Amastris pour le jeune Aimilianos (155 apr. J.-C.), initié aux mystères dionysiaques et distingué pour ses activités athlétiques dont la lutte,²⁰ et l'inscription de Klaudiopolis honorant le danseur bacchique (βαχχικός ὀρχηστής) Satourninos.²¹

Si les thèmes dionysiaques ont pu constituer une partie du répertoire de cette danse, la mythologie ne manquait pas de sujets pouvant être ainsi illustrés. La nature mimétique du spectacle y était aussi forte que dans la pantomime, et il faut insister sur le fait que ὀρχηστής dans les papyrus et les inscriptions désigne généralement un artiste de pantomime, comme le confirme le traité de Lucien.²² L'objectif était alors de danser le mythe, selon la formule de M.-H. Garelli, qu'elle emprunte à une inscription crétoise,²³ auquel cas le thème pouvait en être les grands combats mythologiques de même que les premiers concours, Lucien évoquant entre autres comme sujet de la pantomime « les premiers concurrents des concours olympiques ». ²⁴ La dimension agonistique devait en être forte, ce qui agrémentait le spectacle. Un passage du même Lucien est particulièrement éclairant de ce point de vue :²⁵

Εὐκίνητος δὲ τὸ μετὰ τοῦτο πάντως ἔστω καὶ τὸ σῶμα λελυμένος τε ἅμα καὶ συμπεπηγῶς, ὡς λυγίζεσθαι τε ὅπη καιρὸς καὶ συνεστάναι καρτερῶς, εἰ τούτου δέοι. Ὅτι δὲ οὐκ ἀπήλλακται ὀρχηστὴς καὶ τῆς ἐναγωνίου χειρονομίας ἀλλὰ μετέχει καὶ τῶν Ἑρμοῦ καὶ Πολυδεύκου καὶ Ἡρακλέους ἐν ἀθλήσει καλῶν ἴδοις ἂν ἐκάστη τῶν μιμήσεων ἐπισχῶν.

Ensuite le danseur doit en tout point être agile dans ses mouvements et avoir un corps à la fois délié et solidement constitué, de façon à se courber quand il le faut et, en cas de besoin, à rester ferme sur ses jambes. La danse ne diffère guère de mouvements de bras dans les concours : elle partage les beaux gestes d'Hermès, de Pollux ou d'Héraklès dans leurs luttes, comme on peut le voir en prêtant attention à chaque représentation.

Même si l'on songe assez naturellement à la *capoeira*, pour ce qui est d'une danse qui imite le combat avec de grands mouvements à la limite de l'acrobatie,²⁶ la comparaison

19 Farnoux 2007.

20 SEG 40.1163.

21 IK Klaudiopolis 83.1. Voir aussi Graf ci-dessus, p. 89.

22 Strasser 2004 ; Garelli 2007, 118–127 ; Perrot 2019, 161–164.

23 IC 4222.A.1.

24 Lucien, *Sur la danse*, 47.

25 Lucien, *Sur la danse*, 77–78.

26 Röhrig Assunção 2005.

a ses limites, car cette danse brésilienne sollicite bien davantage les jambes que les bras, tout au contraire de la lutte. S'agissant des mouvements eux-mêmes, le parallèle le plus pertinent serait plutôt la lutte sénégalaise,²⁷ sachant que les enseignements de l'ethnomusicologie sont toujours à prendre avec précaution.

Le cadre juridique : les contrats passés avec des artistes

Toutefois, si *mimēsis* de lutte il y a, ne faut-il pas au moins deux artistes en présence ? Lucien laisse entendre qu'un seul artiste suffisait, mais la scène eût gagné en vérité avec un duo. Stephanos ne semble pas avoir été seul, comme l'indique l'emploi du pluriel dans les expressions τοῖς [ς μι]σθούς αὐτοῦ et τοὺς μισθοὺς Στεφάνου. Certes ces différents salaires pourraient correspondre à plusieurs prestations du même artiste, mais on ne peut exclure que ce soient les salaires de différents artistes qui lui sont dus, parce qu'ils travaillent sous son égide. En d'autres termes, il convient de se demander si Stephanos agit en son nom propre ou s'il était directeur de troupe. Les papyrus ont conservé des exemplaires de contrats de musiciens, et même plus précisément de troupes de musiciens et de danseurs. Or il n'y a qu'une personne référente pour établir ces contrats, qui prennent la forme d'un échange épistolaire avec le commanditaire ou d'un accord couché par écrit après discussion. Ce type de transaction a dû précéder la scène retranscrite sur le papyrus, entre Stephanos et le grand-prêtre en tort, mais aussi entre Stephanos et les magistrats qui se sont acquittés de ce qui était dû. L'exemple le plus proche de la profession de Stephanos est un papyrus de Florence,²⁸ car cette lettre, datée de la onzième année du règne de Commode (181), mentionne deux pantomimes d'Hermopolis (on se rappelle qu'Aurelius Nemesius était *magister chori orchestapalae et pantomimorum*) :

Παῖσις Πευήτος ἀρχέφοδος κώμης Ἴβι[ῶνος]
 Σεσνμβώθεως τῆς νομαρχίας Σαραπίωνι Ἐ[πι-]
 κράτου(?) καὶ Φιβάμμωνι Ἀχιλλέως τοῖς β παντο-
 μίμοις Ἑρμοπολ(ίταις) χαίρειν. ὁμολογῶ παρει-
 ληφέναι ὑμᾶς μεθ' ἧς ἔχετε συμφωνίας
 πᾶσης μουσικῶν τε καὶ ἄλλων ὑπουργοῦντα[ς]
 ἐφ' ἡμέρας πέντε ἀπὸ κς Τῦβ[ι ἔ]ως λ τοῦ ἀβ[του]
 μηνὸς τοῦ ἐνεστῶτος κα (ἔτους) Αὐρηλίου Κομμόδ[ου]
 Ἀντωνίνου Καίσαρος τοῦ κυρίου ἐν τῇ προκει-
 μένη κώμῃ Ἴβιῶνος μισθοῦ τοῦ συμπε-
 φωνημένου πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἐκάστης

27 Chevé et al. 2014.

28 P. Flor. 1. 74.

ἡμέρας ἀργυρίου δραχμῶν τριακονταεξ
 καὶ ἄρτων ζε[ύ]γη τριάκοντα καὶ ἐλαίου κ[ο]τ[ύ-]
 λας τέσσαρας [κ]αὶ ὑπὲρ τιμῆς τοῦ [σ]τεφάνου δ[ρα-]
 χμᾶς δύο . τοὺς δὲ συναγομένους μισθο[ύς]
 ἀποδώ[σ]ω ὑμῖν ἐπ’ ἐκβάσει τῆς ἐορτῆς
 ἀμέμπτ[ως] καὶ ἐλεύσομαι ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς μεθ’ ἧς
 ἔχετε συμφωνίας ἰδίας μου δαπάναις.
 (ἔτους) κα [Α]ὐτοκράτορος Καίσαρος Μάρκ[ου]
 Αὐρηλίου Κο[μ]μόδ[ου] Ἀντ[ωνίου] Σεβαστοῦ
 Ἀρμενικοῦ [ὑ Μ]ηδικοῦ Παρθι[κοῦ] Γερμανικοῦ
 Σαρματικοῦ μεγίστου Τῦβι ις [Παῖσις Πεν-]
 ἦτος παρείληφα ὑμᾶς καὶ πάντ[α ποιήσω]
 ὡς προκ(εῖται(?)). Α. () Κορ () ἔγρα(ψα) ὑπ(ὲρ) α(ὐτοῦ) ἀ[γ]ρα(μμάτου)
 [-ca.?-] . [-ca.?-]²⁹

Paësis fils de Peuës, *arkhephodos* du village d’Ibiön Sesymbötheös de la nomarchie, à Sarrapiön fils d’Epikratēs et à Phibammön fils d’Akhilleus les deux pantomimes d’Hermopolis, salut. Je suis d’accord pour vous engager avec toute votre troupe de musiciens et autres pour travailler cinq jours à compter du 26 Tybi au 30 du même mois de cette année, la 11^e du règne d’Aurelius Commodus Antoninus Caesar notre maître dans le village sus-cité d’Ibiön, pour le salaire dont nous avons les uns et les autres convenu de trente-six drachmes d’argent, de trente paires de pains, de quatre cotyles d’huile et de deux drachmes pour le prix de la couronne. Je vous donnerai de façon irréprochable l’ensemble des salaires à l’issue de la fête et je viendrai vers vous et la troupe que vous avez à mes frais. En la 11^e année de l’Imperator Caesar Marcus Aurelius Commodus Antoninus Augustus Armeniacus Medicus Parthicus Germanicus Sarmaticus Maximus, le 16 Tybi. Moi, Paësis fils de Peuës, je vous ai engagés et je ferai tout ce qui se trouve ci-dessus ... Moi, A. Kor., j’ai écrit en son nom, car il ne sait pas écrire.

La demande émane d’un fonctionnaire illettré en grec, responsable d’un village de l’Hermopolite, qui s’adresse à deux artistes vivant dans le chef-lieu du nome, pour une fête se déroulant à la mi-décembre. Les conditions du contrat ont été décidées lors d’un précédent échange, à la fois un salaire en numéraire, des rétributions en nature qui correspondent à des frais de bouche et l’organisation du déplacement : à en juger par la documentation conservée, ce sont là des engagements usuels dans ce type de contrat. Les deux pantomimes sont recrutés avec leur *symphōnia*, c’est-à-dire leur ensemble musical, qui devait être fait de plusieurs instrumentistes. Quelques paral-

29 1. ἰβι[ωνοσ] papyrus ; 2–3. BL 1.146 : Ἐ[πι]κράτουσ éd. préc. ; 3. l. Φ<ο>ιβάμμωνι ; 5. ὑμασ papyrus ; 10. ἰβιωνοσ papyrus ; 13–14. BL 1.146 : ἔτι βουκέλλασ éd. préc. ; 14. ὑπερ papyrus ; 14. BL 1.146 : π []. ραπο() éd. préc. ; 16. ὑμιν papyrus ; 18. ἰδιασ papyrus ; 23. ὑμασ papyrus ; 24. BL 1.146 : ... \ /κορ() επ[]... [.....] éd. préc.

lèles permettent de le préciser. Deux contrats émanant de l'Oxyrhynchite du III^e siècle, conclus avec le même directeur de troupe, Kopreus, emploient l'expression συμφωνίας αὐλητῶν καὶ μουσικῶν,³⁰ ce qui atteste au moins la présence de joueurs d'*aulos*, mais aucune précision n'est apportée sur les autres musiciens. Un troisième du même nome et de la même époque mentionne explicitement la présence de joueuses de crotales, qui étaient probablement aussi des danseuses, à en juger par l'iconographie qui met souvent les crotales aux mains de danseuses.³¹ Ce papyrus est conforme au formulaire déjà rencontré :³²

ὁμολογοῦσιν ἀλλήλοις Αὐρήλιοι Ἀτρῆς Κορ-
νηλίου καὶ Δίδυμος Ἀντέρωτος ἀμφοτέρω
προστάται κώμης Θώσβεως καὶ Καλλί-
γκος Ἀπειτος ἀπ' Ὁξύρυγχων πόλεως προεσ-
τῶς ἐργαστηρίου αὐλητῶν τε καὶ κροτα-
λιστ[ρ]ι[ῶ]ν, οἱ μὲν περὶ τὸν Ἀτρῆν παρεί-
ληφέναι τὸν Καλλίνικ[ο]ν σ[ὺν] τῇ αὐ-
τῇ συν-
φωνία λειτουργήσαντας τοῖς
ἀπὸ τῆς κώμης ἐφ' ἡμέρας ἑορτῶν πέν-
τε ἀ[πὸ].ι[γ τ]οῦ Φαωφι ἕως ἰζ κα[ι] α[ὐτ]ῆς ἰζ
τοῦ αὐτοῦ μηνὸς μισθοῦ ἐκάστης ἡμέ-
ρας δραχμῶν ἑκατὸν εἴκοσι καὶ ἄρτων
ζευγῶν τεσσαράκοντα καὶ ἐλέου ραφα-
νίν[ου ...]... []... [.....]... []... [] [τῆς ἐο]ρ-
τῆς οἴνου κεραμίου ἐνὸς καὶ ὄξους ἐν(ός),
πάντων ὄντων καθαρῶν. αὐτόθι δὲ
μετεβάλλοντο{ι} οἱ περὶ τὸν Ἀτρῆν τῷ Κα[λ-]
λιν[ί]γκ[ω] [- ca.8 – ὕ]πὲρ ἀ[ρραβῶνος] δρ[α-]
χμᾶς εἴκοσι καὶ τοῦτον ἅμα τῇ συν-
φωνία παραλήμψονται χωρὶς
θεοῦ βίας ἀπὸ τοῦ [Ὁξ]υρ[υγχ]εῖ[το]υ [δ]ιὰ
[...] [-ca.?-]

-----³³

30 *P. Oxy.* 10.1275 et 74.5014. Comme ils ne mentionnent pas explicitement d'artistes de danse, je ne les reproduis pas ici, mais j'ai reporté les données contenues dans ces deux contrats dans le tableau synoptique.

31 Cf. Straus 2018 et Perrot 2021.

32 *P. Oxy.* 74.5015. Voir aussi le *P. Oxy.* 74.5016, plus fragmentaire, où on peut lire le verbe κλοταρεῖζ[εῖν] (pour κροταλίζ[εῖν]).

33 3–4. l. Καλλίνικ[ος] : Καλλίνι|γ'κος papyrus ; 7. l. Καλλίνικ[ο]ν : Καλλίνι|γ'κ[ο]ν papyrus ; 8–20. l. συμφωνία ; 20. l. λειτουργήσαντας ; 13. l. ἐλαίου ; 14. ou [κοτ]υλῶν [ὀ]κτ[ῶ] καὶ ὀλ[ων] τῶ[ν] ἡμέ[ρ]ῶ[ν] ; ^ 17–18. l. Κα[λ]λιν[ί]κ[ω] ; 19–20. l. συμ|φωνία ; 20. corr. ex. ωρις ; 21. l. [Ὁξ]υρ[υγχ]εῖ[το]υ.

Sont d'accord entre eux Aurélios Hatrês fils de Kornêlios et Aurélios Didymos fils d'Anteros, tous deux présidents du village de Thôsbis, et Kallinikos fils d'Apeis de la cité d'Oxyrhynchos, chef de l'atelier des aulètes et joueuses de crotales. D'une part, Hatrês et ses collègues ont embauché Kallinikos avec la même troupe pour assurer une prestation pour ceux qui résident dans le village, pour une durée de cinq jours de fêtes, à compter du 13 de Phaophi jusqu'au 17, y compris le 17 du même mois, pour un salaire journalier de cent-vingt drachmes, de quarante paires de pains et (?) cotyles d'huile de radis, (et pour tous les jours ?) de la fête un *keramion* de vin et un de vinaigre, tout étant exempt de charge. D'autre part, Hatrês et ses collègues ont remis à Kallinikos ... à titre d'acompte vingt drachmes, et ils l'accueilleront lui et sa troupe, sauf cas de force majeure, de l'Oxyrhynchite par ...

Il s'agit cette fois de la mise par écrit de l'accord, après que les contractants se sont rencontrés en personne ; comme dans le papyrus précédent, les responsables administratifs du village s'adressent à des artistes qui résident dans le chef-lieu du nome, en l'occurrence Oxyrhynchos. Le directeur de la troupe, Kallinikos, dispose d'aulètes mais aussi de joueuses de crotales. Malheureusement, si l'on sait que la fête doit avoir lieu autour du 10 octobre, on ignore tout de l'année, vraisemblablement au III^e siècle. Un autre contrat trouvé à Oxyrhynchos, précisément daté sous Sévère Alexandre (234 apr. J.-C.), mentionne aussi une *symphōnia* faite de trois aulètes et d'une joueuse de crotales pour une fête dans un village de l'Oxyrhynchite :³⁴

ὄμο[λο]γοῦσιν ἀλλήλοις Αὐρήλιοι Πτολ-
 λίων Βαρβάρου καὶ Ἡρᾶς Ἡρᾶτος ἀμφοτέρω[ε-]
 ρ[ο]ι προστάται ἀνδρῶν εὐχουμένων
 ἐν κώμῃ Νεσμείμῃ καὶ Ἀντίνοος Ἐρ-
 μίου πρωταύλης καὶ προεστῶς ἐπὶ τοῦ-
 το αὐ[τῶ]ν τριῶν κ[α]ὶ κρο[τῶ]ν αἰσθητῶν
 μιᾶς, οἱ μὲν περὶ Πτολλίωνα παρει-
 ληφέναι τὸν Ἀντίνοον σὺν πάσ[η]
 τῇ συμφωνίᾳ λειτουργήσοντα τοῖς
 θαλασσοπόμοις ἀνδράσι ἐφ' ἡμέρας ἑορ-
 τῶν τέσσαρας ἀπὸ ἑνδεκάτης τοῦ ἕ-
 ξῆς μηνὸς Ἀθὺρ τ[ο]ῦ ἑνεστώτος (ἔτους)
 μισθοῦ ἑκάστης ἡμέρας δραχμῶν
 πενήκοντα καὶ ἄρτων ζευγῶν
 δώ[δε]κα ἐλέου βαφάνινου κοτυλῶν
 δύο[ο] χωρὶς τοῦ χωροῦντ[ο]ς εἰς τὴν
 λαμπάδα καὶ μερικοῦ ἑνὸς καὶ τῆς
 συνήθους ὑπηρεσίας καὶ ὄλων τῶν

34 P. Oxy. 34.2721.

ἡμερῶν οἴνου κεραμίου ἑνός, πάντω(ν)
 ὄντων καθαρῶν· ἀπὸ δὲ τῶν μισθῶ(ν)
 αὐτόθι ἔσχεν ὁ Ἀντίνοος εἰς λό-
 γον ἀρραβῶνος δραχμὰς εἴκοσι καὶ
 τοῦτον ἅμα τοῖς ἄλλοις παραλήμ-
 ψονται χωρὶς θεοῦ βίας ἀπὸ τοῦ Ὁξυ-
 ρυνχείτου διὰ ὄνων τριῶν καὶ ἀπο-
 καταστήσουσι εἰς τὴν κώμην καὶ
 πα[ρ]έξονται αὐτοῖς καὶ ξενίαν
 ἀσφαλὴν καὶ ἀνεπηρέαστον
 καὶ μετὰ τὰς ἡμέρας τέσσαρας
 πληρώσαντες αὐτοὺς πᾶσι τοῖς μισ-
 θοῖς καὶ ἐκτάκτοι[ς] πᾶσι ἀριθμῶ
 πλ[ή]ρη ἐπαναγκ[ο]ν ἀποκαταστή-
 σουσι τῇ ιε εἰς τὸν αὐτὸν Ὁξυρυν-
 χείτην διὰ τῶν ἴσων ὄνων
 τριῶν ὑγιῶς καὶ πιστῶς· ὁ δὲ Ἀν-
 τίνοος εὐδοκίᾳ πᾶσι τοῖς προκει-
 μένοις· κύριον τὸ ὁμολόγημα δις-
 σὸν γραφέν· (ἔτους) ιδ
 Ἀυ[το]κράτορος Καίσαρος
 Μάρκου Αὐρηλίου Σεουή[ρο]υ
 [Ἄλε]ξάνδρου εὐσεβοῦς εὐτυχοῦς
 [σεβ]αστοῦ· Φαῶφι ιγ
 (2^e main) Αὐρήλιος Ἀντίνοος εὐδοκῶ
 πᾶσι τοῖς προκειμέν[οις.]³⁵

Sont d'accord entre eux les Aurélios Ptollion fils de Barbaros et Hêras fils d'Hêras, tous deux présidents des hommes célébrant une fête dans le village de Nesmeimis, et Antinoos fils d'Hermios, premier aulète et responsable à ce titre de trois aulètes et d'une joueuse de crotales. Ptollion et ses collègues sont d'accord pour recevoir Antinoos avec tout son orchestre pour assurer les prestations appropriées pour les hommes organisant les réjouissances pour quatre jours de fêtes à compter du 11 du mois prochain Athyr de cette année, pour un salaire journalier de cinquante drachmes, avec douze paires de pain, deux cotyles d'huile de radis sans compter celle pour la lampe, un pain supplémentaire, le service habituel et un *keramios* de vin par jour, tout étant exempt de charges. Sur les salaires, Antinoos a pour le moment reçu vingt drachmes à titre d'acompte. Sauf cas de force majeure, ils les transporteront, lui et les autres, d'Oxyrhynchite avec trois ânes, ils les conduiront au

35 10. l. θαλιαζομένους ; 15. l. ελαίου ; 28. l. ἀσφαλῆ ; 32. ἐπαναγ'κ[ο]ν papyrus ; 34. ἴσων papyrus ; 36. l. εὐδοκεῖ.

village et leur offriront l'hospitalité en toute sécurité et sans dérangement. Au bout de quatre jours, après leur avoir réglé tous les salaires et toutes les dépenses extraordinaires supplémentaires dans leur intégralité, ils les transporteront obligatoirement le 15 au même lieu d'Oxyrhynchite avec le même nombre de trois ânes sains et saufs. Antinoos est d'accord avec tout ce qui a été indiqué ci-dessus. Le contrat, rédigé en double, est valide. En la 15^e année de l'Imperator Caesar Marcus Aurelius Severus Alexander Pius Felix Augustus, 13 de Phaophi.

Aurélios Antinoos, je suis d'accord avec tout ce qui est écrit ci-dessus.

À la lumière de ces contrats, la *symphōnia* qui accompagnait les pantomimes d'Her-mopolis était selon toute évidence composée d'aulètes et de joueuses de crotales. Ces dernières pouvaient même gérer directement les transactions, comme la danseuse Tnepherōs pour quatre jours,³⁶ voire endosser la responsabilité d'une troupe, ainsi Isidōra dans le nome d'Arsinoïte (206 apr. J.-C.) :³⁷

Ἰσιδώρα κροταλι[στ]ρία
 παρὰ Ἄρτ[ε]μι[σί]ης ἀπὸ κώ-
 μης Φιλαδελφείας. βούλομαι
 παρ[α]λαβεῖν σε σὺν ἐτέραις κρο-
 ταλ[ισ]τρίαις β λιτουργησασαι(*)
 παρ' ἡμῖν ἐπὶ ἡμ[έρ]ας ἕξ ἀπὸ
 τῆς κδ τοῦ Παῦ[ν]ι μηνὸς κατ' ἀρ-
 χαίους, λαμβαν[ό]ντων ὑμῶν
 ὑ(*)πὲρ μισθοῦ καθ' ἡμ[έ]ραν ἑκάσ-
 την (δραχμὰς) λς καὶ ὑ[πὲρ] πασῶν τῶν
 ἡμε[ρ]ῶν κριθῆς [(ἀρτάβας)] δ καὶ ἄρ-
 των ζεύγη κ, ὄσ[α] δὲ ἐὰν κα-
 τελέγηται(*) ἱμά[τ]ια ἢ χρυσᾶ
 κόσμια, ταῦτα σ[ὺ]ν ἀ παραφυ-
 λάξομεν, παρ[εξ]όμεθα δὲ
 ὑμῖν κατερχομέ[νο]ις ὄνους
 δύο καὶ ἀνερχο[μ]ένοις
 τοὺς ἴσους.
 ἔτους ιδ Λουκίου Σεπτ[ι]μίου Σεουήρου
 Εὐσεβοῦς Περτίνακος [καὶ] Μάρκου
 Αὐρηλίου Ἀντωνί[νο]υ Εὐσεβοῦς

36 BGU 7.1648 (très fragmentaire).

37 P. Corn. 9. Cf. Westermann 1924.

Σεβαστῶν καὶ Που[βλί]ου Σεπτιμίου
Γέτα Καίσαρος Σεβ[αστο]ῦ. Παῦ[ν]ι ις.³⁸

À Isidōra, la joueuse de crotales, de la part d'Artemisiē du village de Philadelphie. Je veux t'engager avec deux autres joueuses de crotales pour assurer une fête chez moi pendant six jours à compter du 24 du mois de Payni selon le calendrier ancestral, sachant que vous recevrez pour salaire journalier chacune 36 drachmes, et pour tous les jours 4 artabes d'orge et 20 paires de pains, et tous les vêtements ou parures d'or que vous pourriez apporter, nous les garderons en lieu sûr. Et nous vous fournirons deux ânes à votre arrivée et le même nombre à votre départ. En la 14^e année du règne de Lucius Septimius Severus Pius Pertinax et de Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Pius, Augusti, et de Publius Septimius Geta Caesar Augustus, Payni 16.

Le dernier exemple de troupe mêlant artistes de musique et de danse figure sur une lettre envoyée par le représentant d'un autre village de l'Arsinoïte à un directeur de troupe plus spécifiquement qualifié de « *pronoētēs* de joueuses d'*aulos* » (237 apr. J.-C.) :³⁹

[Αὐρ]ηλ(ίω) Θέωνι πρωνοη(τῆ) αὐλ(ητριδων)
[πα]ρὰ Αὐρηλίου Ἀσκλᾶ Φιλαδέλ-
[φου] ἡγουμένου συνόδου κώ-
[μη]ς Βακχιάδος. βούλομαι
[ἐ]κλαβεῖν παρά σου Τ[]σαῖν
[ὄρ]χήστριαν σὺν ἐτέρα μίᾳ λι-
[τουργ]ήσιν ἡμῖν ἐν τῇ προ[κε]ι-
[μέ]νη κώμῃ ἐπὶ ἡμέρας ι
[ἀ]πὸ τῆς ιγ Φαῶφι μηνὸς
[κατ]ὰ ἀρχαίους, λαβμανόντων
[αὐ]τῶν ὑπὲρ μισθοῦ ἡμερη-
[σί]ως (δραχμᾶς) λς καὶ ὑπὲρ τιμῆμα-
[τος] πασῶν τῶν ἡμερῶν
πυροῦ ἀρτάβας γ καὶ ψωμίων
ζε[ύ]γη ιε, ὑπὲρ καταβάσεως
καὶ ἀναβάσεως ὄνους γ. ἐντεῦ-
θε[ν] δὲ ἐσχή(κασι) ὑπὲρ ἀραβῶνος
[τῆ] τ[ι]μῆ ἔλλογουμέν[ο]υ σ[ο]ι
(δραχμᾶς) []β.
(ἔτους) γ Αὐτοκράτορος (Καί)σαρος Γαίου Ἰουλίου
Οὐήρου Μαξιμίνου Εὐσεβοῦς Εὐτυχοῦς
Σεβαστοῦ Γερμανικοῦ Μεγίστου Δακικοῦ

38 5. I. λειτουργήσαι ; 9. ὑπερ parygus ; 12–13. I. κα|τενέγκητε.

39 Chr. Wilck. 497.

Μεγίστου [Σα]ρματικοῦ Μεγίστου (καί) Γαίου
 Ίουλίου Οὐήρου Μαξίμου Γερμανικοῦ
 [Μεγίστου] Δακικοῦ Μεγίστου Σαρματικ[οῦ]
 [Μεγίστου το]ῦ ἱερωπάτου (Καί)σαρος
 Σεβασ[το]ῦ υἱοῦ τ[οῦ Σε]βαστοῦ Ἐπιφ [].⁴⁰

À Aurelios Theōn, *pronoētēs* d'aulétrides, de la part d'Aurelios Asklas Philadelphos, chef du conseil du village de Bakchias. Je veux embaucher auprès de toi la danseuse Tsain avec une autre pour assurer une prestation pour nous dans le village sus-cité pour dix jours à compter du 13 du mois Phaophi selon le calendrier ancestral, avec pour salaire journalier 36 drachmes et pour compte de tous les jours 3 artabes de froment, 15 paires de pains, pour la descente et la montée (du Nil) 3 ânes. Pour le moment ils ont eu pour acompte au prix que tu as calculé ? drachmes. En la 3^e année de l'Imperator Caesar Gaius Julius Verus Maximinus Pius Felix Augustus Germanicus Sarmaticus Maximus et de Gaius Julius Verus Maximus Germanicus Maximus Dacicus Maximus Sarmaticus Maximus le très saint César Auguste fils de l'Auguste, au mois d'Épiph ...

Tous ces contrats montrent que musiciens et danseurs cohabitaient dans ces troupes, les instruments de prédilection étant l'*aulos* et les crotales. C'est l'accompagnement qu'il faut probablement supposer lors de l'exécution de la pantomime, ce que confirme en partie Lucien qui ajoute à l'*aulos* la syrinx, les battements de pied et les cymbales.⁴¹ Comme l'épithaphe latine d'Aurelius Nemesius souligne le lien entre les danseurs d'*orchestopala* et les pantomimes, il me paraît raisonnable de penser que cette danse était elle aussi accompagnée d'*aulos* et de crotales, d'autant que depuis l'époque classique, la lutte se fait au son de l'*aulos*. Les parallèles ethnographiques mentionnés plus haut montrent l'importance des instruments pour rythmer les mouvements.

Ces papyrus donnent un tableau assez cohérent de ces fêtes de village à l'époque sévérienne, sauf dans le cas d'Isidōra qui est sollicitée pour une fête privée. Les déplacements sont limités à l'échelle du nome, car généralement la troupe vient du chef-lieu pour se rendre dans un village de la même circonscription. Les rétributions en nature comme le nombre d'ânes pour le transport dépendent sans doute du nombre d'artistes engagés et de la durée de la prestation. S'agissant du salaire, nous avons une bonne idée du cachet moyen des artistes, qui ne semble pas avoir été différent entre musiciens et danseurs : dans trois papyrus il est de 36 drachmes d'argent, ce qui semble être une somme consensuelle à cette époque. Il pouvait être plus élevé, si le salaire de 50 drachmes mentionné dans le contrat d'Antinoos concerne chaque artiste. Il semble qu'il y ait eu aussi des cachets forfaitaires pour toute la troupe, comme le montrent les papyrus qui mentionnent un salaire global de 120 à 140 drachmes, correspondant sans

40 1. l. προνοη(τή) ; 6-7. l. λει|[τουργ]ήσειν ; 10. l. λαμβανόντων ; 14. cf. BL 1.190 : . [] ου éd. préc. ; 26. cf. BL 1.190 : γενναιοτάτου éd. préc. ; 27. cf. BL 1.190 : κυρίων [αί]ωνίω[ν Σε]βαστών éd. préc.

41 Lucien, *Sur la danse*, 63, 68 et 73.

doute à la rémunération de trois, quatre voire cinq artistes. On peut comparer ces données au reçu (III^e siècle apr. J.-C.) conservé pour une danseuse, qui montre comment devait s'achever la transaction :⁴²

Ἀρπαῆσις Ἰσιδώρῳ
χαίρειν. ἔλαβον παρὰ
σοῦ ὀρχηστρίαν ἐν
μισθώσει. η̅να
να̅ [] ἕως η̅ [τ]οῦ [...]
ἐμοῦ δίδοντες
εἰς μίσθον δραχμ[ὰς]
ἑξήκον[τ]α τέσσαρε[ς]
-----⁴³

Harpaësis à Isidōros, salut. J'ai reçu de ta part la danseuse pour un salaire ... jusqu'à ce que ... de moi, eux donnant pour salaire soixante-quatre drachmes.

L'état fragmentaire de ce texte ne permet pas de confirmer le salaire journalier de la danseuse, puisque l'on ne sait si le montant de 64 drachmes vaut pour une ou plusieurs journées ; mais si l'on se trouve dans un cas de figure similaire aux précédents, il s'agirait de deux journées. Il ressort de tous ces textes que la transaction était donc conclue avec l'artiste lui-même ou avec un personnage juridiquement et fiscalement compétent pouvant assurer la direction d'une troupe, qu'il soit un homme ou une femme :⁴⁴ c'est la fonction que devait occuper Stephanos dans une troupe qui comptait plusieurs artistes.

42 *P. Aberd.* 58.

43 1. ἰσιδώρῳ papyrus ; 4. l. μισθώσει ; 8. l. τέσσαρας.

44 C'est vrai depuis l'époque ptolémaïque : cf. *P. Count.* 23.

Tableau 1 Contrats impliquant des troupes d'artistes

Pap.	Données chronologiques			Prestation		Troupe				Rémunérations et frais divers								
	Contrat	Presta-tion	Durée	Clients	Type	Lieu	Direction	Lieu	Ar-tistes	Salaire	Pains	Huile	Cé-réales	Vin	Vi-naigre	Supplé-ment	Acomp-te	Trans-port
<i>P. Flor.</i> 1. 74	16 Tybi 181	26-30 Tybi	5 j.	Paësis	Village	Ibiôn (Her-mopolite)	Sarapiôn et Phi-bammôn	Her-mopolis	2 pant. et ?	36 dr /p./j.	60	4 cot.				2 dr. (cou-ronne)		Oui
<i>P. Corn.</i> 9	16 Payni 206	24-29 Payni	6 j.	Artemistië	Privé	Philadel- phie	Isidôra	?	3 krot.	36 dr /p./j.	40		4 art. d'orge					2 ânes
<i>P. Oxy.</i> 34-2721 234	13 Phaophi Athyr 234	11-14 Athyr	4 j.	Aur. Ptol- lion et Aur. Héras	Village	Nesmeimis (Oxy- rhynch.)	Antinoos	Oxy. ?	4 aul. 1 krot.	50 dr /p./j.	24	2 cot.		1 ker.		1 pain	20 dr.	3 ânes
<i>Chr.</i> Wilck. 497	? Épiph	13-22 Phao- phi	10 j.	Aur. Askas Philadel- phos	Village	Bakchias (Arsinoïte)	Aur. Theôn	Krok. ?	2 orch.	36 dr /p./j.	30		3 art. de fro- ment				?	3 ânes
<i>P. Oxy.</i> 74-5015	? Phao- phi	13-17 Phao- phi	5 j.	Aur. Ha- très et Aur. Didymos	Village	Thôsbis (Oxy- rhynch.)	Kallini- kos	Oxy.	aul. krot.	120 dr. /j.	80	? cot.		1 ker./j.	1 ker./j.		20 dr.	Oui
<i>P. Oxy.</i> 10.1275	? Phame- nôth	10-14 Phame- nôth	5 j.	Aur. Omnôphris et 4 collè- gues	Village	Sous (Oxy- rhynch.)	Kopreus	Oxy. ?	aul. mus.	140 dr./j.	80	8 cot.		1 ker./j.	1 ker./j.		20 dr.	10 ânes
<i>P. Oxy.</i> 74-5014	? Payni	17-23 Payni	7 j.	Aur. Dios- koros et Petrônis	Village	Ibiôn Ammoniou (Oxy- rhynch.)	Kopreus	Oxy. ?	aul. mus.	120 dr. /j.	60	8 cot.		1 ker./j.	1 ker./j.		40 dr.	?

Abbreviations : pap. : papyrus ; j. : jour ; Oxy. : Oxyrhynchos ; Oxyrhynch. : Oxyrhynchite ; Krok. : Krokodilopolis ; pant. : pantomimes ; krot. : *krotalistrìa* ; aul. : aulète ; orch. : *orchèstrìa* ; mus. : musicien ; dr. : drachmes ; cot. : cotyles ; art. : artabe ; ker. : *keramios*.

NB : les dates sont celles qui figurent sur les papyrus, sachant qu'il s'agit des mois alexandrins sauf dans deux cas (*P. Corn.* 9 ; *Chr. Wilck.* 497) où la référence est le calendrier ancestral égyptien.

Le cadre de la prestation

Le petit dossier que nous avons étudié concerne essentiellement des fêtes de village, donc des célébrations à caractère public, et c'est pour cette raison que ce sont les responsables du village qui prennent contact avec les artistes. La fête y était sans doute de moindre envergure que dans le cas de Stephanos, qui attend ses salaires de la part des autorités d'un chef-lieu de nome. L'implication du grand-prêtre montre le caractère religieux de la célébration, comme l'indique la qualification de *θεωρία* : le festival était placé sous le patronage d'une divinité, qui toutefois n'est pas précisée. Il pourrait s'agir du culte impérial, pour lequel nous avons au moins un exemple en Arsinoïte sous Septime Sévère, en 201–202 :⁴⁵

Ἀντωνεῖω Ἀ τ[.....]ω (δεκαδάρχω)
 παρὰ Παβοῦτος [Ἰωρίω]νος
 ἡγουμένω[υ] συνόδου κώ(μης) Σεκνε-
 παίου Νήσου. [ἔ]ορτῆς οὔσης παρ' ἡ-
 [μ]εῖν καὶ θεώντων ἡμῶν περὶ τῆς
 [θεί]ας τύχης τῶν κυρίων ἡμῶν
 [ἀ]ττήτων Ἀυτοκρατόρων Σεου-
 [ή]ρο[υ] καὶ Ἀντωνεῖνου Εὐσαιβῶν
 [Σεβ]αστῶν καὶ τ[οῦ] ἰερωτάτου
 Γέτα Καίσαρος καὶ Ἰουλίας
 Δάμνης Σεβαστῆ[ς] μητῆρ [Ἰ]ο
 στ[ρα]τωπαίδων, ἀξιούμεν, κύριε,
 [ἐπιχ]ωρηθῆναι παραλαβῆν ἀπὸ τοῦ
 [.....] ἰτου διὰ Ἀρ[π]οκρατίωνος
 [.....] ου αὐλητᾶς κ[αὶ] ὀρχηστρίας
 -----⁴⁶

À Antonios ... décadarque, de la part de Pabous fils d'Orion, chef du conseil du village de Soknopaiou Nēsos. Comme une fête se tient chez nous et que nous veillons à la Divine Fortune des Empereurs Severus et Antoninus, Pii, Augusti, et du très saint Caesar Geta et de l'Auguste Ioulia Domna sa mère. Nous demandons, seigneur, qu'il soit permis d'engager de la part de ... par Harpokration ... des aulètes et de danseuses.

Cette situation pourrait bien correspondre à celle que l'on a sur le *P. Daris* 7, même s'il faut bien reconnaître que l'on ne peut avoir aucune certitude en la matière. Si l'on prend la couronne du texte dans son sens littéral, on ne peut écarter complètement

45 *P. Alex. Giss.* 3. Il faut remarquer que le texte suit de peu le voyage que Septime Sévère a fait en Égypte.

46 4–5. l. ἡ[[μ]ιν; 7. τήτων papyrus; 8. l. Εὐσεβῶν; 11. l. μητρὸς; 12. l. στ[ρα]τοπέδων; 13. l. παραλαβεῖν.

l'hypothèse d'un concours, où figuraient des épreuves de danse, comme on en a la trace sur un papyrus d'Oxyrhynchos,⁴⁷ du II^e siècle apr. J.-C. (17–18 février), où sont mentionnés les rétributions des artistes : on a notamment un mime (496 drachmes), un homériste (448 drachmes), des musiciens (somme non conservée), un danseur (une centaine de drachmes), un trompettiste (4 drachmes)⁴⁸. Plusieurs autres listes ont été publiées récemment avec des mimes, des chanteurs et des acteurs.⁴⁹ Pour la danse, il faut aussi mentionner un *ostrakon* publié en 2002 dans la *Chronique d'Égypte*⁵⁰ et un papyrus publié en 2009 :⁵¹

ἡθολογίας
καὶ ὀρχιστρικά
καὶ ἑταρία
καὶ κιθαρῶτ-
ία
λβ⁵²

Peinture de caractères

Danses

Compagnie

Citharodie

32

Κάνωπος κιθαρῶδός
[Θ]εαγένης κωμῶδ[ός]
[-ca.?-]ίων μ. ος(*)
[-ca.?-]ος ὀρχηστής
ς[-ca.?-]ς κω[μῶδός]
[-ca.?-][[χος]]
[-ca.?-]ανδρ. [-ca.?-]
[-ca.?-] Traces
-----⁵³

Kanōpos citharōde

Theagenēs comédien

47 *P. Oxy.* 3.519.

48 Le faible montant alloué au trompettiste est dû au fait que sa fonction se limite pour l'essentiel à jouer une sonnerie pour annoncer la proclamation des résultats par le héraut (lui-même rétribué 8 drachmes).

49 *P. Oxy.* 74.5212, 5215–5218.

50 Daté entre 150 et 225 : *SB* 28.16928 (2013) = *Chronique d'Égypte* 77 (2002), 215–216 n° 3.

51 *P. Oxy.* 74.5013 (II^e siècle).

52 1. ἡθολογία ; 2. ἰ. ὀρχηστρικά ; 3. ἰ. ἑταιρία ; 4–5. ἰ. κιθαρῶδ|ία.

53 3. οὐ μίμος.

... mime ?
 ... danseur
 ... comédien

La datation de ces différents documents, quoiqu'elle soit souvent approximative, place plutôt les concours dans le II^e siècle et les contrats pour les fêtes de village au début du III^e siècle. Stephanos a sans doute été recruté pour un festival qui n'impliquait pas l'organisation de concours à proprement parler mais devait tout autant susciter l'effervescence des habitants et exciter des convoitises autour des intérêts économiques en jeu. En effet, quand on voit les sommes qui ont pu être engagées, que ce soit par les contrats ou les listes de participants à des festivals, on comprend la colère de Stephanos : à seul titre d'exemple, au II^e siècle, un ouvrier agricole gagnait en moyenne 240 drachmes par an, un médecin de village 600 drachmes par an.⁵⁴

Les enjeux socio-économiques

Si le montant des prestations est en soi un enjeu d'importance, on peut pousser un peu plus loin la réflexion sur ce que pouvait représenter cette affaire aux yeux de Stephanos, car au-delà du recours juridique pour un impayé, il y a tout un système socio-économique qui ne se laisse que deviner entre les lignes.

Le premier point à souligner est que le temps passé à réclamer son dû correspond à un manque à gagner pour d'autres engagements, même si la troupe peut continuer de circuler en l'absence de son directeur. Toutefois, les exemples évoqués plus haut laissent supposer qu'il pouvait assurer en personne certaines prestations. En outre, il devait pouvoir être joignable par d'autres éventuels commanditaires. Aussi performant le système de poste fût-il, les courriers devaient pouvoir arriver au responsable des artistes, qui avait probablement une résidence fixe dans le chef-lieu du nome : tout déplacement avait des incidences sur les délais de réponse et devoir rester au même endroit par contrainte plutôt que par obligation avait sans doute de quoi exaspérer. Dans le cas présent, le dommage est moindre, puisque la scène se déroule sans doute dans la cité où résident Stephanos et sa troupe ; mais la situation devait l'empêcher d'envisager sereinement les engagements à venir.

Nous n'avons pas beaucoup d'éléments sur le planning de ces troupes, mais les papyrus que nous avons étudiés montrent d'une part qu'il y avait des festivités tout le long de l'année, et d'autre part que le délai entre l'établissement du contrat et la prestation elle-même pouvait aller de 8–10 jours à un mois voire deux – trois mois. Pour un intermittent du spectacle en Égypte romaine, le temps, c'est assurément de l'argent.

54 Bowman 1996, 239 ; Hirt Raj 2006, 219.

Ces professions impliquaient disponibilité, réactivité et mobilité, et c'est sans doute ce qui explique le recours au conseil pour arbitrer l'affaire, alors même que ce n'était pas de sa compétence : il y avait une certaine urgence, aussi Stephanos a-t-il choisi de donner une certaine publicité au litige, voyant l'impasse dans laquelle il se trouvait avec Dionysodōros.

Les danseurs étaient souvent sur les routes, ce que confirment encore deux textes. Le premier, un papyrus d'Oxythynchos du II^e siècle, mentionne un certain Kyrillos qui présente ses excuses d'être parti plus tôt que prévu, « avec le danseur », pour des raisons financières (*P. Oxy.* 3.526) :

χαίροις Καλόκαιρε,
 Κύριλλός σε προσαγο-
 ρεύω. οὐκ ἤμην ἀπα-
 θῆς ἀλόγως σε κατα-
 λείπιν, οὐ γάρ τις λαν-
 βάνων τοῦ Τῦβι τὸν
 τόκον δεκαπλο[ῦν] κε-
 φάλαιον κομίζ[ει][. ἀλλὰ]
 ἀναβένω σὺν [τῷ ὄρ-]
 χηστῆ· εἰ καὶ μὴ ἀ[νέ-]
 βενε ἐγὼ τὸν λόγον
 μου οὐ παρέβενον.
 εὐτύχει.

v

[ἀ]πό(δος) Καλοκαίρω.⁵⁵

Salutations à toi, Kalokairos, c'est Kyrillos qui s'adresse à toi. Je ne me sentais pas insensible de t'avoir quitté sans raison. Même s'il récupère dix fois les intérêts au mois de Tybi, un homme ne recouvre pas pour autant son capital. Je remonte avec le danseur. Même si on ne remontait pas, je ne contreviendrais pas à ma parole. Porte-toi bien.

Remis à Kalokairos.

Le second exemple, plus tardif (IV^e siècle), est celui d'un danseur qui est chargé de porter une lettre à son destinataire.⁵⁶ L'itinérance des artistes en faisait des messagers tout trouvés :

Φλαούιος Ἡρκουλιανὸς Ἀπλωναρίῳ
 τῇ γλυκυτάτῃ καὶ τειμιωτάτῃ(*)

55 r.4–5. l. κατα|λείπειν ; r.5–6. l. λαμ|βάνων ; r.8. l. κομίζ[ει] ; r.9. l. ἀναβαίνω ; r.10–11. l. ἀ[νέ]|βαινε ; r.12. l. παρέβαινον.

56 *P. Oxy.* 14.1676, 1–9.

πλεῖστα χαίρειν.
 ἐχάρην μεγάλως κομισάμε-
 νός σου ἐπιστολήν, δόντος
 μοι αὐτήν τοῦ μαχαιρᾶ. ἦν
 δὲ γράφεις δ[ι]ὰ Πλάτωνος
 τοῦ τοῦ ὀρχηστοῦ(*) πεπομ-
 φέναι μοι οὐκ ἐκομισάμην.⁵⁷

Flavios Herkoulanos à sa très douce et très chère Aplounarious, beaucoup de salutations. Je me suis grandement réjoui de livrer ta lettre, que le boucher m'avait donnée. En revanche, je n'ai pas livré celle que tu écris m'avoir envoyée par l'intermédiaire de Platôn le danseur.

Conclusion

Une lecture historique du *P. Daris 7*, qui replace ce texte dans le cadre plus général des activités artistiques en Égypte romaine d'après les sources papyrologiques, permet de mesurer ce que ce document a d'original mais aussi de cerner l'arrière-plan culturel et socio-économique qui sert de toile de fond à cette saynète pittoresque. Ces minutes nous donnent accès à la vie quotidienne d'un chef-lieu de nome, de ses institutions à ses festivités. Mais c'est surtout la figure de l'*orchēstopalaistodidaktos* Stephanos qui nous invite à préciser ce que nous savions jusque-là des pratiques orchestiques en Égypte romaine. Les différents parallèles que j'ai montrés permettent de reconnaître en Stephanos le responsable d'une troupe comptant plusieurs artistes (comme tendent à l'indiquer à la fois le pluriel de μισθός et le fait que cette discipline semble impliquer plusieurs artistes), ce qui m'amène aussi à étayer l'hypothèse qu'il faut comprendre que c'est un maître plutôt qu'un apprenti, que ce soit une erreur de transcription ou une évolution sémantique, la première hypothèse ayant ma préférence. Ce serait alors l'exact équivalent de l'activité exercée par Aurelius Nemesius. Même si elle est peu attestée, l'*orchestopala* est une spécialité qui semble s'être développée à l'époque impériale, aussi bien en Orient qu'en Occident. Le *P. Daris 7* nous permet désormais d'affirmer son existence en Égypte, dans un contexte qui toutefois n'est pas complètement élucidé : il s'agissait de festivités publiques à caractère religieux, mais rien ne permet d'identifier la divinité concernée, que ce soit une divinité issue du syncrétisme égypto-hellénique ou de l'Empereur romain. Beaucoup de nos parallèles datant du règne des Sévères, on serait tenté de situer ce papyrus également à cette période, mais sans certitude. De la même façon, on reste dans une certaine frustration de ne pas savoir en

57 r.2. l. τιμωτάτη ; r.8. corr. ex. ρχηστοῦ.

quoi consistait précisément l'accompagnement musical, même si l'on peut admettre comme vraisemblable qu'on y ait entendu la mélodie de l'*aulos* et le rythme des crotales. Les enjeux socio-économiques sont un peu plus clairs. On peut en effet situer cette scène dans un processus plus large qui va de l'embauche d'une troupe, par un contrat entre le commanditaire et le responsable d'une troupe dans le même nome, au règlement dû, dont peuvent faire état des reçus ou, de façon plus originale et indirecte, ces minutes d'assemblée. Ces dernières, par leur singularité puisqu'elles documentent une situation anormale, apportent une contribution significative à notre connaissance des pratiques orchestrales dans une *métropolis* d'Égypte romaine, peut-être plus précisément sévérienne.

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The Kinetic Vocabulary of Tragedy

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Abstract: Using examples from Senecan drama complemented by extracts from Euripides' *Medea* and *Bacchae*, this chapter examines the transposition of scenarios from tragedy into the alternative medium of Roman tragic pantomime. It identifies how integral elements of tragedy such as conflict and character may be realised kinetically through the body of the protagonist. Pantomime utilised a set of formal relationships between the soloist's choreography and the other semiotic components comprising the art-form. Focusing on the dancer's relationship to the sung libretto, the chapter discusses how this interaction could generate the dynamic tension necessary for a dramatic performance. In doing so, it questions the interpersonal definition of drama, and proposes that Roman pantomime dance anticipates the postdramatic in its departure from representational conventions.

Pantomime undoubtedly incorporated tragedy. As Lucian of Samosata remarks, dancers needed expert knowledge of all mythological plots, especially those of tragedy (*On the Dance* 61); funerary epigrams refer to the form as *enrhythmos tragoidia*, tragedy set to rhythm.¹ Pantomime, the most popular dance genre of the Roman empire, thus lays claim to a continuity with the history of tragedy reaching back to fifth-century Athens and as such it represents one of the manifold intersections between postclassical Greek and imperial Roman culture. However, the relationship between the two modes of performance and the precise mechanisms of translation remain obscure. This obscurity encompasses both the relationship of pantomime choreography to its libretto, and the relationship of classical tragedies to their adaptations into *fabulae salticae*. Marie-Hélène Garelli defines the libretto as a genre in its own right, distinct from the tragic or lyric poems it references; one such example, a hexameter rendition of the events in Euripides' *Alcestis*, has been discussed by Edith Hall.² H. A. Kelly proposed in 1979 that "the [...] *fabula saltica* was probably not very different from the text used by the

1 Quoted in Lada-Richards 2007, 181 n. 21.

2 Garelli 2007, 309–310: "le travail de réécriture devait obéir à des habitudes culturelles de type hellénistique [...]. On ne choisit pas nécessairement de représenter une pièce, mais la version d'un

tragic singer.”³ Ismene Lada-Richards, meanwhile, suggests that pantomime makes visible and palpable precisely those episodes which are kept offstage in classical tragedy, entailing “the transposition of tragedy’s ‘invisible’ space into the heart of pantomime’s ‘presentational’ space.”⁴ While this conjecture is persuasive, it is also possible to use the literary material at our disposal to recover the extant kinetic stimuli that fed into pantomime performances.

One such resource is the verbal rendition of movement in tragic texts. It is not clear whether the texts themselves were used verbatim as libretti for pantomime, although they are certainly attested as scenarios. I will not be arguing for their use as libretti *per se*, but rather considering the texts in their capacity as choreographic resources. If these tragedies, or versions of these tragedies, were staged as pantomime, how were they translated into choreography for a soloist? Kinaesthesia, or the sense of self-movement, is one of the most neglected senses, not only in sensory history but also in sensory studies more generally.⁵ Movement, however, is fundamental to sense-making, informing our perception of both the world around us and our own embodied selves. Dance, as a manipulation and codification of movement – operating semiotically, but also phenomenologically – concentrates and distils this sense-making mechanism. In other words, how we make sense of tragic drama results in part from the movement it contains. Many of my observations are derived from a practice-led project, *Ancient Dance in Modern Dancers*, conducted at Oxford between 2013 and 2016.⁶ This paper is not concerned with the Ancient Dance project as such, but the workshops allowed us to observe the relationships which arose between different elements of a pantomime performance, and how the professional dance practitioners who participated approached the challenge of crafting such performances.

Dialogic relationships

Pantomime dancers were celebrated (and reviled) for their uncanny ability to assume not only different characters, and different genders, but also apparently altogether different bodies. Lucian suggests that Proteus, the legendary shape-shifting god, was himself a dancer, an *orchēstēs* or *mimētikos anthrōpos* who could take on the appearance of

mythe adoptée par un auteur et susceptible de fournir un canevas intéressant pour une représentation dansée.” Cf. Hall 2008; Viccei 2019 and Viccei in this volume.

3 Kelly 1979.

4 Lada-Richards 2007, 36.

5 Foster 2008; Sklar 2008; Harrop 2010; Schlapbach 2021.

6 The methodology of this project is outlined in Slaney/Bocksberger/Foka 2018. The original investigative team comprised: myself, Sophie Bocksberger, and Caroline Potter (researchers) in collaboration with Marie-Louise Crawley, Susie Crow, Ségolène Tarte (dancers) and Malcolm Atkins (composer/musician).

fire and water, beasts and trees (*On the Dance* 19). The euhemerism is tongue-in-cheek, but the point about the dancer's morphic versatility applies to the supple, virtuosic shape-shifters of the second-century stage. Movement was of course integral, but I will examine first of all the dancer's relationship with some of the other elements of his medium – the libretto, the music, the costume, and the mask – to show how they could all function as forms of partnership or even antagonism; how their use could be dynamic, generating the tension and contradictions necessary for drama to result. I will then turn back to movement itself and analyse how two textual resources – *Medea* and the *Bacchae* – supply abundant material for realisation in this medium.

The first dialogic element we will consider is the mask. Pantomime masks were different from other theatrical masks, tragic and comic, because their features were subtler, and the mouth was closed, signifying the dancer's muteness. Unlike the exaggerated features of "character" masks, which allowed spectators to differentiate easily between the various members of a cast, pantomime masks could not afford to be identified too exclusively with one role, as the dancer often made rapid transitions from one figure to another. Pantomimes did change masks during a performance – Lucian describes a dancer setting out his equipment, including five masks (*prosōpa*), which correspond to the five "sections" or "acts" (*meroi*) of his piece. So it seems likely that each *meros*, each section, was dominated by one role, determined by the mask; but at the same time the dancer could indicate the presence of other characters in the scene. This makes sense of a remark made by Libanius in his speech *On behalf of the dancers*, that skilled dancers could play one character "through" or "via" or "by way of" another, which seems to mean that wearing a particular mask did not preclude making reference to other characters.⁷ The mask provided a keynote for the scene, anchoring it in a particular point of view, but the dancer's body could also work against it if they chose. Physical bearing, direction and quality of movement, and codified gesture could all be broken down in order for one or more components to part company temporarily from the whole, allowing the idea of a separate character to coexist. As in (modern) mime, once invisible objects or supplementary characters are designated as sharing the performance space, they remain salient until the performer indicates otherwise.

The masks used in the Ancient Dance project were neutral masks, most commonly used today in mime. They do not directly replicate ancient pantomime masks but they do share several of the same properties: they are plain, un-emotive, uninflected, designed to absorb the attitude of the body and project it into the face. They are fluid, absorbent, protean, a screen, a blank, a void – and absolutely unforgiving. A character mask, on the other hand, as in *commedia dell'arte* (or indeed in ancient tragedy) does

7 Lucian, *On the Dance* 66; Libanius, *Oratio* 64.113 (see also Webb in this volume, p. 121). Webb 2008, 83–84 notes, with reference to this passage, that a dancer could embody one character and "represent the other entirely through suggestion."

a lot of work for the performer.⁸ It sets parameters for the physical attributes of the role and its rhythms: the mask blends into the body and the body is swept up into the mask such that all actions become assimilated to the identity possessed by that specific mask. Neutral masks have no identity, other than that which is conferred upon them by the performer's movements, which makes every nuance of these movements painfully readable. Any slouch, any twitch, any slip becomes magnified and confuses the image. Pantomime masks were not strictly neutral, but their blandness and "dignity", or general "attractiveness" (*euprepeia*) allowed the dancer more latitude in characterization. Instead of being completely identified with the mask, the *pantomimos* used his mask as a semiotic device to establish the role around which the scene revolved; but he was free to move in and out of that role as required, creating a kinetic counterpoint.

Another element to consider as a form of internal collaboration or partnership is the dancer's costume.⁹ It may seem odd to separate out what could be regarded as an integral extension of the dancer's own body schema and kinaesphere, their self-image and range of sensation and movement (think of Merleau-Ponty and the blind man's cane), but as we found when our dancers began working with the full potential of the pallium or cape, the cloth assumed an independent role of its own.¹⁰ Another of our initial assumptions was challenged, here. At first, participants tended to use the scarves we provided as optional props to be handled and discarded, leaving their bodies and limbs exposed and free to move. But then at a workshop in 2015, one dancer – Ilario Santoro – draped himself in all the leftover fabric, and it was an absolute revelation. Everything made sense: the repeated ancient comparisons of pantomime dancers to (draped) sculpture; how a body swathed in cloth could still be articulate, while being itself concealed; and indeed how the cloth itself, like a marionette, could become narrative material animated by the dancer within.¹¹ The effect was otherworldly. Masked *and veiled*, the *pantomimos* suddenly became entirely plastic, entirely malleable, available for roles whose shapes might exceed the constraints of the anthropomorphic condition.

The relationship between the dancer and the cloth, however, is one of doubleness. Even more than the mask, the pallium creates a discrepancy between the dancer's proprioceptive self – that is, their internal sensorimotor grasp of their own position and motion – and the visual image presented by their costumed exterior, which they must learn to manipulate in order to achieve the desired effects. This concept of the dancer's "two bodies" is not new to dance theory, and pertains to any dance genre whose successful execution is defined by its conformity to visual schema (not all genres of dance assume this, but pantomime would appear to be one of them). Through practice and feedback, the skilled artist comes to know how the internal kinaesthetic sensations he

8 Wiles 2007; cf. Petrides 2013.

9 Wyles 2008; Cooper Albright 2010.

10 Merleau-Ponty 2012, 144–145.

11 For a discussion of the draped dancing body, in particular Loïe Fuller, see Cooper Albright 2010.

experiences relate to the external images being transmitted to the audience. In a genre such as ballet or modern mime, the visible matter to be manipulated – the marionette-self, if you like – consists of limbs and torso, but pantomime involves instead this floating shell of cloth, and part of the dancer's craft is knowing how to move inside it, how to make it move effectively.

The idea of counterpoint brings us to the next of pantomime's dialogic relationships: the dancer and music. This could alternatively be framed as the dancer and the musician or musicians (we'll come to the singer or singers presently). Various instrumentalists are attested as accompanying pantomime, but most notably the *aulētēs* or flute-player.¹² Both the artistic relationship between these two individuals and the aesthetic relationship between the stream of music and the stream of dance should be considered as interactive and collaborative. In one phase of the Ancient Dance project, we were fortunate to work with an existing company comprising two dancers and a musician. We were able to observe their working methods and their approach to composition. It should be stressed that this was altogether different from other phases of the project in which we used recorded music that had been commissioned in advance. The musician took an active role in shaping the pieces. He was responsible for advance preparation of musical motifs which were then used as a basis for kinetic improvisation. As each episode was developed and refined, he would continue to offer suggestions, musically or verbally. Finally, in performance, he and the dancers were involved in a constant live feedback loop, varying the tempo, duration, or dynamics of the piece as it progressed from moment to moment. While we cannot say whether precisely the same relationship pertained between the *pantomimos* and the *aulētēs*, their performances certainly involved a comparable real-time collaboration. One anecdote from Lucian does describe a dancer performing unaccompanied, but this is singled out as unusual (*On the Dance* 64). The perfect synchronization of sound and motion – both of them embodied, both simultaneously visible and audible – is one of the many causes of “wonder” for the audiences of ancient pantomime (Aristaenetus 1.26).

The other characteristic accompaniment to the dance was percussion, specifically the *scabellum* or “clacker”, a type of castanet attached to the musician's foot and stamped rhythmically against the hard surface of the stage. The music itself thus contained an internal tension, the mellifluous oboe-like wail of the *aulos* contrasting with the metallic clatter of the *scabellum*. The dancer has the choice of whether he cleaves to the sinuous flute or staccato percussion, or to neither, preferring to tell a different aspect of the story with his body while agitation and lyricism are both sustained as separate tracks in the musical line.

Sound, both libretto and music, creates the space in which the dance occurs. Focused as we were on reimagining choreography, we originally conceived of the dance as the

12 The *aulos* is a reed instrument, closer to the oboe, but “flute” is a conventional translation.

sole responsibility of the dancer, but working with a musician as part of the team showed us to have overestimated the role of the kinetic in pantomime's overall aesthetic experience. An effective dance did not have to involve convoluted steps or acrobatic maneuvers; simple gestures, repetitions, slowness, and even stillness could all work evocatively in conjunction with the music (including the sung libretto, which I will be separating somewhat artificially from the general soundscape). By "effective", I mean that the dance both possessed narrative clarity and was also emotionally moving. The music provided the space with its atmosphere or ambience, of which the dancer became the focus. Like a lightning rod, he or she conducted the sound, inescapably becoming its carrier irrespective of how closely the movement corresponded with variations in the sonic environment. Both could of course exist independently, but in combination each enhances the other. The performance becomes richer as a dialogue, exploiting divergences such as anticipation and delay, friction and resistance, recall, suspension, and sudden simultaneity in a way that is only possible when two or more sensory channels are open.

The dancer's relationship with the libretto affords similar possibilities. There are no extant examples of texts unequivocally identified as pantomime libretti, but we know that while the dancer performed, a chorus or a *cantor* sung alongside. Ovid refers to his *carmina* being "danced in the public theatres"; Lucan and Statius are both attested as having composed libretti.¹³ The frontispiece to Nicholas Treveth's 1315 commentary on Seneca's *Hercules Furens* depicts the poet reciting from a *pulpitum* surrounded by *mimes* performing the corresponding gestures.¹⁴ But the composition practice involved is unclear: to what extent was it collaborative? Were these commissions, or found-texts? Were they adapted or abridged? Because of the way the libretti are described, however, as material to *be danced*, we can be fairly sure that the text preceded the choreography, as opposed to evolving organically alongside, or the poems coming afterwards. In terms of how the *pantomimos* interacted with his libretto, it was received as a verbal script, either spoken or written, prior to the development of its choreographic content.

The options for movement around a poem are manifold, if not infinite. It can be more or less illustrative, more or less stylized, more or less abstract; broad-brush thematic, or microscopically detailed. This is intermedial translation, and as with all translations, the purpose of the target text is key.¹⁵ Pantomime is narrative; it is communicative; its characters must be clearly defined and their emotions or *pathoi* clearly expressed. One objective during the Ancient Dance project was to observe how this process of translation was accomplished: what did the source-text afford? What decisions were reached

13 Ovid, *Tristia* 2.519; for Lucan, see the late antique *Life of Lucan* attributed to Vacca (p. 78, 16 in Reifferscheid 1860); for Statius, see Juvenal, *Satires* 7.82–90.

14 Treveti 1959.

15 Applicable here is Bruce R. Smith's study of translating Shakespeare sonnets into sign language, which has its own syntactic structure and poetics, and does not seek to correspond word for word (Smith 2010). See also Gianvittorio-Ungar/Schlapbach 2021.

pertaining to movement choices, how did they arise, how and why were other possibilities rejected? And how did participants articulate their own process in reflection?

We had anticipated a closer sequential correspondence between lyrics and choreography than tended to emerge. The shorthand term we used for this was “telescoping”: that is, passages of text collapsed around the single keyword that had stood out or emerged as a stimulus. These words became contact points, little portals or bottlenecks connecting the narrative stream of the text, its forward momentum and imperative of progress, to the more figurative dilations available to the dancer, who could expand on ideas such as “envy”, “melting”, “flight”, “starvation”. The relationship was lateral, not linear; rather than acting out the full verbal content of each phrase, the dancer could use that time to explore the physical ramifications of a given idea. An alternative form of temporal distortion was created by recalling and repeating prior actions in order to juxtapose them with a different passage of text, or enacting the future consequences of the scene described (for instance, cradling a baby as the libretto related the rape of *The-tis*). Pantomime thus makes it possible for two points in the same character’s timeline to coexist, one verbally, one visually. Pathos, nostalgia, suspense, irony, and trauma, among other relationships, can all be represented in this way. The result is a type of intertextuality, creating a retrospective or proleptic cross-reference working against the grain of the verbal narrative. The dancer can complement the libretto without delivering precise correspondence, and this rhythm of divergence and return, digression and intersection, is another strain of cross-modal dialogue.

Pantomime is therefore more than simply a solo performance. It consists of an array of dialogic relationships, between the body and the costume; the body and the mask; the music and the choreography; the choreography and the libretto. Drama is represented in pantomime not by points of view personified, but rather by one body moving in conjunction with other media.

Translating *Medea* into *saltatio*

The remainder of this essay focuses on one of these relationships in more detail: that of verbal text and choreography. The extant texts of Greek and Roman tragedy supply abundant kinetic material, which I will illustrate primarily with reference to Seneca’s *Medea* and Euripides’ *Bacchae*. *Medea* is mentioned twice by Lucian as a pantomime subject. Additionally, correspondences have been noted between Senecan passages such as this one, in which one character provides commentary on the movements of another, and the pantomime convention of concurrent narration:¹⁶

16 These correspondences have been discussed by Zimmermann 2008 and in greater detail by Zanobi 2014.

*Incerta qualis entheos gressus tulit
cum iam recepto maenas insanit deo
Pindi nivalis vertice aut Nysae iugis,
talis recursat huc et huc motu efferro,
furoris ore signa lymphati gerens.
Flammata facies, spiritum ex alto citat.
Proclamat, oculos uberi fletu rigat,
renidet. Omnis specimen affectus capit.
Haeret minatur aestuat queritur gemit.*

Like a maenad possessed, taking tottering steps
as she raves with the onset of the god
on the snowy heights of Pindus or the ridge of Nysa,
she plunges here and there with wild movements
and the signs of frenzied madness in her looks.
Her face is flaming, she draws deep breaths,
she cries out, bathes her eyes in flowing tears,
and smiles again. All kinds of emotions grip her.
She pauses, threatens, burns, laments, groans (382–390, translation mine).

To reiterate, although these texts may have been adapted *en route* to their adoption as libretti, they nevertheless provide an existing lexicon or repertoire of movement suitable for retention by the dancer, whatever its precise kinetic translation. The classic texts of Attic tragedy continued to be performed into late antiquity alongside *fabulae salticae* and tragedies written in Latin, and of course they continued to be read and circulated widely.¹⁷ In Rome itself, as well as in the Greek-speaking Eastern empire, it therefore makes sense to look to canonical Greek as well as Latin authors when seeking pantomime material.

Aside from basic travelling actions such as come/go, arrive/depart, and slightly more uncommon but still quite general terms implying movement such as *agō*, *pempō*, *choreuō*, *komizō*, Euripides' *Medea* contains several repeated verbs of motion. Their recurrence forms a number of kinetic themes, and these provide choreographic information for a dancer wishing to use them as a translational framework. Not surprisingly, the play's movement vocabulary is dominated by references to expulsion and exile.¹⁸ These are balanced, however, by intimations of physical contact and closeness:

17 Jones 1993; for more recent discussion of the postclassical reception of Greek tragedy see e.g. the essays collected in Liapis/Petrides 2018.

18 σε γαίης τερμόνων ἔξω βάλω, "I cast you beyond the borders of this land" (276); ἀλλ' ἔξελας με κοῦδὲν αἰδέσῃ λιτάς;, "But would you drive me out, a suppliant, without shame?" (326); γῆς ἔκβαλόντι, "throwing me out of the land" (373); ἦν δ' ἔξελαύνη ξυφορά μ' ἀμήχανος, "If some unforeseen event should force me out" (392); φυγάς δὲ χώρας ἄτιμος ἐλαύνη, "An exile, you are driven dishonoured from the land" (438); λόγων ματαίων οὔνεκ' ἐκπεσῆ χθονός, "Due to your mad talk

grasping, clutching, touching, embracing, kissing, and (twice) anointing (Aphrodite's arrows, and the poisoned gifts). Another action which is textually specified again and again is supplication: Medea kneels before Creon, Jason has often begged Medea for help (496–497), the Chorus beg her to be merciful (853–854), and the children supplicate the princess (971). Gestures indicating supplication are well-known: touching the benefactor's knees or chin, or stretching out the arms imploringly (as often happens to the victims of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*).

As commentators have noted, Medea tends to describe her progress towards infanticide in terms of a difficult road, a sea voyage, or a race, as just prior to killing the children: (ἄγ', ὦ τάλαινα χεῖρ ἐμή, λαβὲ ξίφος, λάβ', ἔρπε πρὸς βαλβίδα λυπηρὰν βίου, "Come on, wretched hand, take up the sword. / Take it, inch towards the painful finishing line of your life", 1244–1245).¹⁹ Here, a literal action is specified, and the body part performing it – the hand takes up the sword – but also, in a form of physical apposition, the rather unusual and ambiguous metaphor of an athlete approaching the starting/finishing line: not rapidly, like the runner in 1182 ff, but *herpe*: she creeps, or even crawls with reptilian slowness. Two other specific movements recur: falling and turning. 'Where can you turn?' the chorus ask (ποῖ ποτε τρέψη, 358), later echoed by Medea herself (νῦν ποῖ τράπωμαι, 'Now where will I turn?' 502).²⁰ The fateful pine tree falls (πεσεῖν) on Pelion (3–4); the princess falls (πίτνει) as Medea's poison takes hold (1195); Ino falls (πίτνει) from the cliff (1286).²¹ As well as creating verbal and sonic patterns, these repetitions also determine the play's kinetic texture. A dancer may of course decide to depart completely from this framework, but having observed in practice how dancers tended to break down a poetic source-text, it was verbs of motion that often (not always, but often) provided the entry points, the bottlenecks or keyholes, and following these thematic threads is certainly one way of pursuing choreographic dialogue.

One passage which exhibits a particularly high concentration of verbs of motion is the death of the princess as related by the messenger (1159–1194). The 'embroidered robe' (πέπλους ποικίλους) in which she dresses herself bears an easy correspondence to the dancer's pallium. She then paces gracefully through the palace halls – the chorus use an identical phrase of Aphrodite at 830, βαίνοντες ἀβρῶς – repeatedly admiring her outstretched ankles. When the poison takes effect, she staggers backwards (πάλιν χωρεῖ, 1168–1169), she is trembling (τρέμουσα, 1169), she falls to the ground (πεσεῖν, 1170). As she lies unconscious, the palace around her fills with frantic activity, realized as the echo

you are cast out of the land" (450); τοιγὰρ ἐκπεσῆ χθονός, "therefore you are cast out of the land" (458); ὡς μήτ' ἀχρήμων σὺν τέκνοισιν ἐκπέσῃς, "so you aren't cast out along with your children" (461); εἰ φεύξομαι γε γαῖαν ἐκβεβλημένην, "If I go into exile, having been thrown out" (512).

19 Other examples include 257, 277–278, 442 and 523–524.

20 See also 30, 246, 411, 415, 1148.

21 See also 225, 1205, 1265.

of clattering feet (πυκνοῖσιν ἐκτύπει δραμήμασιν, 1180); when she comes to her senses, and the crown is burning, she tries violently to shake it off (σείουσα χαιτήν κρᾶτά τ' ἄλλοτ' ἄλλοσε, / ῥίψαι θέλουσα στέφανον, 1190–1191), but the more she tosses her head, the more fiercely it burns. This scene is ideal for adaptation as pantomime. Whereas its Attic Greek delivery took place via messenger, *orchēsis* as a medium afforded a different mode of presentation; and what this scene afforded the maker of *orchēsis* was a ready-made sequence of action.²²

Seneca's *Medea* does not include the messenger-speech at all, but what it does include are the commentary passages previously mentioned, and a good deal more verbs of motion overall. For the purpose of this essay, however, I will focus just on one (typically and uniquely Senecan) passage. In place of Euripides' messenger, Seneca's Act 4 consists entirely of the spell cast by Medea in order to enchant her gifts to Creusa. Calling on the goddess Hecate, she performs a blood sacrifice:

*Tibi sanguineo
caespite sacrum sollemne damus.
Tibi de medio rapta sepulcro
fax nocturnos sustulit ignes,
tibi mota caput
flexa voces cervice dedi.
Tibi funereo de more iacens
passos cingit vitta capillos.
Tibi iactatur
tristis Stygia ramus ab unda.
Tibi nudato pectore maenas
sacro feriam brachia cultro.
Manet noster sanguis ad aras:
assuesce, manus, stringere ferrum
carosque pati posse cruores –
sacrum laticem percussa dedi.*

For you [Hecate], on the bloody
mound, I dedicate the customary rite.
For you, stolen from deep in the tomb,
a torch has raised nocturnal fire;
for you, tossing my head,
neck thrown back, I have given voice.
For you, as for a funeral, hanging down,

22 This is in line with Lada-Richard's idea, referred to above, that pantomime made tragedy's "invisible" space visible. The KCL Greek Play in 2018 (directed by Holly Smith) accompanied the messenger-speech with a dancer enacting the death of the princess.

a headband encircles my loose hair.
 For you is shaken
 a grim wand from the Stygian wave.
 For you, bare-breasted like a maenad
 I strike my arms with the sacred knife.
 My blood will drip onto the altar:
 get used to drawing the blade, my hand,
 and spilling your own dear blood –
 now struck, I have offered the sacred fluid.
 (Seneca, *Medea* 797–811, trans. mine.)

This appears to happen in real time. Note the tenses: I will take the knife to my arm; ac-
custom yourself (imperatively) to drawing the blade, then (subsequently) to suffering
 the loss of your own blood; and finally I have given the sacred fluid. This commentary
 is slightly different from that of the Nurse, quoted above, as it is supposedly spoken by
 Medea herself.

It is of course impossible to say whether Senecan tragedy did provide the basis for
 pantomime libretti, but if we are seeking for points of contact between dramatic texts
 and their realization in dance, scenes such as this suggest at least the rudiments of a
 translation practice. However they were dialogically approached, these pre-existing
 lexicons of movement necessarily confronted in some respect the pantomime artist
 choreographing tragedy for the Roman stage. They formed a horizon of kinetic expect-
 ation, requiring some form of address or accommodation: part of the cultural baggage
 which pantomime negotiated, part of the aesthetic medium which it transformed.

Translating *Bacchae* into *saltatio*

Euripides' *Bacchae* is a text full of vivid references to movement. We know that the
 scenario at any rate was staged as pantomime, as this Augustan epigram attests:

We seemed to see Bacchus himself, when old Tiresias
 led the bacchantes in a newfangled dance-craze;
 and the dancing steps of Cadmus; and from the forest
 the messenger who had tracked the bacchic revellers;
 and rejoicing in the blood of her son, Agave
 gone mad. Oh, the man's acting is divine!
Planudean Anthology 289 (trans. mine)

According to Juvenal, Statius wrote an *Agave* which was “sold” (or “prostituted”) for
 pantomime performance; this may have been itself a libretto, or a scripted tragedy re-
 quiring more or less adaptation, but judging from its title it evidently covered similar

subject matter. Pentheus is also mentioned in Lucian's catalogue as a role with which dancers should be familiar (*On the Dance* 41). So while it did not necessarily have to be Euripides' text which entered any given choreographic dialogue, Euripides does serve as an extant example of the soundtracks available to be co-opted as poetic counterpoint. As such, we can again focus on the lexicon of movement already present in the text to suggest some possible points of kinetic contact.

Movement is everywhere in the *Bacchae*. Its first word is *hēkō*, "I have arrived/come", and the maenads themselves are constantly, reflexively, running and dancing, as well as traversing geographical space (although this type of reported movement implies a different choreographic relationship). Pentheus disguises himself through gendered gesture, assuming the 'stance' (*estantai*) of the women and practicing 'shaking my head back and forth like a bacchant' (προσειὼν αὐτὸν ἀνασειὼν τ' ἐγὼ / καὶ βακχιάζων, 930–931); Dionysus instructs him to grip the thyrsus in his right hand while at the same time raising his right foot (943–944). The central event of the play is an earthquake (585–603). Movement and turmoil is the very condition of the dionysiac; as the maenads "set their thyrsos in motion" in the Bacchic rites (*ekinoun thyrsos*), calling on the god, "the whole mountain reveled along with them, and nothing remained unmoved by their running" (726–727).

As in *Medea*, the greatest concentration of verbs of motion is found in the messenger speeches, followed by the choruses. I will close by examining two passages, Euripides' second messenger speech (*Bacchae* 1043–1152) and the corresponding scene in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in terms of their kinetic affordances. Affordance is a helpful way of articulating what poetic texts present to a choreographer. More commonly applied to object-perception, this theory refers to the way in which objects are understood not just semantically – this is a chair, a cup, a Bacchic thyrsus – but in their capacity as prompts to action: this configuration of matter affords sitting, or drinking, or brandishing drunkenly in time with my right foot. I propose that when approached as choreographic stimuli, dramatic texts functioned in the same way: their language afforded a certain range of responses that may be lateral, but were not unlimited. We could also compare here Clive Scott's theory of translation as a phenomenological practice involving kinaesthetic response to a source-text. Scott argues that translation should aim to capture and render the psychosomatic effect of a source-text on the reader; he writes that "translation is a mode of reading which gives textual substance to reader-response ... [It] is about registering the text in my body, and conversely, inscribing in text my bodily responses."²³

The first few verbs of motion in Euripides' messenger-speech pertain to travelling, and when first discovered, the maenads are engaged in sedentary pursuits (weaving garlands and singing). Then comes Dionysus' superhuman feat of bending down the pine-

tree – *katēgen*, *ēgen*, *ēgen*, the messenger emphasizes – which the god makes into a circle (*kuklouto*), and “draws round on a curving course to form the shape of a wheel” (1067). *Ekampten es gēn*, he doubled it up to the earth (1069). It can be observed that some of the same expressions are used of pantomime choreography. Libanius and Lucian both use the term *kampō* to describe the contortion of a dancer bending double (a word elsewhere applied to the motion of a caterpillar), and Libanius describes a young dancer being trained to touch his head to his heels and roll like a wheel or a hoop. Libanius likewise uses the expression *periphora* to delineate some form of turning or spinning, a common step in pantomime to judge from its frequent occurrence in the literature. Euripides’ *katēgen*, *ēgen*, *ēgen* might well become the acrobatic feat of the slow *huptiasmos* or backbend, attested in Lucian and Nonnus.²⁴ When Dionysus exposes Pentheus, there is a moment of total silence, and by implication, total stillness. The maenads rise to their feet as one (*estēthen orthai*). Then they charge. Ruth Webb has shown that the contrast of held pose and rapid movement was a rhythm integral to pantomime.²⁵

We can supplement the maenads’ attack on Pentheus with its treatment in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, also a text with strong links to pantomime (Appendix).²⁶ The Ancient Dance project used this text in a 2016 workshop with Lausanne-based dance company Le Marchepied. Dancers participated in a one-day workshop during which they were introduced for the first time to the principles of ancient *orchēsis* then worked individually to develop their own interpretations of this piece and another *Metamorphoses* excerpt, the rape of Thetis. In these passages, we are seeking words which afford movements or qualities of movement. Most (but not all) of the possibilities highlighted are verbs or participles; some, such as *saucius*, “wounded”, and *citius*, “faster”, suggest attitude or rhythm. If following the text, the dancer adopts a distinct sequence of roles: Pentheus, foaming and stamping like a war-horse when the trumpet sounds; then Agave on her *insano cursu*, embodying both herself and her sisters – the verb *adeste* is important, here, as she makes them all present or manifest for the audience – with verbs of rapid motion such as *errant*, *ruit*, *coeunt*, *sequuntur*, and their shared characteristic of frenzy, *furens*. Then Pentheus, again, trembling (*trepidum*, twice) and wounded, pleading for his life with the typical Ovidian gesture of a supplicating hand. It is unlikely that the *sparagmos* itself is represented kinetically as its vivid verbal rendition would make this redundant, but the text gives Agave a clear instruction in lines 723–725: *collaque iactavit movitque per aera crinem*, her braids whipping through the air as she tosses her head in recognizably bacchic style, and then the fingers knotted in Pentheus’ hair – *complexa* – as she strikes a triumphant pose with his decapitated head held high.

Two points may be extracted here applicable to adapting tragedy for pantomime. One is the response of Pentheus to the sounds that syntactically speaking strike the air

24 Libanius, *or.* 64.104; Lucian, *On the Dance* 71, and Nonnus, *Dion.* 19.277–282.

25 Webb 2008, 50.

26 These links have been explored in particular by Ingleheart 2008; Lada-Richards 2013; Garelli 2013.

(*ictus* [...] *aether*), but as a resource for performance are felt as a body-blow by Pentheus himself. Although figurative in the narrative context, *perstat* also offers a useful choreographic starting point of immobility in contrast to the wild running of Agave and company. With Pentheus rooted to the spot, the ululating cries of the bacchants shiver up and down the scale, possibly accompanied in the musical soundtrack itself by the actual bellow of a war-trumpet. His body convulses as if he wants to rear and plunge (*ut fremit acer equus*) but is restrained by iron discipline even in this fever of *ira* and lust for battle. *Ictus*, struck by sound, *movit*, this is how he moves.

The other important point relates to Agave summoning her sisters (*adeste sorores*). In Senecan tragedy, the verb *adesse*, usually delivered as an imperative, occurs regularly in scenes of invocation, of which there are several in the Senecan corpus. *Ades invocata, iam fave votis, dea*, Phaedra's Nurse calls on the goddess Diana to support her appeal to Hippolytus (*Phaedra* 423). Vocal summoning – *invocata* – leads to physical (that is, choreographic) manifestation (*ades*). It could be argued that this presence is imaginary, if the Senecan text is being delivered as *recitatio*, and the verbal utterance simply conjures an ekphrastic image *ante oculos*, in the mind's eye of those listening. However, if we accept that *recitatio* coexisted with tragic pantomime as options for performing Seneca, the use of the *invocare/adesse* formula as a choreographic prompt is not incompatible with its use as ekphrasis. Where the libretto contains the instruction *adeste*, we may understand this to signify the transition to a corresponding representation by the dancer.

The clearest example occurs in the prologue to *Hercules Furens*. Juno summons (*revocabo*, 92) personifications such as Rage and Madness from the Underworld: *adsint ab imo Tartari fundo excitare / Eumenides, ignem flammearum spargant comae, / viperea saevae verbera incutiant manus* (86–87). Called up by the singer, the Furies arrive onstage in the form of the actions performed by the dancer who shakes fire from her hair and brandishes serpents in each hand. Indeed, Juno's subsequent desire to be possessed herself by these demonic forces (*me me sorores, mente deiecta mea versate primum*, 110–111) reinforces the impression of multiple personae occupying a single body.

We find a similar application of the same relationship in the invocation-scenes of Seneca's *Medea*. Medea likewise opens the play by summoning the Furies: *nunc, nunc adeste, sceleris ultrices deae* (13), in this case tangled (*squalidae*, 14) with snakes and clinging to torches (*amplexae*, 15): *adeste*, she repeats (16), calling on them with her 'inauspicious voice' (*voce non fausta*, 12). Later, during the *tour-de-force* spell-casting scene, it is mainly via the Nutrix that the effect of Medea's voice is reported, again pairing the powerful *vox* with the various presences it commands. *Tracta magicis cantibus*, drawn by her magical chants, *squamifera turba adest* (684–685), the snakes arrive; even more pithily, the mythical Python *adsit ad cantus meos* (699). This proximity of invocation and presence may be simply a structure derived from religious and magical formulae.²⁷ However,

27 On the ritual form of Medea's invocation see Boyle 2014 *ad loc.*; Costa 1989 *ad loc.*

if these texts were used as a resource for pantomime performances, it also has another function: I believe it indicates points where the dancer is invited to respond choreographically to a textual offer. Medea herself, like Phaedra's Nurse, summons the goddess Diana: *Nunc meis vocata sacris, noctium sidus, veni*, the singer compels her (750), and a few lines later again the familiar verb returns to close the digressive passage: *adesse sacris tempus est, Phoebe, tuis* (770).

I have lingered on this language because I believe it expresses a principle important to the formulation of pantomimic choreography. Pantomime involves a translation of the verbal or sonic into the kinetic. Like Pentheus feeling the *ictus* of the air that is moved by the cries of the bacchantes, the dancer responds in performance to the *cantor's* vocalization. In rehearsal, or in development, the ways in which music, libretto, and movement interact depend in large part upon the way the chosen text is manipulated. Nevertheless, in likely pantomime source-texts such as Senecan tragedy and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, we can identify instances where such interaction appears to be indicated.

If there are two words which I hope will be retained from this essay, they are "counterpoint" and "affordance". Tragic text may be understood in this light as a tissue of affordances or prompts to movement. I have been concentrating somewhat artificially on verbs of motion as kinetic stimuli. They were certainly not the only keyholes which our participants in the Ancient Dance Project discovered, but the principle of telescoping operated throughout as the backbone of kinaesthetic reception. And kinaesthetic reception is precisely how pantomime artists in antiquity were engaging with the poetic texts that formed their libretti. There has been some discussion recently around ideas of re-performance, and diachronically speaking, pantomime did re-perform Attic tragedy; but I would prefer to approach these performances as direct physical translations, across media and material, of the movement encoded in dramatic speech.²⁸ Kinaesthesia, as I mentioned earlier, is the most neglected of the senses, but vital to apprehending the creative processes involved in tragic pantomime as it came to dominate the stages of the Roman empire.

Appendix: Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 3.669–729

Highlighted text provides kinetic information.

*Perstat Echionides. Nec iam iubet ire, sed ipse
vadit, ubi electus facienda ad sacra Cithaeron
cantibus et clara bacchantum voce sonabat.*

28 On reperformance in general, see Hunter/Uhlig 2017; Lamari 2017; on pantomime as reperformance, see Webb 2017.

Ut **fremit** acer equus, cum bellicus aere canoro
 signa dedit tubicen, **pugnaeque adsumit amorem**,
 Penthea sic **ictus** longis ululatus aether
movit, et audito clamore **recanduit ira**.
 Monte fere medio est, cingentibus ultima silvis,
 purus ab arboribus, spectabilis undique campus.
 Hic oculis illum cernentem sacra profanis
 prima videt, prima est **insano concita cursu**,
 prima suum misso **violavit** Penthea thyrsos
 mater.

"Io, geminae" clamavit "**adeste** sorores!
 ille aper, in nostris **errat** qui maximus agris,
 ille mihi **feriendus** aper." **Ruit** omnis in unum
 turba **furens**; cunctae **coeunt** trepidumque **sequuntur**,
 iam **trepidum**, iam verba minus violenta loquentem,
 iam se **damnantem**, iam se peccasse **fatentem**.
Saucius ille tamen "fer opem, matertera" dixit
 "Autonoe! moveant animos Actaeonis umbrae."
 Illa, quis Actaeon, nescit **dextramque precantis**
abstulit: Inoo **lacerata** est altera **raptu**.
 Non habet infelix quae matri brachia tendat,
trunca sed ostendens deiectis vulnera membris
 "adspice, mater!" ait.

Visis **ululavit** Agaue
 collaque **iactavit movitque** per aera crinem
avulsumque caput digitis **complexa** cruentis
 clamat "io comites, opus haec victoria nostr' est!"
 Non **citius** frondes autumnis frigore tactas
 iamque male haerentes alta **rapit** arbore ventus,
 quam sunt membra viri manibus **direpta** nefandis.

The son of Echion persisted. He no longer ordered others to go,
 but went himself to Mt Cithaeron, where the followers of the god
 performed their rites and raised their voices in Bacchic singing.
 Like a war-horse foams at the mouth with desire for battle
 when the war-trumpet sounds the advance with its sonorous bronze,
 so Pentheus was struck by the ululations that made the air vibrate,
 and as he heard their cries his rage burned hot again.
 In the heart of the mountains, on a peak surrounded by forest
 but clear of trees, visible from everywhere, is a field.
 Here he came to lay profane eyes on the sacred rites.

The first to see him, the first to halt her wild running,
the first to strike Pentheus with her rod like a spear ...
... was his mother.

“Hey, sisters,” she shouted, “come here, my sisters!
This huge boar, that has been causing havoc in our fields –
I have to destroy him!” They came running as one,
the furious crowd; they all came together and pursued him, terrified,
– oh, terrified *now*, now speaking words less violent,
now cursing himself and admitting that he had done wrong.
Wounded, he still said, “Oh, help me, Aunt
Autonoe! Be moved by the spirit of Actaeon.”
She knew nothing of Actaeon, and as he held out his hand to her
she ripped it off: Ino got the other one.
The poor man had no arms left to extend to his mother,
but thrust his maimed torso at her, stripped of limbs.
“Look, Mother!” he said.

Agave howled exultantly at the sight
and tossed her head, and whipped her hair,
and tore off his head, gripping it in blooded fingers.
“Hey, girls,” she cried, “This is a great victory for us!”
Autumn leaves, touched by the frost and unable to cling
to the tall tree, are not more quickly scattered by the wind
than the limbs of that man were dismembered by terrible hands.

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Performative Aspects of the Pantomime and Performative Spaces *Alcestis Barcinonensis and Archeological Sites*

RAFFAELLA VICCEI

Abstract: The *Alcestis Barcinonensis*' 122 lines of Latin hexameter feature performative details that are linked to the Roman pantomime. This chapter presents and discusses these details, expanding our knowledge of Roman dance practices. The chapter also takes archaeological evidence into account, and identifies and analyzes some possible performative spaces where imperial audiences could have enjoyed the dancing and acting (*orchēsis* and *hypokrisis*), as well as the figures, dispositions, and emotions (*schēmata*, *ēthē*, and *pathē*) of *Alcestis*' characters. This peculiar text was performed in Italy four times between 1999 and 2018, and two of these performances were held at the Roman theatres of *Faesulae* (2003) and *Mediolanum* (2009): the chapter also examines these archaeological sites and their contemporary use for the reperformance of *Alcestis*, thus enhancing our understanding of this dramatic text as well as of the type of sites where it could have been performed, thus enhancing our understanding of this dramatic text as well as of the type of sites where it could have been performed.

Alcestis Barcinonensis

Several works on *Alcestis* were performed between the *skēnē* and the orchestra of classical Greek theatres, but Euripides's *Alkestis* (first performed at Athens' Theatre of Dionysus in 438 BCE) was the point of reference for the recovery and reworking of this theatrical myth in Greek and Latin literature and remains so in modern and contemporary literature, art, music, and dance – for Christoph W. Gluck's melodrama *Alceste* no less than for Martha Graham's *Alcestis*, a *tanztheater* staged in New York in 1960.¹

One late antique Latin hexameter poem, however, stands out in this long and multifaceted tradition, highlighting the substantial contribution of the imperial period

1 Viccei 2020, 7–16, 119.

and the Latin language to the ancient theatrical and orchestric traditions, right down to the Christian era:² the anonymous *Carmen de Alcestide*, better known as *Alcestis Barcinonensis*. Like many variations of this myth, the *Alcestis Barcinonensis* presents similarities and differences with, and hybridization of, Euripides' tragedy, of which the Anonymous probably had direct and complete knowledge.³ Some crucial differences, however, highlight the poem's suitability as a pantomime libretto, as I will briefly illustrate here.

The character of Death, who, in Euripides, first appears in the prologue, does not appear at all in *Alcestis*, although here too death is something permanent and decisive. Heracles, the hero-god who in Euripides brings Alcestis back to life, is also absent. Admetus, an active and almost omnipresent character in Euripides, is mainly a mute or weeping figure in *Alcestis*. Beginning in line 32, he gives way to his father, his mother (barely mentioned in Euripides) and above all his bride, who undisputedly dominates the second half of the *Carmen* (*Alc. Barcin.* 72–122). The characters' functions are also different. The role of the Poet – an original creation of the anonymous writer, and a hybrid between the chorus and the tragic messenger – stands out from the rest. The hybridization also affects Alcestis, who maintains various Euripidean features but also presents features that make her a Roman female character, similar to other, previous renditions of Alcestis in Latin literature, as well as to the *matronae* of funeral epigraphy:⁴ *univira, fidelis, pia*, Alcestis is a woman with *muliebris audacia*, who chooses *devotio* and becomes an extraordinary example of wife and mother.

Like in Euripides' tragedy, in *Alcestis* there is a composite and polyphonic representation of many different points of view on death. However, the only death that actually occurs is Alcestis'. Thanks to her noble *ethos*, her death becomes a means of obtaining eternal glory, and can thus be defeated – or at least this is what Alcestis is longing for when, talking to Admetus, she envisions herself as an *umbra rediens* (*Alc. Barcin.* 90). Crucially, Alcestis' last night of life not only manifests in words and weeping: it also appears through the transformation of the body. The anonymous writer focuses on the metamorphosis of precise parts of Alcestis' body, especially her hands and feet, which takes place shortly before her death (*Alc. Barcin.* 116–122). This phenomenon, so meaningful for the performativity of *Alcestis*, marks the end of the similarities between Euripides and Anonymous. This is rendered even clearer in the epilogue, when the Latin Alcestis is not brought back from Hades by Heracles. Anonymous' Alcestis thus lives twice only in a poetical and ritual dimension (*Alc. Barcin.* 76–77: *si morior, laus magna mei; post funera nostra / non ero, sed factum totis narrabitur annis*, "If I die, great praise will be bestowed on me; after my funeral / I will no longer be, but my deed will be narrated every year").

2 Viccei 2020, 15.

3 Viccei 2020, 16–19; see *ibid.* Chapter II, especially commentary and notes.

4 Viccei 2020, 12–15.

This rewriting of *Alcestis* remained unknown until the 1950s, when the papyrologist Ramon Roca-Puig purchased four papyrus sheets in Cairo for Barcelona's *Fundacion San Lucas Evangelista*. These were part of a Latin and Greek *Codex Miscellaneus* in which the *Carmen de Alcestide* had been fully transcribed. The sheets were added to the *Papyri Barcinonenses* collection, donated to Montserrat Abbey and named *P. Monts. Roca (Papyri Montserratenses Roca)*.

Since its discovery, the *Alcestis Barcinonensis* has been the subject of many studies. Although there are still issues and problems to be solved (as was recently highlighted by the book *L'immagine fuggente. Riflessioni teatrali sulla Alceste di Barcellona*⁵), nevertheless some likely conclusions have been drawn regarding the *Carmen's* authorship, chronological framework and genre, which I will briefly outline. The anonymous author of these 122 dactylic hexameters is a typical late antique *poeta doctus*, active in a geocultural context that may have coincided with the codex's area of origin, the Thebaid (Middle and Upper Egypt). His *Alcestis* was likely composed in the second half of the IV (or early V) century AD. The vivid debate on the work's genre, characterized by undeniable theatrical potentialities,⁶ has led me to reconsider the issue and draw the conclusions presented here.

Alcestis Barcinonensis: word, orchēsis, hypokrisis

Pantomime is a form of "reperformance that drew constantly on a repertoire of bodily *schēmata*: postures and gestures that were not restricted to the stage but were found in the visual arts as well and involved the spectators as much as the performers."⁷ In pantomime, what dominates is the visual and rhythmic code, based on three cornerstones: *schēmata*, the poses or figures;⁸ *kinēsis*, the dynamic "body-mind" in space, which "articulates itself according to the *schēmata*";⁹ and *akinētos stasis*, the suspension of the *kinēsis*, that is, the moment in which the *saltator* becomes the character's "image" (*eikōn*).¹⁰

In *Alcestis*, the body can perform *kinēsis* and *akinētos stasis* in systematic alternation.¹¹ Opposition and alternation are found not only in movements and gestures, but also

5 Viccei 2020.

6 First identified by Ramon Roca-Puig (1982, 14) and later highlighted especially by Gianotti 1991, 121–149 and Hall 2008a, 258–282.

7 Webb 2017, 263; see also 275–276, 278–279. A bibliography on pantomime can be found in Viccei 2020, 80–81, 89–90, especially in the notes.

8 Marinelli 2016, 47, 51; Viccei 2017, 150–151, n. 6.

9 Marinelli 2016, 51; see also 39, 53, 56.

10 Marinelli 2017, 11–12, 19. See Plutarch, *Quaest. Conviv.* 9. 15.

11 Libanius, *On Behalf of the Dancers (or. 64)* 117–118; Marinelli 2017, 18–19; Webb 2017, 264. See Viccei 2020, 93–94, for references to *Alcestis*.

in male (Admetus, his father) and female (Admetus' mother, Alcestis, her daughter), in the young (Alcestis, Admetus, their children) and the elderly (Admetus' parents), and in the light with which the *Carmen* begins and the darkness which dominates at the end. The antinomy that deserves the most attention is that between male and female, for it is related to two fundamental categories of pantomime's mimetic project, in which male and female *schēmata* – being different “principles of channelling energy”¹² – are alternated and frequently pitted against one another. This dynamic, however, does not prevent substitutions between the male and female “style”¹³ and vice versa, a phenomenon that recurs in many passages of *Alcestis*.¹⁴

The main feature of pantomime consists in rapid changes from one character to another, carried out by a single performer who plays one role at a time. There were rapid shifts, on sight,¹⁵ from one mask to the other – to a maximum of five, corresponding to as many parts in the piece¹⁶ – conveying the substitution or transformation of a character.¹⁷ The mask, whose deployment requires specific technical competence, radically changes the image of the actor-dancer. *Schēmata* and body control, acting and dancing (*hypokrisis*, *orchēsis*) are linked to the mask through a complicated play of physical, intellectual, and emotional implications.

The analysis of *Alcestis* suggests the possibility that *Alcestis* might be a *polyprosōpos orchēsis*, a dance for a single performer impersonating various roles.¹⁸ Between the interventions of the characters (Apollo, Admetus, Admetus' parents, and Alcestis), the performer can adopt a new role: as a matter of fact, in the poem, there are neither overlapping roles nor too rapid role shifts. At the same time, the variations in the five characters' *schēmata*, *pragmata*, *ēthē*, and *pathē* are often conveyed by verbs in asyndeton, that is, in a rhetorical mode that could be suitable to a peculiar aspect of the pantomimus' choreutic practice: by drawing *pragmata* and *pathē* closer, the asyndeton could comply with the rapidity of the transformations of the *orchēsis* and *hypokrisis*. It could thus support a performative mode frequently exploited by actor-dancers and much appreciated by the audience.

Two of the *Carmen*'s characters are worthy of particular attention in regard to their performativity: Apollo, with whom the poem begins, and the Poet.

While describing the peculiar pantomime of the Judgement of Paris,¹⁹ Apuleius recalls that the first to appear on stage was Paris, followed by the gods Mercury, Juno,

12 Marinelli 2017, 14–15 (“principi di gestione dell’energia”). On the interpretation of female characters: Savarese 2003, 97–101; Webb 2017, 263.

13 Libanius, *On Behalf of the Dancers* (or. 64) 66.

14 Viccei 2020, 94–95.

15 Wyles 2008, 70.

16 Lucian, *On Dancing* 66–67. Petrides 2013, 433–450; Webb 2017, 271.

17 Webb 2008, 48.

18 Viccei 2020, 95–96.

19 Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* X, 29, 5–34, 2; Viccei 2020, 88, n. 21, 92, n. 34.

Minerva, and Venus. The presence of the gods allowed the performer to “make the divine images (*agalmata*) ‘come alive’ on the stage.”²⁰ In this regard, Libanius wrote: “But, if looking at the statues of the gods (*agalmata*) makes you wiser through sight, the pantomime makes you see all the statues of the gods on the stage, not by imitating them in marble, but by making them live through himself, so that not even the most skillful sculptor could aesthetically surpass him in this field.”²¹ In pantomime, the gods were not simply represented but ‘rendered present.’ *Alcestis*’ opening scene accommodates the young Admetus and a god, Apollo, whose statues were much diffused throughout the Empire and constituted a heritage known and shared by the dancer and the audience. The performer of *Alcestis*, just like those of the Judgement of Paris, could impersonate not only characters from tragic myth but also one of the most recurrent gods in the tragic, and especially Euripidean, tradition, which was the most commonly exploited in pantomime. He could ‘bring to life’ a sculptural image of the god, not in its entirety but through the evocation of specific and conventional iconic signs which sufficed to make Apollo recognizable.

We now come to the character of the *Poeta*, the only character, besides Admetus, to appear throughout the *Alcestis*. Is the *Poeta* another pantomime role or is he only a voice that provides stage directions to the other five characters? The latter option seems the more likely, both because the sources do not seem to show poets as characters in pantomimes and because all the interventions of *Alcestis*’ *Poeta* aim to indicate and define *schēmata*, *pragmata*, *ēthē*, and *pathē* of the other characters, as well as the mood of the story, while there is nothing that delineates or characterizes the *Poeta*’s own possible gestures, movements, actions, features and feelings.

Alcestis’ performance text suggests that Admetus’ mother and Alcestis have been silently present on stage since Admetus’ brief intervention (*Alc. Barcin.* 25–31). From the two women’s subsequent speeches, one can deduce that Admetus too is there, silent or weeping (*Alc. Barcin.* 71, 106). The couple’s children are also on stage, at least since the beginning of Alcestis’ speech.²² In addition to the protagonist, pantomime also allows the presence of supernumerary actors,²³ who do not necessarily need to be actor-dancers: hence it is possible that the silent roles of *Alcestis* were played by non-speaking actors. This was certainly less a necessity than a possibility. These supporting roles may have been superfluous, given that a skilled pantomime could create, with proper gestures, the illusion of their presence on stage and their departure,²⁴ even their

20 Cadario 2009, 47.

21 Libanius, *On Behalf of the Dancers* (or. 64) 116. See Webb in this volume.

22 Viccei 2020, 96–97.

23 Gianotti 1991, 132; Jory 1997, 217–221; Tedeschi 2002, 128–129; Hall 2008a, 267, n. 23, 273–274.

24 Webb 2017, 274.

utter vanishing, as in the case of the “image of the one who recedes” (*fugientis imago*, *Alc. Barcin.* 119).²⁵

The body of the actor-dancer, modulated by dance and acting, contains many “souls” that manifest themselves before the eyes of the audience.²⁶ The centrality of the body and its transformation, which is physical, intellectual, and emotional, is a distinctive feature of pantomime: “it is the body that defines the value of the emotion and of the vital force that is represented, which in turn shapes the perception of the character that is portrayed.”²⁷ With its *schēmata* and embodied knowledge,²⁸ the body of the performer can surpass the spoken word, and it can “show and represent [...] emotions” (δείξειν καὶ ὑποκρινεῖσθαι [...] πάθη).²⁹

In the art of pantomime, movement and voice (*kinēsis* and *phonē*) are distinguished: the voice is an instrument of libretto performers, not of the pantomime, who is on stage *ore clauso*, i. e. with a mute mask on his face.³⁰ What does this kind of mask imply for the actor-dancer? It implies not only wordlessness but “a series of variations on the organization of the body which concern both the movement of the head and that of the torso and limbs. The mask is an enormous amplifier of the gestures”, including hand gesture.³¹

The sources show how “feet position, hand posture, the good harmony of head movements” constitute the basis of the pantomimic *schēma*.³² The verses of *Alcestis* suggest the concurrence of these body parts and their well-balanced mutual relationship, which could be perfectly conveyed by the movement and figures of a pantomime. In particular, the feet, which are essential instruments to control the energy of the *saltatio*

25 Viccei 2020, 97–98.

26 Lucian, *On Dancing* 74, 81. No less important than the preparation of the body, “music, rhythm, meter [...] philosophy, physics, ethics” (Savarese 2003, 96) were part of the *pantomimus*’ training, which was also of an intellectual kind. Marinelli 2016, 57; See Marinelli 2017, 21–22; Beta 1992, 31–34.

27 Marinelli 2016, 45 (“è il corpo che dà il valore all’emozione e alla forza biotica rappresentata che a sua volta informa la percezione del carattere che si rappresenta”), referring to Luc. *De salt.* 80.

28 On the *embodied knowledge* of the *pantomimus* and the *embodied cultural knowledge*: Webb 2017, 262–279; Sklar 2008, 85–111.

29 Lucian, *On Dancing* 67.

30 In addition to literary sources including Cassiodorus (*Var.* 1, 20) and Lucian (*On Dancing* 29, 62), the closed mouth is well documented by archaeological discoveries, such as the mask found in the theatre at *Caesarea Maritima* that belonged to a statue of Polyhymnia (white marble, second half of the first century to the first half of the second century CE; Milan, Civic Archaeological Museum of Milan, A 0.9.4078; Cadario 2013, 32–33, Cat. 3.2), protector of pantomimes, (Lucian, *On Dancing* 36; Nonnus, *Dionysiaca* V, 88), or the masks on the ivory relief of a pantomime found at *Augusta Treverorum* (fifth century CE; Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Antikensammlung TC 2497). About the relief: Pasini 2003, 288, 385, num. 147, fig. 147; Wyles 2008, 63, 65; Cadario 2009, 19–23; Jory 2001, 1–20; Petrides 2013, 441–445, 447.

31 Marinelli 2016, 35–36. See also Slaney in this volume, pp. 231–232.

32 Libanius, *On Behalf of the Dancers* (or. 64) 57. See Marinelli 2017, 12–13.

and necessarily move in harmony with the rhythm of the body,³³ play a major role in *Alcestis*: they do so implicitly in every movement, and explicitly in Admetus' prayer to his mother (*Alc. Barcin.* 23) and before Alcestis' death (*Alc. Barcin.* 118). The hands, very eloquent³⁴ and capable of evoking figures and symbolizing speech,³⁵ play a fundamental role in pantomimic communication, actually replacing the spoken word.³⁶ In the *Carmen*, the anonymous writer describes the chromatic transformation of Alcestis' nails, which turn blue (*Alc. Barcin.* 117) – one of the main signs of death approaching.

The movements of the head (*neumata*),³⁷ which must be considered in relation to the mask and the balance of the body, are equally crucial in pantomime. In *Alcestis* there is no explicit reference to *neumata*, but they are implied in several passages, especially those which put emphasis on the eyes and face (for example, *Alc. Barcin.* 19, 32), which are in turn eloquent physical instruments in the dance,³⁸ and possible indicators of the pantomimic nature of the work. Also the references by Admetus' mother to her own breasts and womb (*Alc. Barcin.* 48–49), two metaphors for motherhood and childbirth which pantomimes loved to represent,³⁹ must be seen as part of a corporeal framework. The same goes for the reference to the dismembered bodies (*Alc. Barcin.* 66, 68), whose representation constituted the greatest display of flexibility and disarticulation by the pantomime, who was trained for this by his acting teacher.⁴⁰

In *Alcestis*, the body is extensively present. Both physical sensations and abstract ideas are prominent: in particular, the former are expressed through verbs and often linked to concrete objects, which the pantomime tries to recreate in practice through movement and figures (*kinēsis* and *schēmata*):⁴¹ his “demonstrative and mimetic science” must be able to “express thoughts and illuminate what is obscure.”⁴² In this respect, the pantomime is akin to a poet, who uses *ekphrasis* just like the pantomime uses movement and figures: not so much “to expound what the spectator can grasp by himself, but above all to help him *interpret* and see with the ‘intelligent gaze.’”⁴³

33 Marinelli 2016, 40–41, 46–47.

34 Cassiodorus, *Var.* 4, 51, 8: *orchestrarum loquacissimae manus, linguosi digiti, silentium clamosum, expositio tacita*; similarly, Claudian, *Paneg. Theod.* 313; Nonnus, *Dion.* XIX, 198–204, 214, 216–219, 224, 261; formerly, Seneca, *Ep.* 121, 6; Lucian, *On Dancing* 63–64, 69.

35 Nonnus, *Dion.* XIX, 226; Lada-Richards 2004, 31.

36 Lucian, *On Dancing* 63; Robert 2009, 225–257; Marinelli 2016, 2–55.

37 Libanius, *On Behalf of the Dancers (or. 64)* 59, 62, 65; Nonnus, *Dion.* XIX, 202–204. Marinelli 2016, 36.

38 For example, Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* X, 30, 3: *nonnunquam saltare solis oculis*.

39 Hall 2008a, 272.

40 Libanius, *On Behalf of the Dancers (or. 64)* 104. Savarese 2003, 95–96.

41 Hall 2008a, 277; Marinelli 2016, 45–46.

42 Lucian, *On Dancing* 36.

43 Agosti 2006a, 355 (“spiegare quel che lo spettatore può cogliere da solo, ma soprattutto aiutarlo a *interpretare* e vedere con lo ‘sguardo intellettuale’”; author’s italics).

The *Alcestis Barcinonensis* is, therefore, a rewriting via the body. Many elements of *Alcestis* bring to mind the theory and practice of pantomime and its visual and poetic framework.⁴⁴ Even if the *Carmen* was not conceived by its author as a libretto, it shares and/or imitates so many elements of pantomimic performativity that it could be represented on stage as a *tragoedia saltata*.

The visual clarity (*enargeia*) of the word and poetic construction of *Alcestis* (which mirrors an epoch especially fond of visuality), as well as the actions visualized by the author and therefore potentially visualizable by spectators, could surely have been enhanced by the bodily writing of a *saltator*. This kind of performer could rely on an art which allowed him to create, through gestures and movements, sequences of embodied and living paintings, based on skills and suggestions further derived from sculpture, painting and mosaics, whose iconographic heritages were known to be used by the pantomime for his *schēmata*. These embodied paintings established a direct communication with the audience, who were used to reading images because of their extensive presence within the Roman Empire.⁴⁵ Pantomime has many connections with tragedy; dance and acting (*orchēsis* and *hypokrisis*) are linked.⁴⁶ Pantomime is part of the acting,⁴⁷ and if pantomime is “a way of reperforming tragedy”,⁴⁸ the opposite might also be considered in an epoch of contaminations and interferences such as the fourth century CE: tragedy as a possible reperformance of pantomime.⁴⁹ In this particular case, *Alcestis* seems to open up the possibility of an alternative form of representation, a miniature tragedy⁵⁰ or a *tragoedia cantata*:⁵¹ an alternative way of performing *Alcestis*, which would by no means conflict with the pantomimic genre and the prerogatives of the text itself, but would rather be a legitimate variation.

***Alcestis Barcinonensis*: late antique performative spaces**

The link between poetry and a performative dimension, well documented especially in Egypt and in the Orient from the third century CE onwards,⁵² raises questions about performance spaces, which were extremely heterogeneous during the imperial era.⁵³

44 Viccei 2020, 89–102.

45 Agosti 2006a, 353–354. Garelli 2007, 351–362; Schlapbach 2008, 317–320, 331–337; Cadario 2009, 45–51; Webb 2017, 265.

46 On “coesione” and “identità” between dancing and acting and on the close connection between actor and dancer: Lucian, *On Dancing* 65, 83–84; Marinelli 2016, 28–29, 32, 37.

47 Marinelli 2016, 55.

48 Webb 2017, 263.

49 Regarding reperformance: Hunter/Uhlig 2017, especially 1–18, 283–301.

50 Moretti 2010, 269–284.

51 Hall 2013, 456.

52 Agosti 2006b, 35–62; Agosti 2008, 231–259; Cribiore 2001, 241–242.

53 Viccei 2020, 81–82.

The consumption and perception of poetic texts ('poetic' in its broadest sense) was affected by their performance in places which by their nature, function, and tradition had nothing to do with the theatre.

The history of the literary and theatrical myth of *Alcestis* in the late Republican and Imperial Roman culture⁵⁴ and the general history of Roman theatre from at least the first century BCE onwards suggest that the spaces in which the texts on *Alcestis* – including the *Carmen* – were performed, and their modes of consumption, were multifaceted. Very few scholars have dealt with the themes which I will here illustrate briefly, being aware of the limits imposed by an incomplete and fragmentary documentation.

Lorenzo Nosarti and Vincenzo Tandoi, two accomplished experts on the *Carmen de Alceste*, have suggested that it was "probably intended to be recited during the festival of the Carneia"⁵⁵ and addressed "by way of recitation to an easy-to-please audience with modest expectations."⁵⁶ Although I do not agree with the remark on the cultural level of the potential spectators,⁵⁷ the possibility that *Alcestis*' performative context was linked to Apollo Carneios, and in particular to the celebrations of the god during the Carneia festival in the Cyrenaica, a geocultural area adjacent to the Thebaid, the place where the *Carmen* was likely composed, is acceptable and interesting.⁵⁸ The performance of *Alcestis*, however, may not have been limited to this event. Several musical and poetic *certamina* in honor of Apollo were held in Africa. One likely place was Carthage, which hosted the *Asclepia* as well as the *Pythica*, international games dedicated to Apollo,⁵⁹ who was present in the form of a majestic statue⁶⁰ in the *frons scaenae* of the theatre, built near the *odeum*.⁶¹ *Alcestis*, in which Apollo is the central and, in fact, the only god, may have been performed here and in other similar places where, along with poetical and musical contests, pantomimes were also performed.⁶²

Theatres in North Africa,⁶³ especially in the presumed area of the *Carmen*'s composition and first performance, the Thebaid, were undoubtedly suitable spaces for the

54 Viccei 2020, 12–16.

55 Nosarti 1992, 46.

56 Tandoi 1984, 242.

57 Viccei 2020, 106.

58 Nosarti 1992, XVII–XVIII.

59 Tertullian, *Scorp.* VI, 2–3: *Agonas istos, contentiosa sollemnna et superstitiosa certamina Graecorum et religionum et voluptatum, quanta gratia saeculum celebret iam et Africae licuit. Adhuc Carthaginem singulae civitates gratulando inquietant donatam Pythico agone post stadii senectutem. Ita ab aevo dignissimum creditum est studiorum experimentum committere, artes corporum et vocum de praestantia expendere.*

60 The statue of Apollo with *Python* (second century CE) is in Tunis, The Bardo National Museum (C 939).

61 Septimius Severus ordered the construction of the *odeum* in 207 CE to celebrate the *Pythica* (see Picard/Baillon 1992, 14).

62 Cadau 2015, 273.

63 On this widespread but largely undocumented and unexplored reality: Ciancio Rossetto, Pisani Sartorio 1994 (*Aegyptus, Creta et Cyrenae, Africa Proconsularis, Numidia, Mauretania*) and Isler

performance of a pantomimic *Alcestis*. Theatre buildings in the North African provinces, including Egypt, which was thought to be pantomime's place of origin as well as Proteus' homeland,⁶⁴ gave ample space to pantomime into the late imperial period.⁶⁵

Alcestis may also have circulated in the urban *theatra* of other Roman provinces, because pantomimes often went on tour. In other words: *Alcestis* may have been seen by an audience in an African theatre, for instance in *Leptis Magna*, but also in *Mediolanum* – and I purposely mention these two cities as examples of the wide circulation of pantomimes, because they were both connected with the name of a famous pantomime, *M. Septimius Aurelius Agrippa*, who successfully performed in Milan and *Leptis*.⁶⁶

Besides these favourable spaces for the performance of *Alcestis*, there were others that did not call for grand executions or a vast and heterogeneous audience. Tertullian, Augustine and Macrobius suggest that in the late imperial period the words *theatrum* and *gymnasium* (understood as a school of rhetoric) had a similar meaning, and therefore there was a “‘theatrical function of educational structures’, on account of the lecture halls in the schools of rhetoric and the libraries in North Africa during the Vandal era, where the literary production of poets, scholars, professors and fellow students was shared on the occasion of rehearsals and literary *certamina*”; plausibly, “the school poets presented their *theatricum carmen* in their accustomed settings. So, the practice of *studiorum experimentum committere*, still a component of the public agones held at the *Odeum* in Carthage in Tertullian's lifetime, could have shifted to, or taken place

2017; more specific studies, including Lachaux 1979; Caputo 1959; Caputo, Traversari 1976; Caputo 1987; Fuchs 1987, esp. 133–134, 136, 141–143, 145–147, 150–158, 161–167, 177–180, 183–184, 186–192; Di Vita 1990, 133–146; Sear 1990, 376–383; Picard, Baillon 1992, 11–27; Ros 1994, 16–32; Serpetti 2011, 149–168.

64 Libanius, *On Behalf of the Dancers* (or. 64) 80, 117 (Molloy 1996, 241–242, 272); Lucian, *On Dancing* 19. On Proteus, mythical archetype of pantomimes (Schlabach 2008, 320–327), and Pharos Island, at the mouth of Alexandria port: Nonnus, *Dion.* 1.13–15.

65 On pantomime in North Africa: Caputo 1987, 139–142; Paolucci 2015, LIV; in the late imperial period: Vesterinen 2007. On literary sources: Hall 2013, 462–463. Archeological evidence: relief on the *frons pulpiti* of Sabratha theatre with an iconographic version of the pantomime of the Judgment of Paris (a recurrent theme: Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* X, 30–34; Lucian, *On Dancing* 45; Tertullian, *Apol.* XV, 2; Augustine, *Civ. Dei* XVIII, 10). On the Sabratha relief (end of the second century CE), a figurative theatrical *summa* to which men of letters and/or actors, mimes and pantomimes probably contributed: Caputo 1959, 19–22, 345; Rodríguez López 2017, 27–28. The same motif appears in the mosaics of a fourth-fifth century CE *domus* at *Cesarea* (*Mauretania Caesarensis*) and of various *villae* (Viccei 2020, 81, n. 7). Also from North Africa is the *saltator* in the Albizzati terracotta (end of the second century CE), discovered in Tunisia (Albizzati 1928, 27–31). Epigraphical sources: inscription on the honorary monument to *M. Septimius Aurelius Agrippa* (beginning of the third century CE), *pantomimus sui temporis primus* who performed at the *Leptis Magna* theatre. *IRT*, 606; Viccei 2014, 252.

66 As to the epigraph, see *supra*, n. 65. On dancers as cultural mediators in the Roman empire, see Schlabach 2020.

concomitantly in, more exclusive sites, which would have been preferred by a public of intellectuals and *scholastici*.⁶⁷

In the North African provinces, this alternation and interaction between the performance spaces is also documented by an archeological complex which stands out for its uniqueness and conservation status. It is the series of *auditoria* of Kom el-Dikka, built in the heart of Alexandria from the middle of the IV century CE, and redefined and expanded between the end of the V and the beginning of the VI.⁶⁸ These confirm and monumentally echo the city's age-old intellectual, cultural, and pedagogic vocation, and interestingly testify to the relationship between the oldest part of the *auditoria* (southern complex, rooms H–M, ca. 350 CE) – and the nearby theatre/*odeum*.⁶⁹ These rooms were polyvalent structures: accommodating twenty or thirty people, with rows of seats for the students and a bookstand and platform/*thronos*⁷⁰ for the teachers, they were at once academic classrooms and places for conferences or recitation. These *auditoria* probably had a functional relationship with the adjacent theatre/*odeum*, which started in the early years of the structure's usage, and continued during the expansion and reshaping of the urban and architectural space, when the spectacle building (also) became an *auditorium princeps*.⁷¹ As such, it could have hosted orations, rhetorical declamations, poetic recitations, and the most popular theatrical spectacles, especially pantomimes, which would have attracted a more numerous and diversified audience than the smaller *auditoria*.⁷² A polyvalent space like the *auditoria* in Alexandria could have hosted several reperformances of the *Carmen de Alceste* – a likely possibility for such a versatile text.

Thermal baths and private houses (*domus*) may have constituted other suitable spaces for the representation of *Alceste*. Their architecture, decorations and acoustics (to mention the main features of a space) would allow for interesting variations in the performance of a pantomimic *Alceste*, and in its reception by an audience that was less numerous, and more culturally and socially homogeneous, than that of the theatres.

The notion that the typology of a space and the atmosphere of an environment influence the reception of a performance is ancient and important.⁷³ The relationship between space and representation must be addressed whenever one deals with theatre,

67 Paolucci 2015, LXII–LXVI, also for the references to Tertullian, Augustine and Macrobius.

68 Derda, Markiewicz, Wipszycka 2007.

69 Kołataj 1983, 187–194; Kołataj 1998, 631–638.

70 Libanius, *Chriae* III, 7.

71 The remark on the planimetric and functional similarity between theatres and school buildings (*diatribai*) in a passage from Elias of Alexandria (*Isag.* 21, 30) is particularly interesting: διὰ τοῦτο γὰρ τὰ θέατρα κυκλοτερεῖ διὰ τὸ ἀλλήλους βλέπειν, καὶ αἱ διατριβαὶ κυκλοτερεῖς ἵνα ὁρῶσιν ἀλλήλους καὶ τὸν διδάσκαλον (“just like theatres have a rounded structure to allow mutual vision, *diatribai* too are rounded so that students can see each other and the teacher”).

72 Kiss 1990–1992, 331–338.

73 See for example *De domo*, in which Lucian examines the influence of space and atmosphere on the reception of sophistic performances. Fornaro 2019, 150–152.

and in particular theatre-dance, such as pantomime, where the performance requires careful management of the relationship between the rhythmic and stylized movement of the actor-dancer and the space that is demarcated and traversed by it. *Alcestis* is no exception in this regard.

Given the variety of theatrical spaces, and the number of people on stage (the pantomime, one or more supernumerary actors, and one or more musicians, that is, singers and instrumentalists),⁷⁴ not only urban theatres but also private theatres, rooms in the *domus* and thermal baths, and *auditoria* such as those of Kom el-Dikka could host pantomimic performances or scenic readings of the text, also in the form of *tragoedia cantata*.

The choice of a *domus*, a *villa* or a private theatre over an urban theatre must not be seen in reductive terms; it could even, in fact, have enhanced the dramatic force of the *Alcestis*, a familiar and domestic tragedy which, from line 21, is set in the royal *domus* of Alcestis and Admetus. A similar setting might have enhanced the audience's emotional involvement, promoting their identification with a performed story which, because of its tragic nature, was a source of the "pain" that "the spectator craves", a "pain" that "is a pleasure" to the spectator, as Augustine observed, who experienced it in the African theatres.⁷⁵

***Alcestis Barcinonensis*: archeological sites for contemporary reperformances**

So far, there have been four reperformances of *Alcestis Barcinonensis* in Italy. Two of these were staged at the Roman theatres in Fiesole and Milan, respectively.⁷⁶ Through its conceptualization, staging, and protagonists, the 2003 performance in Fiesole is closely linked to the first Italian performance of *Alcestis* in 1999, which was promoted by Olimpo Musso (professor of History of Greek and Latin drama at the University of Florence). The 1999 performance was staged in the Presidential Council Room, and performed by only one dancer (Sara Cascione). The 2003 performance shared some essential elements with the previous one in Florence, but it also presented many alterations, beginning with the performative space: the later pantomime was staged partly among the remains of Fiesole's Roman theatre and partly in a modern private house.⁷⁷ This was due to the different aims of this second staging: it was not, in fact, intended to be seen in the places where it was physically staged, but rather in Zaragoza's Roman Theatre Museum, where it was screened as a video projection during the opening

74 Viccei 2020, 90–92, 95–99.

75 *Confessions* III, 2, 2.

76 On the other reperformances in Florence (1999) and Milan (2018): Viccei 2020, 112–116, 124–131.

77 Hall 2008a, 266; Cascione 2009, 41–42.

event for the Museum and its exhibition *El Teatro Romano. La puesta en escena*. Accordingly, the use of stylistic features typical of short film, and in line with its technical means, contributed to the creation of a new *Alcestis*.

In this new version, it was possible to set the story in two places that differed in typology, nature, and meaning. Fiesole's Roman theatre was used as an outdoor setting, that is, as the place where the actions of *Alcestis*' male characters (Apollo, Admetus, and Admetus' father) took place, while the modern villa was used as an interior setting, particularly a room with a fireplace, which was a backdrop for the actions of the female characters (Admetus' mother and *Alcestis*), in line with the traditional woman-*domus* association.

In 2009, the remains of another theatre, that of *Mediolanum*, hosted another reperformance of *Alcestis*. Designed for a special opening of the Milan Roman Theatre's Multimedia and Sensory Museum, this version of *Alcestis* was performed on one single day, several times in a row.

The remains of the Roman theatre's *cavea*, together with architectural materials belonging to the *scaenae frons* and the *porticus post scaenam*, are preserved in Milan's Chamber of Commerce building, about four meters below street level. This space is simultaneously integrated into the city and separated from it, and characterized by installations that promote a multimedia, 'sensorial' (olfactory and aural) and visual understanding of the archaeological remains.⁷⁸ A partial version of *Alcestis* was performed here, conceived and directed by myself.⁷⁹

In order to illustrate the longevity of *Mediolanum*'s theatre (from the Augustan age to the end of the IV/beginning of the V century CE), I decided to use a late antique text and, stimulated by Gianfranco Gianotti's article hypothesizing the relationship between the *Carmen* and pantomime, as well as by Lorenzo Nosarti's book,⁸⁰ I chose *Alcestis*, and investigated it through a lens of theatrical practice in order to examine its pantomimic nature. The preparation relied on the study of imperial pantomime, coupled with a search for contemporary forms, styles, and performative techniques⁸¹ that could provide tools for a credible reperformance of *Alcestis*. The research relied especially on Martha Graham, given her work on *Alcestis* (1960)⁸² and because her *tanztheater* – in many ways a total theatre – features principles of movement, gesture, posture, rhythm, and corporeal expressiveness that are akin to those of pantomime

78 Viccei 2009, 9–56, especially 38–42 (musealization), 43–49 (*Alcestis*' staging); Viccei 2014, 231–235, 244–253, 255–258; Viccei 2022, 207–223.

79 The Florentine productions had no influence whatsoever on it; see Viccei 2020, 118.

80 Gianotti 1991, 121–149; Nosarti 1992.

81 An important stimulus for the staging in Milan came from Lo Iacono 2007. For my subsequent reflection on the work, see: Hall 2008b, 363–377; Macintosh 2010; Lada-Richards 2010, 19–38; Gasparotti 2017, 27–75; Zanardi 2017, 105–156.

82 Viccei 2020, 119, n. 146.

and therefore apt to convey its language today.⁸³ The path indicated by Graham guided much of the work of actor-dancer Paolo Stoppani,⁸⁴ the only performer in this *Alcestis*, who was at once the creator of the performative act, the object of the creation (the body takes on the forms of the performative acts conceived by the pantomime), and its instrument.

Due to organizational constraints and the Museum's limited access, it was possible to offer only one partial reperformance of *Alcestis*. Therefore I selected the verses that could best convey the crux of the dramatic plot, its structure, its peculiarities, and the characters' *ēthē* and *pathē* within the three minutes of the performance.⁸⁵

The reperformance began with Admetus' dismay, as Apollo has just revealed that his death is imminent (the character of the god is not played, but is made present through Admetus' agitation), and his request to his father to die in his place (*Alc. Barcin.* 25–30). The father's reply was summarized by reading lines 32–37, which were embodied by the performer: he emphasized the parts of the body mentioned here, especially the hands (*Alc. Barcin.* 33–34), whose expressiveness and communicative power in pantomime we have previously discussed. The eloquent hands transformed the cloak (*pallium*) worn by the performer into the hair of Admetus' old mother⁸⁶ and the woman's harsh words were conveyed through well calibrated movements of the womb and hands (*Alc. Barcin.* 46–51). This was promptly followed by the moment in which Alcestis offers her own life in order to save that of her husband. This gift was visualized by the performer, who provided an incisive counterpoint to the character of Admetus' mother (*Alc. Barcin.* 71–74, 80–81). The interpretation of Alcestis' last moments and death through the words of the *Poeta* (*Alc. Barcin.* 108–110, 115–119) sealed the tragic ending. The metamorphosis of Alcestis' body – eyes, feet, and especially hands – in the moment of death was conveyed through a well practiced exercise of the performer's bodily malleability, which allowed him to perform opposing movements (rigidity-flexibility; equilibrium-disequilibrium). This focus on the metamorphosis of individual body parts was the culmination of the *mimesis* of the body, according to the language and style of pantomime. The actor-dancer's scrupulous respect for the principle of clarity (*saphēneia*), according to which “every action that is performed is

83 Graham 1991; Franco 2003; Borile 2014; URL: <http://www.marthagraham.org/>. Viccei 2020, 119.

84 With Stoppani (Viccei 2020, 119–120, n. 148) there was constant dialogue and discussion about the historical and theoretical contents of pantomime, which were essential for his dramaturgy and the creation of the performance.

85 Viccei 2020, 120–121. An Italian translation (Nosarti 1992, 18–21) was preferred over the Latin text for the verses read by the off-stage voice because the Museum's visitors had already heard the Latin prologue of Plautus' *Casina* from the multimedia installation “Reciting Statues” (on which, Viccei 2009, 38) at the end of the archaeological tour and shortly before seeing *Alcestis*. The dramatic reading of *Alcestis* was accompanied by the dramatic sounds of Gregorio Paniagua's *Musique de la Grèce antique*.

86 On the versatility of the *pallium*, Viccei 2020, 97.

clear and does not need a narrator”,⁸⁷ has paradoxically confirmed the power of *Alcestis*’ verses, which are perhaps even more expressive when embodied.

The connection between the main features and mode of pantomime and *tanztheater* proved performatively valid in the case of *Alcestis*, and I believe that this contemporary performative language can be read as one of the possible ‘variations on the theme’ of imperial pantomime.

The implementation of this crossover allowed the performer to rapidly shift from one character to another, and perform the instantaneous immobility required at the end of each tableau.⁸⁸ The choice to perform barefoot⁸⁹ and cover the face with a pantomime-derived mute mask had a great influence on the actor’s bodily work.⁹⁰ The costume, too, was conceived to test and amplify what is known about its function in pantomime. The performer therefore used costume as an instrument for the characters’ transformations. It was made transparent in order to show the body’s eurythmic work;⁹¹ its shape and colors imitated the clothing in a painted image of a pantomime at the entrance to Milan Roman Theatre, and were also partly inspired by the relief of a pantomime at *Augusta Treverorum*.⁹² This connection between artistic and living images, established in a museum space that had temporarily turned into a theatrical space, suggested to the visitor-spectator that the language of imperial pantomime influenced art, and vice versa.

This partial reperformance of *Alcestis* never lost sight of the space of the museum setting, which is not a neutral space but a theatrical, historic, archeological and museographic space. The potential effect of the use of sensorial museography on the audience’s reception of *Alcestis* was by no means underestimated, especially because spectators entered the area of the Roman theatre mainly as visitors. As a matter of fact, *Alcestis* was the culmination of a guided tour aimed at providing an intellectual, sensorial and emotional understanding and knowledge of a Roman theatre with its long history. The reperformance was conceived to be integrated into a heavily defined space and to be unperformable elsewhere – it could be carried out only in that place and in a single event.

Just as the Multimedia and Sensory Museum of the Milan Roman Theatre is a place of thoughtful mediation between antiquity, represented by the archaeological remains, and the contemporary world, hinted at by the installations, so the *Alcestis Barcinonensis* was a performative laboratory of the interconnection between ancient (Roman pantomime) and contemporary (*tanztheater*) languages and styles.

87 Lucian, *On Dancing* 62.

88 Lucian, *On Dancing* 117–118.

89 Savarese 2003, 102–103.

90 Viccei 2020, 122.

91 A recurrent motif in Lucian, for example in *On Dancing* 8; 71.

92 *Supra*, n. 30.

The performative space was created by the action of the performer and the correlation between this action and a precise place within the museum, namely at the end of the archeological area, where the ruins of the theatre and the installation “Reciting Statues” are in spatial and semantic proximity. This is evocative on several levels. A video is projected onto two statues, so that the half-length images of two actors are superimposed over them: one of them (Giorgio Albertazzi) recites the prologue of Plautus’ *Casina* in Latin, while the other listens.⁹³ These statues, inspired by the sculpture group *I Sette Savi* by the artist Fausto Melotti,⁹⁴ were conceived as a symbolic image of the actor, and on the occasion of the Museum’s opening event, they also had the function of anticipating the living image of the performer of *Alcestis*, as a kind of ideal ancestral figures.

The performance of fragments of *Alcestis* in an all-encompassing and immersive theatrical space which also included an olfactory aspect, thanks to the installation “lastra olfattiva” – a space that is at once archaeological and contemporary, a multimedia musealization – became a stimulating opportunity for an audience of visitors and spectators to engage and interact with aspects of the multifaceted Roman theatrical culture, of which pantomime was one of the most popular expressions, though nowadays it is little known to the public.⁹⁵ Being able to enjoy parts of *Alcestis* in this peculiar theatrical space thus provided a chance to learn about a possible form of reperformance of an ancient Roman theatrical text of sure interest and historical-cultural value.

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93 For the visitors-spectators, this prologue was a historical and cultural prologue to the reperformance of the late Latin *Alcestis* and itself a reperformance of another Latin theatrical text.

94 URL: <https://www.fondazionefaustomelotti.org/it/>; Melotti 1963, 50–51.

95 Viccei 2009, 39–42; Viccei 2022, 207–223.

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Part III: Discourses

The Orator and the Dancer

Conceptualizing Gestures in Roman Performances

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Abstract: Ancient Roman rhetorical sources, when discussing the capacity of bodily performances to express and arouse specific emotions, often correlate the abilities of the orator to those of the dancer, especially of a pantomimic type. Thanks to the rise of this new kind of performance the mimetic potential of dance was pushed to the very limit, and hence brought the theoretical reflections on gestures as a means of communication to a higher level of sophistication. The purpose of this essay is to investigate the process of conceptualization and cultural construction of gestures in the Roman world through the analysis of some passages, mainly from Cicero and Quintilian, where dance and oratorical performances are compared. This approach will reveal the evolution of this comparison under the growing influence of pantomime, and thus shed light on the specifically Roman contribution to cultural debates on body language developed throughout antiquity.

Introduction

Nowadays, many professional roles require some ability in public speaking, within which great attention is paid to non-verbal communication. The techniques taught by leadership consultants often include skills derived from theatrical performance (although perhaps with excessive, and sometimes misleading, simplifications). Nevertheless no modern trainer would ever use the notion of 'dance' as a term of comparison to describe the persuasive gestures of an effective speaker.

By contrast, ancient Greek and Roman rhetorical sources, when discussing the capacity of bodily performances to express and arouse specific emotions, often correlate the abilities of the orator to those of the dancer, especially of a pantomimic type. The interest in body language within public performances certainly predates the birth of

pantomime (at the beginning of the first century BCE)¹ and its official introduction into Roman culture in 22 BCE. But it is thanks to the rise of this new kind of performance that the mimetic potential of dance was pushed to the very limit,² hence bringing the contemporary theoretical reflections on gestures as a means of communication to a higher level of sophistication (as is evident, e. g., in Lucian's *On Dancing*).³ The purpose of this essay is to investigate the process of conceptualization and cultural construction of gestures in the Roman world through the analysis of some passages in rhetorical texts which compare dance and oratorical performances, and to trace the growing impact of pantomime on this conceptualization. By doing this, I hope to shed some light on the specifically Roman contribution to cultural debates on body language developed throughout antiquity.

The Emergence of Gestures in Theoretical Reflections on Delivery

For us, traditional rhetorical theory begins with Aristotle's *Rhetorics*.⁴ In this work Aristotle says that the theory of delivery (ὑπόκρισις in Greek, *actio* or *pronuntiatio* in Latin) is a recent development in rhetoric and that it is rather vulgar (φορτικόν); he implies this again in the *Poetics*, when he uses the same term with reference to tragic performances, where the acting employs gesture and motions to capture the attention of a specific kind of spectator which he terms φαῦλοι ("low, inferior", in terms of education).⁵ Despite these negative comments, however, Aristotle admits the great appeal of visual and especially audible components of verbal communication to the

- 1 The first occurrence of the term παντόμιμος may be read on an inscription from the Asiatic town of Priene (*I.Priene* 113), from c. 80 BCE: here the term refers to a certain Ploutogenes, an artist who performed for four days in the local theatre and was "able to beguile men's souls with his art" (trans. Lada-Richards 2007). The bibliography on the pantomime is huge: among the most recent titles see especially Lada-Richards 2007, Hall/Wyles 2008, Hall 2013.
- 2 The mimetic capacity of dance was recognized from the Classical period. See e. g. Arist. *Poet.* 1447a25: "rhythm on its own, without melody, is used by the art of dancers (since they too, through rhythms translated into movements, create mimesis of character, emotions, and actions)." Translations of the *Poetics* are from Halliwell et al. 1995.
- 3 Cf. Schlapbach 2008 and 2018.
- 4 Its origins, however, were certainly earlier, as we may infer from Aristotle himself (see e. g. *Rhet.* 1354a11 ff.). On the first mention of delivery in rhetorical theory cf. Arist. *Rhet.* 1404a12–15, quoting the sophist Thrasymachus: "Now, when delivery comes into fashion, it will have the same effect as acting. Some writers have attempted to say a few words about it, as Thrasymachus, in his *Eleoi*." Translations of the *Rhetorics* are from Freese 1926.
- 5 Arist. *Rhet.* 1403b36: τὸ περὶ τὴν λέξιν [...] δοκεῖ φορτικὸν εἶναι. Cf. *Poet.* 26, where Aristotle, reporting that tragedy is considered vulgar in comparison with epic (1462a2 ff.), rejects this argument on the grounds that we should not criticize the art of drama *per se*, but only its delivery (1462a5–9: "Now, in the first place, this charge applies not to poetry but to acting, since one can overdo visual signals both in an epic recital [...] and in a singing display [...] Secondly, not all movement (any more than all dancing) should be eschewed, but only that of crude performers [...]").

audience, since they are directly linked with emotions. In his opinion, delivery draws on nature rather than art: hence the difficulty in formulating a theory of it.⁶

After Aristotle, Theophrastus is probably the first who developed an independent treatment of this issue, writing a treatise titled *Περὶ ὑπόκρισεως*, in one book.⁷ According to some scholars, it was Theophrastus who officially extended the meaning of the term *ὑπόκρισις* from voice to bodily movements, discussing voices and motions with regard to any kind of performer.⁸ His treatment of the topic seems to have been so influential as to induce later theorists to recognize delivery as the fourth part of rhetoric, beside diction/style (*λέξις*), invention (*εὑρεσις*) and arrangement (*τάξις*).⁹ Unfortunately, Theophrastus' work on delivery has not survived: but, from a later testimony, we know that he attributed primary importance to both the bodily movement (*κίνησις τοῦ σώματος*) and the pitch of voice (*τόνος τῆς φωνῆς*) in arousing the emotions and, consequently, persuading the souls of the hearers.

πλὴν καὶ Θεόφραστος ὁ φιλόσοφος ὁμοίως φησὶ μέγιστον εἶναι ῥητορικῆ πρὸς τὸ πείσαι τὴν ὑπόκρισιν, εἰς τὰς ἀρχὰς ἀναφέρων καὶ τὰ πάθη τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ τὴν κατανόησιν τούτων, ὡς καὶ τῇ ὄλῃ ἐπιστήμῃ σύμφωνον εἶναι τὴν κίνησιν τοῦ σώματος καὶ τὸν τόνον τῆς φωνῆς¹⁰.

However, also Theophrastus the philosopher says in like manner¹¹ that delivery is for an orator the greatest (help) in regard to persuasion. (He says this) referring to the principles and the emotions of the soul and the knowledge of these, so that the movement of the body and the pitch of the voice are in harmony with the entire science.¹²

After Theophrastus, theoretical concerns on the importance of bodily movements in rhetoric became more systematic. Stoic treatises often contained chapters on delivery.¹³ The philosopher Chrysippus, for instance – head of the Stoic school at the end of the third century BCE – described non-verbal communication as intrinsically related to thought and speech: “I think that attention must be given not only to unconstrained

6 Arist. *Rhet.* 1404a15–18: “[...] and in fact, a gift for acting is a natural talent and depends less upon art, but in regard to style (*περὶ δὲ τὴν λέξιν*) it is artificial.” *Lexis* (lit. “speech, diction”), defined in *Poet.* 1449b34–35 as “the actual composition of the metrical speech” (*λέγω δὲ λέξιν μὲν αὐτὴν τὴν τῶν μέτρων σύνθεσιν*), has to do with the verbal expression of any kind of performer.

7 Diog. Laert. 5.48.

8 According to Fortenbaugh (2003, 271), the treatise *On Delivery* “was an inclusive work that discussed voices and motions appropriate not only to orators, but also to musicians, actors, and rhapsodists.”

9 With the addition of memory, these parts will soon become five, as we are told in *Rhet. Her.* 1.3.1–2: *Oportet igitur esse in oratore inventionem, dispositionem, elocutionem, memoriam, pronuntiationem.*

10 In this sentence *φωνῆς* is Rabe's emendation for *ψυχῆς*.

11 I. e. in a way similar to Demosthenes.

12 Athanasius, *Prefatory Remarks to Hermogenes' On Issues*, *RhGr* vol. 14, 177.3–8 Rabe (trans. Fortenbaugh 2003).

13 Diog. Laert. 7.43. On Hellenistic rhetoric theory see Kremmydas/Tempest 2013.

and smooth order <but> also besides the speech even to the kinds of delivery suitable according to the appropriate modulations of the voice and expressions or gestures of the countenance and hands.”¹⁴

When this theorisation process on the role and the power of delivery in oratorical performances moved to Rome,¹⁵ the first authors who – relying on a cumulative tradition of Hellenistic rhetorical thought – discussed gestures and their persuasive effect on the listeners were the anonymous writer of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (late 80s BCE) and Cicero, especially in his *De oratore* (55 BCE), *Brutus* and *Orator* (both of the 46 BCE). In these works we read frequent and interesting comparisons between oratorical and theatrical gestures. But the treatise most focused on the interconnections between the two is Marcus Fabius Quintilianus’ *Institutio oratoria* (late first century CE), which often refers also to pantomimic dancers.

Towards a Roman Theory of Gestures

The first taxonomy of gestures may be read in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*. Among the faculties that a speaker should possess (i. e. invention, arrangement, style, memory), the anonymous author of this work also lists delivery (*pronuntiatio*), defining it as “the graceful regulation of voice, countenance, and gesture” (1.3: *pronuntiatio est vocis, vultus, gestus moderatio cum venustate*).¹⁶ After having emphasized that no one has ever carefully written on delivery because it has to do with sensorial experience,¹⁷ he clarifies that *pronuntiatio* includes both voice quality (*vocis figura*) and physical movement (*corporis motus*, 3.20). In the following chapters he mostly focuses on the properties of the voice (volume, stability and flexibility) and on the different tones that should be used in declamation (conversation, debate and amplification, see 3.20–24), concluding with a brief summary of the most appropriate gestures and mien that make what is said more plausible (3.25–27). Since “the rules regulating bodily movement ought to correspond to the several divisions of tone comprising voice” (3.26), the synthetic list of oratorical gestures here exposed – which privileges postures over gesticulation¹⁸ – is matched to the eight subdivisions that had been previously listed for the voice. The only comparison between orators and theatrical performers occurs at 3.26, where ac-

14 Plut. *De Stoic. rep.* 1047a–b, trans. Cherniss 1976.

15 Gaines 2007.

16 The translations of this work are from Caplan 1954.

17 *Rhet. Her.* 3.19: “Therefore, because no one has written carefully on this subject – all have thought it scarcely possible for voice, mien, and gesture to be lucidly described, as appertaining to our sense-experience (*ad sensus nostros pertinent*) – and because the mastery of delivery is a very important requisite for speaking, the whole subject, as I believe, deserves serious consideration.”

18 I. e. the static over the dynamic way in which the orator performs.

torial gestures are criticized for their excessive sophistication.¹⁹ The author then concludes his scrutiny of *pronuntiatio* by emphasizing, once more, the practical nature of the topic and the consequent difficulty of theorizing on it:

Non sum nescius quantum susceperim negotii qui motus corporis exprimere verbis et imitari scriptura conatus sim voces. Verum nec hoc confisus sum posse fieri ut de his rebus satis commode scribi posset, nec, si id fieri non posset, hoc quod feci fore inutile putabam, propterea quod hic admonere volumus quid oporteret; reliqua trademus exercitationi. Hoc tamen scire oportet, pronuntiationem bonam id proficere, ut res ex animo agi videatur.

I am not unaware how great a task I have undertaken in trying to express physical movements in words and portray vocal intonations in writing. True, I was not confident that it was possible to treat these matters adequately in writing. Yet neither did I suppose that, if such a treatment were impossible, it would follow that what I have done here would be useless, for it has been my purpose merely to suggest what ought to be done. The rest I shall leave to practice. This, nevertheless, one must remember: good delivery ensures that what the orator is saying seems to come from his heart.²⁰

If we now turn our attention to Cicero's rhetorical writings, we find an increasing interest in delivery. Avoiding any taxonomical classification of the type proposed by the author of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, Cicero rather tries to theorize the reasons for admitting its value in oratory. In Book 3 of his dialogue *On the Orator* (*De oratore*),²¹ he starts the specific section devoted to *actio* by defining it as "the dominant factor of oratory" (*actio [...] in dicendo una dominatur*), since "without delivery the best speaker could not be of any account at all, and a modest speaker with a trained delivery can often outdo the best of them" (3.213). The underlying idea of Crassus' discourse (one of the two main speakers of the dialogue) is that the connections between emotions, on the one hand, and their audible and visible expressions (voices and gestures),²² on the other, are based on nature: as if to say, voice and gestures arise spontaneously from the emotions that the orator must himself feel while performing in public.

Omnis enim motus animi suum quemdam a natura habet voltum et sonum et gestum [...].

For nature has assigned to every emotion a particular look and tone of voice and bearing of its own [...].²³

19 *Rhet. Her.* 3.26: "the gestures should not be conspicuous for either elegance or grossness (*in gestu nec venustatem conspiciendam nec turpitudinem esse*), lest we give the impression that we are either actors or day labourers."

20 *Rhet. Her.* 3.27.

21 The translations of this text are from Sutton/Rackham 1942 and Rackham 1942.

22 On the need, in Cicero's rhetorical theory, of tempering and controlling the emotional modulations in performance see Fjelstad 2003. On the theory of oratorical delivery and emotions, see Hall 2007.

23 *Cic. De or.* 3.216.

Atque in eis omnibus quae sunt actionis inest quaedam vis a natura data.

And all the factors of delivery contain a certain force bestowed by nature.²⁴

This awareness, however, does not prevent Cicero from emphasizing the importance of training the natural²⁵ ability of a speaker to express specific emotions and from suggesting which kind of gesture the orator should avoid in public speaking. Indeed, though often referring to actorial models (in particular to his friend Roscius, author of a book where oratorical eloquence and actorial craft were compared),²⁶ Cicero forbade the use of purely theatrical gestures in oratorical deliveries because of their connection with mimicry and their extreme artificiality:

Omnes autem hos motus subsequi debet gestus, non hic verba exprimens scenicus sed universam rem et sententiam non demonstratione sed significatione declarans, laterum inflexione hac forti ac virili non ab scena et histrionibus sed ab armis aut etiam a palaestra; manus autem minus arguta, digitis subsequens verba, non exprimens, brachium procerius proiectum quasi quoddam telum orationis, suppletio pedis in contentionibus aut incipiendis aut finiendis. Sed in ore sunt omnia, in eo autem ipso dominatus est omnis oculorum; [...].

But all these emotions must be accompanied by gesture – not this stagy gesture reproducing the words but one conveying the general situation and idea not by mimicry but by hints, with this vigorous manly throwing out of the chest, borrowed not from the stage and the theatrical profession but from the parade ground or even from wrestling; but the movements of the hand must be less rapid, following the words and not eliciting them with the fingers; the arm thrown out rather forward, like an elocutionary missile; a stamp of the foot in beginning or ending emphatic passages. But everything depends on the countenance, while the countenance itself is entirely dominated by the eyes; [...].²⁷

24 Cic. *De or.* 3.223.

25 By ‘nature’ we should always understand a combination of the two aspects: *natura ab arte perfecta*, as Robert Sonkowsky pointed out years ago in an influential article (Sonkowsky 1959, 270).

26 Macr. *Sat.* 3.14.12 (trans. Kaster 2011): “Indeed, who has not read the speech in which he berates the Roman people for rioting while Roscius was acting? And there’s no doubt that he used to compete with the actor himself to see whether the latter could mime a given thought with a variety of gestures in more different ways than he himself could state it with a variety of expressions drawn from his abundant eloquence. This made Roscius so confident of his skill that he wrote a book in which he compared oratorical eloquence with the actor’s craft.” Cf. Val. Max. 8.10.2, according to which Roscius tried to reproduce stage gestures seen in the Forum: “Aesopus and Roscius, two most skilful actors, often stood in the audience when he (Hortensius) was conducting a case in order to bring back to the stage the gestures they had sought in the Forum” (trans. Shackleton Bailey 2000). Interestingly, the orator Hortensius was nicknamed Dionysia, the name of a famous dancer of the time, implying both his female appearance and his rather ‘theatrical’ performance (Gell. *Noct. Att.* 1.5.2). On the famous friendship between Cicero and Roscius and, more in general, on the connection between oratorical and theatrical delivery, see Fantham 2002.

27 Cic. *De or.* 3.220–221. Cf. *De or.* 1.251: “Who would deny that in his movements and carriage (*motu statuque*) the orator must have the bearing and elegance of Roscius? Yet no one will urge young

After these remarks recognizing the specific quality of oratorical gestures, the remaining part of this survey on delivery focuses on the relevance of the eyes and of facial expressions in public speaking, without paying too much attention to the other parts of the body. More generally, while claiming the 'artistic' dimension of public speaking and its contiguity with theatrical performance, Cicero's main concern is always the search for *decorum* ("propriety", cf. *Or.* 74): this is why his interest in gestures remains rather limited.

What strikes me as particularly interesting in this context is the insistence on the remarkable nature of the orator's body language, precisely described in these terms: *actio quasi sermo corporis* (*De or.* 3.222). Because of its supposed 'naturalness', Cicero says, delivery goes beyond the linguistic idioms and becomes understandable to everybody:²⁸

Est enim actio quasi sermo corporis, quo magis menti congruens esse debet; oculos autem natura nobis, ut equo et leoni iubas, caudam, aures, ad motus animorum declarandos dedit, quare in hac nostra actione secundum vocem vultus valet; is autem oculis gubernatur. Atque in eis omnibus quae sunt actionis inest quaedam vis a natura data; quare etiam hac imperiti, hac vulgus, hac denique barbari maxime commoventur: verba enim neminem movent nisi cum qui eiusdem linguae societate coniunctus est, sententiaeque saepe acutae non acutorum hominum sensus praetervolant: actio, quae prae se motum animi fert, omnes movet; eisdem enim omnium animi motibus concitantur et eos eisdem notis et in aliis agnoscunt et in se ipsi indicant.

For by action the body talks, so it is all the more necessary to make it agree with the thought; and nature has given us eyes, as she has given the horse and the lion their mane and tail and ears, to indicate the feelings of the mind, so that in the matter of delivery which we are now considering the face is next in importance to the voice; and the eyes are the dominant feature in the face. And all the factors of delivery contain a certain force bestowed by nature; which moreover is the reason why it is delivery that has most effect on the ignorant and the mob and lastly on barbarians; for words influence nobody but the person allied to the speaker by sharing the same language, and clever ideas frequently outfly the understanding of people who are not clever, whereas delivery, which gives the emotion of the mind expression, influences everybody, for the same emotions are felt by all people and they both recognize them in others and manifest them in themselves by the same marks.²⁹

devotees of eloquence to toil like actors at the study of gesture." On the importance of dance for developing the actor's abilities in gestures, cf. *De or.* 3.83: "For I should assert it to be impossible for him (i. e. the actor) to come up to the mark in point of gesture if he had not had lessons in wrestling and in dancing."

28 On this remark see also Lucian, *On Dancing* 64 (see n. 51).

29 Cic. *De or.* 3.222–223.

As an additional element, Cicero here introduces a kind of hierarchy that privileges ‘authenticity’ over ‘simulation’. The distinction between the orator’s and the actor’s gestures (respectively conceived not only as ‘natural’ vs. ‘artificial’, but also as ‘symbolic’ vs. ‘pictorial’) becomes *ontological* and leads to the statement that orators are “players that act real life” (as if to say, agents of truth), while “actors [...] only mimic reality” (that is, they are simply ‘imitators’ of truth). As a consequence, the orator must be versed in moral science too.³⁰

In his subsequent works, the *Brutus* and the *Orator*, Cicero continues to reflect on the role of emotions in oratorical deliveries, emphasizing once more the direct connection of oratorical gestures with thought, which – by avoiding pure imitation – surpass words:

Sed cum haec magna in Antonio tum actio singularis; quae si partienda est in gestum atque vocem, gestus erat non verba exprimens, sed cum sentiis congruens – manus umeri latera supposito pedis status incessus omnisque motus cum verbis sentiisque consentiens; vox permanens, verum subrauca natura. Sed hoc vitium huic uni in bonum vertebat; habebat enim flebile quiddam in questionibus aptumque cum ad fidem faciendam tum ad misericordiam commovendam; ut verum videretur in hoc illud, quod Demosthenem ferunt ei, qui quaesivisset quid primum esset in dicendo, actionem, quid secundum idem, et idem tertium respondisse.

In all these respects Antonius was great, and combined with them a delivery of peculiar excellence. If we divide delivery into gesture and voice, his gesture did not seek to reflect words, but agreed with the course of his thought – hands, shoulders, chest, stamp of the foot, posture in repose and in movement, all harmonizing with his words and thoughts; voice sustained, but with a touch of huskiness. This defect however, he had the unique skill to turn into a merit. For in passages of pathos it had a touching quality well-suited to winning confidence and to stirring compassion. You can see by his example how all this bears out the truth of the dictum attributed to Demosthenes; who when asked what was first in oratory replied to his questioner, ‘action’, what second, ‘action’, and again third, ‘action’.³¹

Finally, in a passage where dance is explicitly mentioned, the issue of ‘gender’ (that is, the orator’s concern for projecting a socially acceptable image of himself as a male representative of the Roman upper-class) is introduced. Authenticity and naturalness of gestures are made synonymous with a manly performance, while an extreme grace is equated with effeminacy:

30 Cic. *De or.* 3.214: *Haec ideo dico pluribus quod genus hoc totum oratores, qui sunt veritatis ipsius actores, reliquerunt, imitatores autem veritatis, histriones, occupaverunt.*

31 Cic. *Brutus* 141–142. Translations of the *Brutus* and the *Orator* are from Hendrickson/Hubbell 1939.

Quos Sex. Titius consecutus, homo loquax sane et satis acutus, sed tam solutus et mollis in gestu ut saltatio quaedam nasceretur cui saltationi Titius nomen esset. Ita cavendum est ne quid in agendo dicendove facias, cuius imitatio rideatur.

Sextus Titius was a disciple of these two, a voluble fellow and not lacking in acuteness, but in bearing so languishing and effeminate that a kind of dance came into vogue which was called 'the Titius'. It shows what care must be used to avoid anything in style of action or speaking which can be made absurd by imitation.³²

Grace in movement and nobility of style, we are told, should never lead to an excessive artificiality of gestures, which was typical of stage performances. In three different and contrasting examples, we are warned about the dangers of postures and movements that, because of their excessive sophistication, resemble theatrical performances too closely:

Fuit enim Sulpicius omnium vel maxime, quos quidem ego audiverim, grandis et, ut ita dicam, tragicus orator. Vox cum magna tum suavis et splendida; gestus et motus corporis ita venustus ut tamen ad forum, non ad scaenam institutus videretur.

Sulpicius indeed was of all orators whom I have ever heard the most elevated in style, and, so to speak, the most theatrical. His voice was strong and at the same time pleasing and of brilliant timbre; his gesture and bodily movement extraordinarily graceful, but with a grace that seemed made for the forum rather than for the stage.³³

Vox canora et suavis, motus et gestus etiam plus artis habebat quam erat oratori satis.

His [Hortensius'] voice was sonorous and agreeable; his delivery and gesture even a little too studied for the orator.³⁴

Idemque motu sic utetur, nihil ut supersit: in gestu status erectus et celsus; rarus incessus nec ita longus; excursio moderata eaque rara; nulla mollitia cervicum, nullae argutiae digitorum, non ad numerum articulus cadens; trunco magis toto se ipse moderans et virili laterum flexione, brachi projectione in contentionibus, contractione in remissis.

He will also use gestures in such a way as to avoid excess: he will maintain an erect and lofty carriage, with but little pacing to and fro, and never for a long distance. As for darting forward, he will keep it under control and employ it but seldom. There should be no effeminate bending of the neck, no twiddling of the fingers, no marking the rhythm with the finger-joint. He will control himself by the pose of his whole frame, and the vigorous

32 Cic. *Brutus* 225. On this topic see, e. g., Gunderson 2000; Connolly 2007.

33 Cic. *Brutus* 203.

34 Cic. *Brutus* 303.

and manly attitude of the body, extending the arm in moments of passion, and dropping it in calmer moods.³⁵

To summarize: on a practical level, Cicero openly recognizes a mutual influence between oratorical and theatrical gestures. Nevertheless, the opposition he establishes (probably influenced by earlier Greek sources) between the supposed ‘naturalness’ of the former and the perceived ‘artificiality’ of the latter makes their specific gestures quite divergent in both form and content. It follows that, in Rome, they not only operate through different artistic means (i. e. employing symbolic vs. pictorial representations), but they ideally also convey opposing values on both social (manliness vs. effeminacy) and ontological (agents vs. imitators of truth) levels. Explicit references to dance are basically absent from Cicero’s writings on rhetoric and he continues to favour – as Aristotle before him – the acoustic over the visual components of delivery, dealing more extensively with the emotional power of the voice’s inflections.

The Impact of Pantomime on the Discussion of Rhetorical Gestures

When, more than a century later, Quintilian writes the *Institutio oratoria* (a work in 12 books on the theory and practice of rhetoric with a strong didactic purpose),³⁶ the situation looks quite different. In Book 11, Quintilian deals extensively (from 3.1 to 3.184) with delivery.³⁷ Remarkably, one third of this whole section (from 3.65 to 3.136) focuses specifically on gestures, to which the author attributes an explicit and precise meaning which is independent of the words they accompany (11.3.9: *gestus motusque significet aliquid*).³⁸ As many scholars have pointed out, the structure and documentation of this section rely especially on Cicero’s work (starting from the very beginning, where Quintilian inserts an explicit quotation of Cicero’s definition of *actio*, 11.3.1: “Cicero in one passage calls *actio* a ‘sort of language’, and in another ‘a kind of eloquence of the body’”). As we continue reading, however, we notice numerous and interesting novelties in the way Quintilian treats the topic, which may be interpreted as contributions of his own experience and of the culture of his time.³⁹

The first striking element is, of course, the equal importance he attributes to the aural and visual components of delivery and the close connections he establishes between these two aspects: “Delivery, taken as a whole, is divided, as I said, into two parts, voice and gesture. One appeals to the eye, the other to the ear, the two senses

35 Cic. *Or.* 59.

36 The translations of this work are from Russel 2002.

37 Among the titles on this subject see especially Maier-Eichhorn 1989; Aldrete 1999, 3–43.

38 Cf. *Inst. Or.* 11.3.66.

39 Fantham 1982.

by which all emotion penetrates to the mind" (11.3.14).⁴⁰ When the discourse turns to gesture, Quintilian makes sure to show that the visual aspects of delivery are effective even independently of words. To do so, he inserts a direct comparison with dance:

Quid autem quisque in dicendo postulet locus paulum differam, ut de gestu prius dicam, qui et ipse voci consentit et animo cum ea simul paret. Is quantum habeat in oratore momenti satis vel ex eo patet, quod pleraque etiam citra verba significat. Quippe non manus solum sed nutus etiam declarant nostram voluntatem, et in mutis pro sermone sunt, et saltatio frequenter sine voce intellegitur atque adficit, et ex vultu ingressuque perspicitur habitus animorum, et animalium quoque sermone carentium ira laetitia adulatio et oculis et quibusdam aliis corporis signis deprenditur. Nec mirum si ista, quae tamen in aliquo posita sunt motu, tantum in animis valent, cum pictura, tacens opus et habitus semper eiusdem, sic in intimos penetret adfectus ut ipsam vim dicendi nonnumquam superare videatur.

I postpone for the moment, however, the question of what is required for particular oratorical contexts, in order to speak first of Gesture, which itself conforms to the voice and joins it in obeying the mind. The importance of Gesture for an orator is evident from the simple fact that it can often convey meaning even without the help of words. Not only hands but nods show our intentions; for the dumb, indeed, these take the place of language. A dance too is often understood and emotionally effective without the voice; mental attitudes can be inferred from the face or the walk; and even dumb animals reveal their anger, joy, or wish to please by their eyes or some other bodily signal. Nor is it surprising that these things, which do after all involve some movement, should have such power over the mind, when a picture, a silent work of art in an unvarying attitude, can penetrate our innermost feelings to such an extent that it seems sometimes to be more powerful than speech itself.⁴¹

After classifying postures and movements of the head (68–71) and the face (72–82, including eyes and brows, nostrils, lips and neck), which enable the orator both to express and to arouse emotions,⁴² Quintilian focuses on arms (83–84), hands (85–87) and finger positions (92–106), inserting also a broad digression (88–92) that focuses on the most appropriate gestures for, respectively, the court and the stage (this lat-

40 The division of delivery into voice and gesture is adopted by Cicero too (*De or.* 3.212 e *Or.* 54): but his treatment of the two components is clearly unbalanced in favour of the former rather than the latter.

41 *Quint. Inst. or.* 11.3.65–67.

42 *Quint. Inst. or.* 11.3.72–73: "The face is sovereign. It is this that makes us humble, threatening, flattering, sad, cheerful, proud, or submissive; men hang on this; men fix their gaze on this; this is watched even before we start to speak; this makes us love some people and hate others; this makes us understand many things; this often replaces words altogether."

ter identified with the pantomime).⁴³ This interest in describing the finer details of a whole range of expressive hand and finger poses (*manus iactare*, cf. 11.3.179) that, he says, “speak for themselves” (*ipsae locuntur*, 86) and without which delivery is rendered “mutilated and ineffective” (*sine quibus trunca esset actio ac debilis*, 85) is absolutely new in Roman sources and deserves special attention.⁴⁴

Some scholars have recently proposed a possible logic behind this (apparently chaotic) catalogue implying that, in the author’s intentions, such a detailed description of hand and finger poses implicitly reproduces the basic linguistic categories of *verba* and *nomina* listed in Book 1, creating a sort of ‘grammar’ of gestures.⁴⁵ Yet, we can’t resist the idea that the growing success of pantomime in the early Roman Empire (whose mute performer, wearing a neutral and unexpressive mask, based his outstanding mimetic capacities on strictly corporeal postures and gestures)⁴⁶ might have influenced Quintilian’s effort to describe in a more methodical way techniques and practices in use for generations in daily communication, and in his wish to theorize all the aspects (including clothing)⁴⁷ that could contribute to the success of the orator’s performance as a whole.⁴⁸

The difficulty of theorizing on delivery, especially on its visual aspects, had been a matter of concern since Aristotle, and continued to be so in Roman culture.⁴⁹ The systematic approach of pantomime dancers in developing their affective vocabulary of hand-gestures (thanks to which they were easily understood by their audience and could elicit the desired emotional reactions) may have offered a model to Quintilian, allowing him to formulate a first (albeit rudimentary) theoretical framework in which

43 The focus on gestures continues almost until the end of Book 11, with some concerns about the most convenient relationship between gesture and phrasing (107–116), a list of the most common mistakes that orators make (117–136) and some remarks on dress (137–149: the limitations of the gesture of the left hand is probably due to the constrictions of the toga).

44 Even if, earlier in Book 1 (1.11.17–18), he had tried to ennoble the practice of *chironomia* (literally *lex gestus*) by tracing it back to the Greek tradition. On the importance of Quintilian’s evidence for reconstructing the Roman interest in rhetorical body language see especially Graf 1991.

45 Dutsch 2013.

46 The neutral mask serves as a pointer to other signifiers in the performance (signs that are most crucial to the art): on this topic see Petrides 2013.

47 Especially if we take into account the symbolism that was inherent in the pantomime’s costume (Wyles 2008).

48 This does not necessarily imply, as has been suggested by other scholars (Aldrete 1999, 43; *contra* Hall 2004, 158), that oratorical gesture was *practically* influenced by contemporary pantomime. Certainly the outstanding expressiveness of this specific theatrical art exerted some kind of influence on oratorical delivery, but we are not able to evaluate the extent of its practical impact, if any, on the orator’s gestures.

49 Cf. e. g. *Rhet. ad Her.* 3.27: “I was not confident that it was possible to treat these matters adequately in writing” (see above pp. 272–273).

the basic elements used by the orators in non-verbal communication could be efficiently classified.⁵⁰

The dividing line that Quintilian – relying on issues already brought into play by Cicero when sketching his binary opposition of oratorical vs. theatrical gestures – draws between the orator and the dancer is certainly clear on many different levels, as we can infer from these statements: “I do not want the orator’s gestures to be modelled on the dance; but I do want something of these boyhood exercises to underpin them, so that the grace acquired in learning them stays with us, though unobserved, when our minds are on other things” (1.11.19); “An orator has to be very different from a dancer; he must adapt his gesture to his sense more than to his words” (11.3.89); “Oratory has a different flavour: it does not wish to be too highly spiced, because it is a real activity, not an imitation” (11.3.182). Some elements of the communication methods of the orator and the dancer, however, betray an area of convergence which makes us suppose a mutual influence between these two figures.

For instance, the alleged universality of hand ‘language’, of which other authors will later speak when referring to the pantomime dancer,⁵¹ is described by Quintilian as the strength of oratorical gestures:

Manus vero, sine quibus trunca esset actio ac debilis, vix dici potest quot motus habeant, cum paene ipsam verborum copiam persequantur. Nam ceterae partes loquentem adiuvant, hae, prope est ut dicam, ipsae locuntur. An non his poscimus pollicemur, vocamus dimittimus, minamur supplicamus, abominamur timemus, interrogamus negamus, gaudium tristitiam dubitationem confessionem paenitentiam modum copiam numerum tempus ostendimus? non eaedem concitant inhihent [supplicant] probant admirantur verecundantur? non in demonstrandis locis atque personis adverbiorum atque pronominum optinent vicem? – ut in tanta per omnis gentes nationesque linguae diversitate hic mihi omnium hominum communis sermo videatur.

As for the hands, without which the Delivery would be crippled and enfeebled, it is almost impossible to say how many movements they possess, for these almost match the entire stock of words. Other parts of the body assist the speaker: the hands, I might almost say, speak for themselves. Do we not use them to demand and promise, summon and dismiss,

50 As Graf (1991, 38) opportunely points out, gestures are not systematically categorized by the author. As for the absorption of knowledge coming from other disciplines, rhetorical theory integrated and discussed, e. g., the nutrition prescriptions from dietetics, the theories of voice production from philosophy and medicine, and so on.

51 According to a famous anecdote, told by Lucian, a foreigner thought to use a pantomime-dancer as an interpreter with his barbarian neighbours, “so deeply had he been impressed by that disclosure of the distinctness and lucidity of the mimicry of the dance” (*On Dancing* 64). Cf. also *Lib. Or.* 64.11.2.7 (where pantomime is described as “a form of instruction for the masses”, τὴν ὄρχησιν διδαχὴν τινα τοῖς πλήθεσι) and *Anth. Lat.* 100.7–10 (“he [sc. the pantomime dancer] fights, he plays, he loves, he revels, he turns round, he stands still, he illuminates the truth, and imbues everything with grace. He has as many tongues as limbs, so wonderful is the art by which he can make his joints speak although his mouth is silent”, trans. Hall 2013).

threaten and beg, show horror and fear, inquire and deny, and also to indicate joy, sadness, doubt, confession, remorse, or again size, quantity, number, and time? Do they not excite, restrain, approve, admire, display shame? Do they not serve instead of adverbs and pronouns when we need to point out places or persons? Amid all the linguistic diversity of the peoples and nations of the world, this, it seems to me, is the common language of the human race.⁵²

As Quintilian himself admits at the end of this long portion of text on gestures, the oratory of his time had inevitably absorbed external elements that had, by then, become acceptable. But the ‘Romanness’ of oratorical deliveries must be preserved:⁵³ hence the need to control influences that might be dangerous for the ‘ideal’ orator.

Sed iam recepta est actio paulo agitatior et exigitur et quibusdam partibus convenit, ita tamen temperanda ne, dum actoris captamus elegantiam, perdamus viri boni et gravis auctoritatem.

Nowadays, however, a somewhat more agitated style of Delivery is regarded as acceptable, and is indeed appropriate in some contexts; but it needs to be under control, lest, in our eagerness to pursue the elegance of the performer, we lose the authority of the good and grave man.⁵⁴

In conclusion, there is no doubt that, in Roman culture, the orator and the dancer contributed to the need for theorizing gestures, means that were fundamental to both for expressing and arousing emotions in their respective audiences. In the early imperial age the impact of pantomime, which based its appeal on body language, went beyond the theatrical stage, causing a growing interest in the visual aspects of the orator’s delivery and stimulating a systematic analysis of its specific idiom. Nevertheless, the different features and functions of the gestures that these two arts were thought to employ (symbolic vs. pictorial, natural vs. artificial) led to a sharp conceptual distinction between them, especially regarding the cultural values that they were thought to convey.⁵⁵

52 Quint. *Inst. or.* 11.3.85–87; cf. the much less detailed account of *actio* at Cic. *De or.* 3.223, quoted above p. 275.

53 There was a wide range of meanings and aspects that this notion was supposed to convey, including social role, ethnicity and gender.

54 Quint. *Inst. or.* 11.3.184.

55 I thank all the participants in the symposium *The Dance of Priests, Matronae, and Philosophers: Aspects of Dance Culture in Rome and the Roman Empire*, where a preliminary version of this paper has been originally presented, for their useful suggestions and comments, especially Karin Schlapbach for her admirable organisation of the event and her careful reading of this contribution.

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Der Dichter als Tänzer und Körperperformer

Die Kinetik des Dichtens bei Horaz

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Abstract: This chapter examines metapoetic dance images in Horace. Focusing on a set of passages from the Epistles which cast the lyric or dramatic poet alternately as a gladiator, a pantomime, or a tightrope artist, the first part argues that these images foreground the spectacular and awe-inspiring dimension of these specifically Roman competitive or performative disciplines and portray the making of poetry less as an exercise in representation than as a virtuosic and public physical art. The chapter then turns to the dance images in Odes 1.1. and 4.3 and shows that there, the poet appears in different types of spaces as a participant in reciprocal interactions and as the object of others' kinetic actions. The diverse dance images, which have in common that they put the spotlight on the poet and make a spectacle of his body, portray the poet as a public figure in constant interaction with his audience.

Die Kinetik des Dichtens in Drama und Lyrik, griechisch und römisch

Dichtung und Tanz sind in der Antike auf mannigfaltige Weise eng verbunden. Chorlyrik, Drama und Pantomimus sind multimediale Performancegenres, und Symposium, Theater und religiöser Kult boten Griechen und Römern vielfältige Gelegenheiten, Tänze und Gesänge zu verbinden. Dichtung und Tanz sind im von den Musen abgeleiteten Begriff *mousikē* vereint, der die Einheit von Singen, Musizieren und Tanzen bezeichnet, und am Ende der Antike schliesst das lateinische Pendant *musica* bei Augustinus in der Theorie den Tanz nach wie vor als selbstverständlich mit ein (*De musica* 1.2.3–1.3.4).¹ Doch die enge Verbindung von Dichtung und Tanz kommt auch jenseits von konkreten Performancepraktiken zum Ausdruck. Die tanzenden Musen

¹ Neben *μουσική* bedeutet auch *μολπή* die Einheit von Singen und Tanzen (dazu Graf in diesem Band, oben S. 90–91).

bei Hesiod (*Theogonie* 70) oder später bei Ennius (*Annales* 1.1) verweisen auf die untrennbare Einheit von kinetischer Energie und dichterischer Inspiration.

Der vorliegende Beitrag nimmt weniger die Kombination von Dichtung und Tanz in antiken Aufführungskontexten in den Blick als vielmehr die Vorstellung, dass das Dichten selbst eine Form von Tanzen oder von Körperperformance sei, und zwar am Beispiel programmatischer Passagen in den Episteln und den Oden des Horaz. Die Verankerung des Dichtens im Körper und in der Motorik muss keineswegs nur metaphorisch verstanden werden, wie eine wenig beachtete Stelle aus Aristoteles' *Poetik* zeigt: der dramatische Dichter solle bei der Ausarbeitung des Plots, so Aristoteles, „soweit wie möglich auch mit den Gesten mitwirken, denn bei gleicher Begabung sind diejenigen am überzeugendsten, die in den Leidenschaften sind“ (ὄσα δὲ δυνατὸν καὶ τοῖς σχήμασιν συναπεργαζόμενον· πιθανώτατοι γὰρ ἀπὸ τῆς αὐτῆς φύσεως οἱ ἐν τοῖς πάθεσιν εἰσιν, Kap. 17, 1455a 29–31).² Das relevante Wort ist hier *schēmata*, ein vielseitiger Begriff, der ebenso „Körperhaltungen“ wie auch „Gesten“ und insbesondere „Tanzfiguren“ bedeutet. Die Stelle darf nicht überstrapaziert werden, und Aristoteles ging wohl nicht davon aus, dass gute Tragödiendichter beim Dichten tanzten. „Gesten“ mag die Sache am besten treffen.³ Doch steht ausser Zweifel, dass von Gesten des Dichters die Rede ist und nicht lediglich von denjenigen, die der Dichter den Schauspielern oder dem Chor zudenkt. Denn das ganze Kapitel 17 bezieht sich auf den Dichter und seine Arbeit am Plot. Übersetzungen wie z. B. diejenige Manfred Fuhrmanns gehen an der Sache vorbei: „Ausserdem soll man sich die Gesten der Personen möglichst lebhaft vorstellen.“⁴ Diese Wiedergabe, die mehr in τοῖς σχήμασιν συναπεργαζόμενον hineinliest, als das Griechische hergibt, mag damit zu tun haben, dass Aristoteles am Anfang von Kap. 17 betont, man müsse durch den sprachlichen Ausdruck (*lexis*) am Plot (*mythos*) arbeiten, indem man sich diesen so gut wie möglich vor Augen führe (Δεῖ δὲ τοὺς μύθους συνιστάναι καὶ τῇ λέξει συναπεργάζεσθαι ὅτι μάλιστα πρὸ ὀμμάτων τιθέμενον, 1455a 22–23).⁵ Auf diese Art und Weise „sehend“, wird der Dichter, der dem Geschehen sozusagen persönlich beiwohnt, den passenden Ausdruck finden (οὕτω γὰρ ἂν ἐναργέστατα ὁρῶν ὥσπερ παρ' αὐτοῖς γιγνόμενος τοῖς πραττομένοις εὕρισκοι τὸ πρέπον, 1455a 23–25). Von der imaginierten physischen Nähe und Involviertheit des Dichters ist es aber nur ein kleiner Schritt zu seiner tatsächlichen körperlichen Beteiligung durch *schēmata*. Die Eliminierung des Körpers des Dichters in Fuhrmanns Interpretation, die von zahlreichen anderen geteilt wird, ist symptomatisch dafür, dass die körperliche Dimension in unserer Wahrnehmung der antiken Auffassung des Dich-

2 Übersetzungen sind, soweit nicht anders vermerkt, von der Autorin.

3 Bocksberger 2021 erinnert zu Recht daran, dass *schēma* als Tanzfigur eine dynamische Dimension besitzt.

4 Fuhrmann 1982.

5 So z. B. Gallavotti 1974, 160: „è sottinteso dunque, e sempre in riferimento alla λέξις, il concetto del πρὸ ὀμμάτων τίθεσθαι.“

tens immer noch unterbelichtet ist, trotz mehr als einem halben Jahrhundert an Forschungen zu Mündlichkeit und Performativität.⁶ Diese Dimension scheint, wenn man Aristoteles folgt, durchaus nicht nur in Form von Metaphern und Bildern vorhanden zu sein, sondern auch als tatsächliche motorische Aktivität, aus der sich das Dichten nährt und die die Vorstellungskraft und das Mitfühlen des Dichters belebt – und zwar, wie dieser Beitrag zeigen möchte, nicht nur des dramatischen Dichters.⁷

Das Verbindungsglied zwischen dem Körper und dem Dichten sind die Emotionen (*pathē*). Die Passage aus der *Poetik* setzt stillschweigend voraus, dass Emotionen zuallererst körperliche Zustände sind. Wenn es also in der Tragödie darum geht, Emotionen durch Wörter auszudrücken, dann kann der Dichter mit seinem Körper arbeiten: Körperhaltungen, Gesten und Bewegungen versetzen ihn in die gewünschten Emotionen, und auf der Grundlage dieses Erlebens am eigenen Leib kann er die überzeugendsten Worte finden. Der Körper ist hier eine Ressource, die Emotionen generiert, und nicht etwa nur ein passives Ausdrucksmittel.

Die zentrale Bedeutung der Körperbewegungen und des Tanzens für die dramatischen Dichter zeigt sich auch in den Nachrichten über das ‚multi-tasking‘ der Dichter im Hinblick auf die Aufführung. Gemäss dem peripatetischen Musiktheoretiker Aristokles (2. Jh. v. Chr.) galten verschiedene dramatische Dichter, darunter Aischylos und Sophokles, auch als Choreographen und Tanzmeister, denn sie studierten die Tänze mit ihren Chören gleich selber ein.⁸ Dies legt nahe, dass die dramatischen Dichter den Tanz als Gestaltungsmittel nutzen konnten, das womöglich seinerseits wiederum auf den Wortlaut der Dichtung einwirkte. Ob wahr oder imaginiert, die Figur des Dichters und Choreographen in Personalunion deutet an, dass Dichten und Tanzen nicht wie heute als zwei klar unterschiedene Ausdrucksformen verstanden wurden, sondern als verschiedene Aspekte ein und derselben Tätigkeit, die einander gegenseitig nährten. Vor diesem Hintergrund gewinnt Aristoteles' Vorstellung, dass die Dichter bei ihrer Arbeit am Skript auch selber mit Gesten arbeiteten, wiederum an Kontur. Es geht dabei aber nicht in erster Linie um das Verhältnis von Dichter und Schauspieler bzw. Chor oder um den noch weiteren Themenkomplex der *reperformance*, sondern viel-

6 Ähnlich z. B. auch Schmitt 2008; Gallavotti 1974; Hardy 1969, 54; Rostagni 1945. Richtig dagegen Vahlen 1885, 185: „quantum id fieri possit etiam gestibus ea quasi ὁποκιρτῆς agat“; Brink 1971, 185; Argumente für die hier vertretene Interpretation finden sich bei Lucas 1968, 175. In jüngster Zeit ist im Anschluss an die wegweisenden Arbeiten von Bruno Gentili, Claude Calame und anderen v. a. die *reperformance* von ursprünglich an bestimmte Kontexte gebundenen Dichtungen neu untersucht worden (z. B. Hunter/Uhlig 2017; Budelmann/Phillips 2018).

7 Dass das Sprechen onto- und phylogenetisch quasi aus der Gestik hervorgeht, wird heute aus neurowissenschaftlicher Perspektive vertreten. Dazu z. B. Iacoboni 2008, 79–84.

8 Athen. 1, 21e–f (Aischylos); 22a: „Aristokles sagt auch, dass die alten Dichter – Thespis, Pratinas, Kratinos und Phrynichos – Tänzer genannt wurden, weil sie nicht nur ihre Dramen in Chortanz umsetzten, sondern auch unabhängig von ihren eigenen Dichtungen diejenigen, die es wünschten, im Tanzen unterrichteten“ (= TrGF 1, 1 T 11); 628d; Plu. *Quaest. Conv.* 8.9, 732F. Dazu Curtis 2017, 156.

mehr um die Arbeit des Dichters an seinem Stoff und den Figuren. Dass der Körper an dieser Arbeit Anteil haben kann, also an einer Etappe, die der Aufführung vorgelagert ist, ist bemerkenswert. Der Fokus auf den Dichter, der alleine an seinem Text arbeitet, wirkt überraschend modern; gleichzeitig ist die formalisierte körperliche Dimension dieser Tätigkeit in der antiken Tradition der engen Beziehungen zwischen Dichtung und Performance anzusiedeln.

Es ist diese Beteiligung des Körpers, die der vorliegende Beitrag in den Blick nehmen möchte. Thema ist die Darstellung des Dichtens als einer Körperperformance, und zwar da, wo keine tatsächliche Aufführung im Spiel ist. Gefragt wird, was diese Bezugnahme auf den Körper, auf Bewegung und Tanz bedeuten kann – was sie bei einem Römer bedeuten kann, Horaz, der ein lyrischer Dichter nach griechischem Vorbild sein will, der jedoch nicht mehr in die gleichen Performancekontexte wie seine Vorgänger eingebettet ist. Es wird in der Forschung oft betont, dass in Rom Chöre im öffentlichen Raum weniger präsent sind als bei den Griechen, und dass das gemeinsame Mahl, das *convivium*, als soziale Institution und als Aufführungsort von Dichtung nicht die Bedeutung hat, die das Symposion für die griechischen Lyriker hatte.⁹ Das heisst nicht, dass die Römer nicht ebenfalls eine vielfältige Tanzkultur hatten. Doch wissen wir noch weniger darüber, in welchem Verhältnis Tanz und Dichtung zueinander standen, als bei den Griechen.¹⁰

Umso interessanter ist es festzustellen, dass der Tanz – wie auch die Musik – in Horaz' dichterischem Universum allpräsent ist. Die Thematisierung des Singens und Musizierens in den Oden sowie die Musikalität ihrer Sprache haben seit jeher grosse Beachtung gefunden und die Frage aufgeworfen, ob die Oden selbst gesungen wurden (nein, sagte Richard Heinze in einem wichtigen Aufsatz von 1923 – die Präsenz der Musik in den Oden sei eine metaphorische; ja, sagte Günther Wille in seinem Opus magnum von 1967, *Musica romana*).¹¹ Diese Debatte setzt sich unter veränderten Vorzeichen bis heute fort, auch wenn folgendes nunmehr als Konsens gelten darf: Horaz' Dichtung wurde zu seinen Lebzeiten in Buchform verbreitet, gelesen und – dies kann jedenfalls nicht ausgeschlossen werden – im kleineren Kreis auch rezitiert.¹² Aber mit Ausnahme des *Carmen saeculare*, einer Auftragsdichtung für die Säkularspiele des

9 Die legendären Gesänge der Römer beim Gastmahl, die Cicero unter Berufung auf Cato erwähnt (*Brut.* 75; *Tusc.* 1.3; 4.3), sind womöglich eine erfundene Tradition in Anlehnung an Dikaiarchs Darstellung der Gesänge beim Symposion (fr. 88 Wehrli). Dazu Pierre 2016, 207–212; Lowrie 2009, 48–60; offen gegenüber einer möglichen historischen Tradition sind Habinek 2005; Petersmann 2002; Rüpke 2001; Zorzetti 1990.

10 Nachrichten über Chöre, die sangen und tanzten, sind sparsamer: die Salier gehören dazu, ebenso der Chor der 27 *virgines* im Jahr 207 v. Chr. (*Livius* 27.37; vgl. Prescendi in diesem Band).

11 Heinze 1923; Wille 1967, 234–253.

12 Zur Rezitation in Horaz' Rom, vgl. Lowrie 2009, 12–13.

Augustus im Jahr 17 vor unserer Zeitrechnung, wurde sie ursprünglich wohl weder gesungen noch regelmässig in Kontexten rezitiert, in denen auch getanzt wurde.¹³

Gleichzeitig hat aber die Frage, ob sich Horaz' Lyrik als mündliche Äusserung oder als geschriebener Text präsentiert, als Gesang oder als Buch, keineswegs an Interesse verloren. Denn an diesem Gegensatz hängen unterschiedliche Auffassungen von Dichtung: mit der Mündlichkeit sind Sprechakte verbunden und somit pragmatische Kontexte; die Schriftlichkeit eines Gedichts weist auf seine potentielle Autonomie vom Entstehungskontext hin. Mündlichkeit bedeutet Vollzug, Schriftlichkeit signalisiert Medialität. Dieser Gegensatz ist künstlich und wird auf mannigfaltige Weise unterlaufen: eine lediglich imaginierte Mündlichkeit wird vom Gedicht-Text selbst erzeugt, der somit auch seine eigenen fiktionalen pragmatischen Kontexte transportiert, und umgekehrt kann auch ein schriftliches Gedicht z. B. eine Einladung aussprechen und in diesem Sinne handeln und Handlung bewirken. Gerade der vielgestaltige moderne Begriff der „performance“, der in der jüngeren Debatte zentral ist, kann sich auch auf schriftliche Texte beziehen, sei es im Sinne der Sprechakttheorie oder im Sinne einer Rezeptionsästhetik, gemäss der die Bedeutung eines literarischen Texts in der Interaktion mit der Leserin performativ erzeugt wird.¹⁴ Dennoch ist unumstritten, dass die (anachronistische) Rede vom Singen in Horaz' Oden für die Performativität seiner Dichtung, und das heisst letztlich für die Frage nach dem sozialen Ort, den sie sich selber zudenkt, von höchster Bedeutung ist.

Umso erstaunlicher ist es, dass die Darstellung des Dichters als Tänzer, Wettkämpfer und Schausteller in dieser Debatte weitgehend vernachlässigt worden ist. In ihrer wichtigen Monographie mit dem Titel *Writing, Performance and Authority in Augustan Rome* von 2009 bemerkt Michèle Lowrie zwar, dass sich das Interesse augusteischer Dichter an der performativen Dimension der Sprache oft in einer besonderen Aufmerksamkeit für das Theater und dramatische Medien ausdrückt. Doch konzentriert sich ihre Studie darauf, wie die Dichter das Verhältnis von Mündlichkeit und Schriftlichkeit bzw. Gesang und Literatur darstellen, und nimmt den Tanz nicht eigens in den Blick.¹⁵ Diese Leerstelle ist durchaus repräsentativ: während die poetologische Dimension der Rede vom Singen bei Horaz ausgiebig untersucht worden ist, sind Tanz und Körperperformance mit wenigen Ausnahmen durch die Maschen der Forschung

13 Z. B. Curtis 2017, 132 n. 3: „It is unknown whether and how Horace's *Odes* were performed“; cf. Lowrie 2009, 12; 63; 72–97; 251–258; Barchiesi 2000, 170 with n. 6; Rossi 2009, 365–366.

14 Zur Sprechakttheorie Austin 1976; bei Horaz, Lowrie 2009, 63–97; zur Rezeptionsästhetik Waring 1975.

15 Lowrie 2009, 73–74: „The vocabulary of song, instruments, Muses and other singing gods, verbs of utterance or singing, and the like abound in Horace“ (n. 46 schliesst Belege von *chorus* in den Oden mit ein, doch Lowries Diskussion im entsprechenden Kapitel privilegiert das *Singen* des Chors); ähnlich auch McCarthy 2019, 23–32. Die Frage nach der Performance ist Teil des grösseren Themas des Verhältnisses der Oden zur griechischen Lyrik; dazu z. B. Feeney 1993; Rossi 2009; Briand 2016.

gefallen.¹⁶ Das mag ein Stück weit damit zu tun haben, dass Horaz im allgemeinen eine feindliche Haltung gegenüber Performance, Schauspiel und Tanz unterstellt wird. Lowrie betont den Bruch, der Horaz gemäss seiner eigenen Darstellung von einer (historischen oder imaginierten) Tradition des Singens von Dichtungen trenne; Lada-Richards kommt, ausgehend von Horaz' Äusserungen zum Pantomimus in der *Ars poetica*, zum Schluss, dass Horaz dieses Genre dezidiert ablehnte.¹⁷

Darüber hinaus hat das relative Desinteresse der Forschung am Motiv des Tanzens bei Horaz wohl vor allem zwei Gründe. Erstens ist das musikalische Vokabular, zumal in den Oden, durchaus prominenter als das Tanzmotiv; zweitens kommt das Singen und Lyraspielen oft im Zusammenhang mit dem Dichter-Ich vor und erinnert dadurch direkt an die musikalische Performance der frühgriechischen Lyrik. Das Motiv des Tanzens fügt sich hingegen nicht so nahtlos in dieses Bild ein: denn während man sagen kann, dass die gesamte frühgriechische Lyrik, auf die sich Horaz bezieht, gesungen wurde, so wurden nicht alle Lieder von einem Chor gesungen und getanzt.¹⁸ Es kann Horaz also nicht lediglich darum gehen, spezifische vergangene Aufführungspraktiken zu evozieren.¹⁹ Allerdings scheint mir, dass sich die Frage nach der Bedeutung des Tanzmotivs dadurch nur umso dringender stellt. Dieses Motiv ist gerade insofern interessant, als es nicht einfach als obligatorischer Bestandteil einer ursprünglichen Aufführungspraktik betrachtet werden kann. Die Erklärung, dass Tanz und lyrische Dichtung per se zusammengehören, greift daher zu kurz. Die Frage ist vielmehr: warum nimmt Horaz das Motiv des Tanzens auf? Was leistet es in seiner Dichtung? Es mag sogar sein, dass wichtige Aspekte der kulturellen Bedeutung des Tanzes gerade da zutage treten, wo dieser sozusagen ohne äusseren Anlass thematisiert oder evoziert wird und einfache, kontextuelle Erklärungen für seine Präsenz im Text fehlen.

Auch ist es nicht so, dass das Tanzmotiv bei Horaz ausschliesslich griechisch konnotiert wäre. Zwar ist das Tanzvokabular tatsächlich zu einem Teil griechisch: von *chorus* ist die Rede, dem Tanzchor, von *chorea*, dem Chortanz – griechische Wörter, die noch nicht so lange Eingang in den lateinischen Wortschatz gefunden hatten.²⁰ Allein schon deshalb sind z. B. die „leichtfüssigen Tänze (*chori*) der Nymphen und Satyrn“ in der ersten Ode des ersten Odenbuchs (1.1.31) griechisch angehaucht, abgesehen davon, dass auch die „Nymphen“ und „Satyrn“ direkt der griechischen Mythologie entstammen (mehr dazu unten).

16 Unter den Ausnahmen ist Curtis 2017; ebenso Peponi 2002, die Horaz' *imitatio* der frühgriechischen Lyrik als „re-enactment“ begreift (bes. 38–43); ähnlich Barchiesi 2000.

17 Lowrie 2009, 48–60; Lada-Richards 2019 (dazu unten).

18 Welche Lieder im einzelnen in die Kategorie der Chorlieder gehören, ist nicht in jedem Fall klar, wie das Beispiel von Stesichoros zeigt.

19 Zumal die Chorlyrik bei Horaz weit weniger präsent ist als monodische Lyrik, bzw. Horaz nicht besonders an dieser hellenistischen Unterscheidung gelegen ist. Vgl. Curtis 2017, 15; Briand 2016.

20 *chorus* ist vor dem 1. Jh. v. Chr. nur je einmal bei Naevius und Lucilius bezeugt, *chorea* erst im 1. Jh. (ThLL ss.vv.). Dazu Curtis 2017, 15–17; Alonso Fernández 2011, 96–105.

Daneben gehört das Tanzen in den Oden aber auch zu den Strategien, die gezielt an Römisches anknüpfen und die Lyrik dadurch in Rom heimisch zu machen suchten. Dies lässt sich z. B. in c. 1.37 beobachten, der Ode auf den Sieg über Antonius und Cleopatra bei Actium (Horaz wird nach Shackleton Bailey ⁴2001 zitiert):

*Nunc est bibendum, nunc pede libero
pulsanda tellus, nunc Saliaribus
ornare pulvinar deorum
tempus erat dapibus, sodales.*

Jetzt heisst es trinken, jetzt mit freiem Fuss
die Erde erschallen lassen, jetzt war es Zeit, mit dem Saliermahl
zu ehren das Polster der Götter,
Gefährten!

Die ersten drei Wörter dieses Gedichts übersetzen den Anfang eines Gedichts von Alkaios auf den Tod des Tyrannen Myrsilos (332 Voigt/L.-P.) und verweisen damit direkt auf das griechische Symposion. Horaz fügt diesem Zitat das sonore Tanzen hinzu, das ebenfalls an griechische Vorbilder erinnert (Hesiods tanzende Musen, unter deren Füßen die Erde erschallt) und das eine Konvergenz von Sprechsituation und angesprochener Handlung suggeriert nach der Art eines griechischen Chorlieds. Diese Konvergenz wird noch verstärkt durch die Junktur *pede libero* im ersten Vers, die neben dem Tanz auch an das lyrische Versmass des Gedichts denken lässt und dem Tanzen damit eine selbstreferentielle Dimension verleiht.²¹ Die Anklänge an Griechisches stehen in einem Spannungsverhältnis zur Verankerung der Aussage in der Sprechsituation, die durch die doppelte Anapher von *nunc* in den Vordergrund rückt und die Nennung der römischsten aller Tänzer vorbereitet, der Salier.²² Die Salier waren bekannt für ihre opulenten Gelage, aber auch für ihren Tanz, das *tripudium* (s. Prescendi in diesem Band). Das „Polster der Götter“ deutet ein *lectisternium* an, bei dem man Götterstatuen auf Polstern platzierte, um sie am gemeinsamen Mahl teilhaben zu lassen. Die Salier sind somit das Scharnier zwischen dem griechisch inspirierten Trinken und Tanzen am Anfang des Gedichts und einem Ritual, das schon seit dem 4. Jh. vor unserer Zeitrechnung zur römischen Staatsreligion gehörte. Die Salier, deren Name selbst an ihren Tanz erinnert, sind das Bindeglied zwischen diesen beiden Welten, sie verankern das Tanzen der ersten beide Verse im römischen „Jetzt“. Die Strophe schliesst

21 Hes. *Theog.* 69–70: *περὶ δ' ἴαχε γαῖα μέλαινα / ὑμνεύσαις, ἐρατὸς δὲ ποδῶν ὑπο δοῦπος ὀρώρει*, schon von Ennius imitiert (*Ann.* 1.1 Skutsch). *liber* evoziert sowohl den Gott Liber als auch ein freies (i. e. lyrisches) Versmass (cf. Thevenaz 2016, 120). Zur Vieldeutigkeit von *pes* vgl. Curtis 2017, 19. Vgl. auch Prescendi in diesem Band, oben S. 75.

22 Cf. West 1995, 183: „Horace instantly modulates and speaks as a Roman.“ Mit dem dritten *nunc* wechselt auch das Tempus (*nunc . . . tempus erat*, 2–4), wobei das Imperfekt die Perspektive auf die Vergangenheit öffnet und in einer Spannung zu *nunc* steht.

mit dem Vokativ *sodales*, dem römischen Pendant zu den sympotischen *ἑταῖροι* oder *φίλοι* der frühgriechischen Lyrik, mit dem der Dichter sich selber im eingangs angesprochenen Trinken und Tanzen noch einmal mit einschliesst. Damit wird eher eine private Feier evoziert, während die Salier und die Vorstellung eines *lectisternium* zuvor auf den öffentlichen Raum verwiesen.²³ Diese Ambivalenz ist charakteristisch für die ganze Strophe, die sehr schön zeigt, welche unterschiedlichen Parameter den Raum des Tanzens bei Horaz konstituieren: griechisch vs. römisch, fern vs. nah, imaginiert vs. zur Lebenswelt gehörend, exklusiv vs. öffentlich. In diesem Spannungsfeld situiert sich das Tanzen; gleichsam sein Brennpunkt, bereichert es alle seine Dimensionen.

Hier möchte der vorliegende Beitrag einhaken und fragen, ob das Motiv des Tanzens, an dem der Dichter teilnimmt, Aufschluss darüber geben kann, welchen Ort Horaz seiner neuen Kunst, der lyrischen Dichtung, in Rom zudenkt. Was für Räume evoziert das Tanzmotiv, welche Art von Interaktionen impliziert es, welche Art von Gemeinschaft? Das Tanzmotiv führt weg vom Wort und hin zum Körper, weg von der Bedeutung und hin zur Bewegung, weg vom Werk, hin zum Vollzug. Das Tanzmotiv evoziert einen Raum, einen Kontext, in dem sich die Lyrik situiert und in dem sie agiert. Wie wir uns diesen Raum und dieses Agieren vorzustellen haben, das ist die Frage, die hier interessiert. Um sie einzukreisen, sollen zuerst drei Textpassagen aus Horaz' hexametrischen Episteln und anschliessend zwei exemplarische Auszüge aus den Oden diskutiert werden.

Der Dichter als Körperkünstler in den *Episteln*

In den Episteln herrscht ein anderer Ton vor als in den Oden, leichtfüssiger und etwas näher beim Gespräch. Auch die Bildersprache setzt andere Akzente. In den Episteln fallen drei prominente Stellen auf, an denen der Dichter auf je unterschiedliche Weise als ein athletischer, akrobatischer oder tanzender Performer charakterisiert wird. Zwei dieser Textstellen beziehen sich auf den lyrischen Dichter, die dritte auf den dramatischen Dichter. Trotz dieser Uneinheitlichkeit lohnt es sich, diesen Bildern nachzugehen und zu fragen, was sie über Horaz' Vorstellung vom Dichten mitteilen können.

In der Epistel 1.1, die wohl etwa dem Jahr 20 vor unserer Zeitrechnung zuzuordnen ist²⁴, stellt der Dichter sich selbst als ausgedienten Gladiator dar und als alterndes Rennpferd, und zwar gegenüber Maecenas, der den Dichter gebeten hat, sich wieder

23 Nisbet/Hubbard ³1975, 411: „the celebrations are communal and Roman“; Thevenaz 2016, 120: „un banquet communautaire, et non privé“ (mit Verweis auf Hardie 1977, der den Bezug der Ode zu einem Chorlied untersucht). Diplomatischer sind Kiessling/Heinze ¹⁴1984, 174 („*epulae publicae* und *priuatae*“) und Mayer 2012, 218: „Horace invites his companions (*sodales*) to prepare a celebration (possibly private) in accordance with Roman traditions.“

24 So Kiessling/Heinze ⁷1961, 2; vgl. Mayer 1994, 8–10.

der Dichtung zu widmen – man darf annehmen, dass die lyrische Dichtung gemeint ist, denn seit der Publikation der ersten drei Bücher *carmina* waren etwa drei Jahre vergangen, und seither dichtete Horaz ausschliesslich Hexameter – die Episteln.²⁵ Die Antwort des Dichters fällt negativ aus (*epist.* 1.1.1–9):

*Prima dicte mihi, summa dicende Camena,
spectatum satis et donatum iam rude quaeris,
Maecenas, iterum antiquo me includere ludo?
Non eadem est aetas, non mens. Veianius armis
Herculis ad postem fixis latet abditus agro,
ne populum extrema rediens exoret harena.
Est mihi purgatum crebro qui personet aurem:
,Solve senescentem mature sanus equum, ne
peccet ad extremum ridendus et ilia ducat.'*

In meinem ersten Lied Besungener, Maecenas, dem auch das letzte gehören soll, willst du mich wieder in die alte Gladiatorenkaserne sperren, der ich doch zur Genüge erprobt bin und zum Abschied schon den hölzernen Degen erhalten habe? Vorüber sind die Jahre, verändert ist die Gesinnung. Veianius hat seine Waffen an den Pfeiler des Herculestempels geheftet und verbirgt sich zurückgezogen auf dem Land, um bei seiner Rückkehr das Volk nicht am Rand der Arena um Gnade zu bitten.²⁶ Eine Stimme ertönt mir oft im hellhörigen Ohr: ‚Entschirre das alternde Pferd beizeiten, wenn du vernünftig bist, damit es nicht am Ende noch lächerlich strauchelt und keucht‘.

Das Vorbild für den Dichter als alterndes Rennpferd findet sich bei Ibykos aus Rhegium (6. Jh. v. Chr.).²⁷ Kontext und Überlieferung geben interessante Hinweise auf die Funktion des Bildes und auf sein Verständnis in der Antike (fr. 2 = 287 PMG):

Wieder zielt Eros nach mir unter schwärzlichen Brauen hervor mit schmelzenden Blicken,
und mit vielerlei Zauberwerk stösst er ins endlose Fangnetz der Kypris hinein mich.
Wahrlich – ich zittere vor seine Zugriff
so, wie ein jochtragend Rennpferd, das Preise errang und nun alt wird,
nur wider Willen an rasendem Wagen zum Kampf geht. (Übers. Latacz 1991)

Das altersschwache Pferd wird hier normalerweise einfach als Bild für das lyrische Ich gedeutet, das zu alt ist für den Kampf mit dem mächtigen Gott Eros.²⁸ Doch hat das

25 Lowrie 2009, 257 lässt offen, ob lyrische Dichtung oder die Episteln selbst gemeint seien.

26 Oder: ihn gehen zu lassen (so Mayer 1994, ad loc.).

27 Dass sich Horaz an griechische Vorbilder anlehnt, deutet u. a. *iterum* (3) an, das Ibykos' αὐτῆ entspricht (287.1); ähnlich auch z. B. Sappho 130 Voigt.

28 So z. B. Wilkinson 2013, 241–242. Zu Eros' Herausforderung zum Kampf cf. Cavallini 1997, 143; dieser Aspekt wird bei Horaz mit dem Bild des Gladiators angedeutet.

Bild auch eine poetologische Dimension und steht ebenso für den Dichter, der zu alt ist, um Liebesgedichte zu dichten. Der Kontext, in dem das Fragment überliefert wird, Platos Dialog *Parmenides*, lässt daran keinen Zweifel. Denn dort verweist die Dialogfigur Parmenides auf Ibykos' Pferd, um sein Widerstreben zum Ausdruck zu bringen, sich auf eine langwierige Untersuchung einzulassen (wörtlich, „einen derartigen und so riesigen Wort-Ozean zu durchschwimmen“).²⁹ Das Pferd ist Teil einer wesentlich bekannteren poetologischen Metapher, nämlich des Fahrens auf einem Wagen.³⁰ Doch es ist Ibykos' Pferd, das bekannt war und zitiert wurde.

Bei Horaz tritt der Gladiator gleichsam als römische Variante der Wettkampfmotiv hinzu, und ohne dass das Thema Liebe direkt angesprochen würde. Entsprechend der Tatsache, dass das Dichten hier zurückgewiesen wird, ist das Bild negativ gefärbt, ebenso wie auch in einer Passage aus Epistel 2.2, wo der Kampf der Dichter, die um die Gunst des Publikums konkurrieren, als brutaler Schlagabtausch zwischen Gladiatoren dargestellt wird.³¹ In beiden Bildern, dem Gladiator und dem Pferd, erscheint das Dichten von Lyrik als körperlicher Kraftakt; dieser findet in der Öffentlichkeit statt und wird allseits gesehen und gewertet (diese beiden Aspekte stecken in *spectatum*).³² Ganz im Zentrum steht sozusagen die Motorik: sich ungebührlich bewegen, sich in Kontexten bewegen, die einem nicht gut anstehen, sich inkompetent bewegen, all dies bliebe nicht ohne Folgen, sondern würde vom Publikum mit Gelächter quittiert. Ehre und Schande des Dichters haben damit zu tun, wie er sich in der Öffentlichkeit bewegt.³³

Selbstverständlich spielt Horaz hier mit der Mehrdeutigkeit von *ludus*, die von der Assonanz *includere ludo* untermalt wird. Die Übersetzung vereindeutigt eine Interpretation (*ludus* als Gladiatorenschule), die im Text durch *donatum rude* und *includere*

29 Plato, *Parmenides* 137a: καίτοι δοκῶ μοι τὸ τοῦ Ἴβυκείου ἵππου πεπονθέναι ᾧ ἐκεῖνος ἀθλητῆ ὄντι καὶ πρεσβυτέρῳ ὅφ' ἄρματι μέλλοντι ἀγωνιεῖσθαι καὶ δι' ἐμπειρίαν τρέμοντι τὸ μέλλον ἑαυτὸν ἀπεικάζων ἄκων ἔφη καὶ αὐτὸς οὕτω πρεσβύτης ὧν εἰς τὸν ἔρωτα ἀναγκάζεσθαι ἰέναι. καγῶ μοι δοκῶ μεμνημένος μάλα φοβεῖσθαι πῶς χρητῆλικόνδε ὄντα διανεῦσαι τοιοῦτόν τε καὶ τοσοῦτον πέλαιγος λόγων. Ennius verwendet das Bild ebenfalls (*ann.* 522–523 Skutsch), doch Fragment und Überlieferungskontext geben wenig preis über seine Ausgestaltung; ebenso Tib. 1.4.31–32: *quam iacet, infirmae venere ubi fata senectae, / qui prior Eleo est carcere missus equus.*

30 Dazu Nünlist 1998, 255–264 (die vorliegende Stelle wird allerdings nicht besprochen).

31 *Epist.* 2.2.97–98: *caedimur et totidem plagis consumimus hostem / lento Samnites ad lumina prima duello.* Gemäss Lowrie 2009, 257 steht das Bild für „the social world of poetry.“ In *epist.* 1.19.47–49 (*displicet iste locus' clamo et diludia posco. / Ludus enim genuit trepidum certamen et iram, / ira truces inimicitias et funebre bellum*) spricht der Dichter mit Bezug auf die vorliegende Epistel, „wie ein Ringer mit der Begründung, dass ihm der Boden nicht zusage, abbricht und Aufschub, *diludia*, fordert“ (Kiessling/Heinze 1961, 188). Bemerkenswert ist die martialische Sicht auf die Folgen einer literarischen Produktion, die als Spiel beginnt.

32 Kiessling/Heinze 1961, 4 vergleichen *epist.* 2.2.103: *cum scribo et supplex populi suffragia capto.*

33 Vgl. z. B. Athenaios 14, 628d: „Denn im Tanz und in der Gangart (ἐν ὀρχήσει καὶ πορείᾳ) ist schön (καλόν) die harmonische und ordentliche Form (εὐσημοσύνη καὶ κόσμος), hässlich (αἰσχροπὸν) hingegen das Ungeordnete und Vulgäre.“ Zu den sozialen und moralischen Konnotationen des Gehens, die hier in καλόν und αἰσχροπὸν enthalten sind, vgl. Bremmer 1993.

vorbereitet ist.³⁴ Doch *ludus* lässt weitere Assoziationen zu, die in Vers 10 erneut in den Vordergrund treten (*Nunc itaque et versus et cetera ludicra pono*, „Jetzt lasse ich also sowohl die Verse als auch alle anderen Spiele“). Mit *ludicra* mögen die (im Vergleich zu Epos oder Tragödie) leichten, spielerischen Inhalte oder auch ein innerer Zustand oder eine Haltung angedeutet werden, die mit dem Dichten lyrischer Verse verbunden werden.³⁵ Aber in erster Linie bedeutet das Wort die Spiele, die im Zirkus oder im Theater dargeboten werden.³⁶ Dies sollte nicht unterschlagen werden, denn damit werden lyrische Dichtung und öffentliche Schauspiele und Unterhaltungen noch einmal zusammen gedacht.

Auch im zweiten Epistelbuch finden wir den Dichter als Körperkünstler. Diese Metapher bildet die Klimax eines normativen Porträts des lyrischen Dichters in *Epistel* 2.2, der Epistel an Florus, die nicht lange nach 1.1 entstand.³⁷ Ein guter Dichter muss Vokabular und Stil beherrschen, vor allem aber muss er jede Anstrengung verbergen, er muss schnell und flexibel sein (*epist.* 2.2.120–125):

*Vehemens et liquidus puroque simillimus amni
fundet opes Latiumque beabit divite lingua;
luxuriantia compescet, nimis aspera sano
levabit cultu, virtute carentia tollet.
ludentis speciem dabit et torquebitur, ut qui
nunc Satyrum, nunc agrestem Cyclopa movetur.*

Kraftvoll und flüssig, ganz ähnlich einem reinen Strom, wird er seine Fülle ausgießen und Latium mit einer reichen Sprache beschenken. Üppig Wachsendes wird er stutzen, allzu Rues wird er durch massvolle Bearbeitung glätten, was wertlos ist, wird er entfernen. Wie ein Spiel wird sein Tun aussehen, und er wird sich drehen und winden wie einer, der bald einen Satyr, bald einen plumpen Kyklopen tanzt.

Gemeint ist in den letzten zwei Versen ein Pantomime, wie sie seit den 20er Jahren vermehrt in Rom auftraten, dank der Förderung durch Maecenas und Augustus selber.³⁸ Diese virtuosen Solotänzer nahmen nacheinander verschiedene Rollen ein und stellten auf diese Weise ganze Mythen dar. Möglicherweise ist hier sogar ein bestimmter

34 Im „Einsperren“ (*includere*) mag man vielleicht auch eine Anspielung auf Ibykos' „Netze“ der Aphrodite vermuten (Ἔρος αὐτέ με ... ἐς ἀπειρα / δίκτυα Κύπριδος ἐσβάλλει, Vv. 1–4).

35 Mayer 1994, 89–90; Kiessling/Heinze 1961, 5 („all den sonstigen Tand“, darunter auch Beifall und Erfolg).

36 ThLL s. v. *ludicer* I A 1 a.

37 Zur Datierung Kiessling/Heinze 1961, 244.

38 Tac. *ann.* 1.54.2: *indulserat ei ludicro Augustus, dum Maecenati obtemperat effuso in amorem Bathylli*; s. o. S. 20 (Introduction). Porphyrio ad loc.: *torquebitur et fatigabitur ut pantomimus*. Vgl. Lada-Richards 2019, 96; Pasoli 2009, 411–413; Garelli 2007, 116; Brink 1982, 345–348.

Stoff gemeint, die Liebe von Polyphem und Akis zu Galatea.³⁹ Das Sich-Winden, ja Sich-Quälen (*torquebitur*) ist einerseits ein Gegensatz zum Anschein des Spielens (*ludentis speciem*); damit nimmt Horaz eine Forderung auf, die wahrscheinlich schon im Hellenismus formuliert wurde, nämlich dass Anstrengung in der Dichtung möglichst zu verbergen sei.⁴⁰ Andererseits ist das Verb *ludo* gleichzeitig eines der üblichen Wörter für das Tanzen, und das Wirbeln und Sich-Drehen leitet über zum Vergleich mit der körperlich anspruchsvollen Kunstform des Pantomimus, der im folgenden Vers expliziert wird.⁴¹ Die Polysemie des an sich einfachen Vokabulars in diesem Vers ist gleichsam die sprachliche Version der Wandelbarkeit des Tänzers, von der hier die Rede ist.⁴²

Der Pantomime zeichnet sich dadurch aus, dass er in schnellem Wechsel verschiedene Figuren verkörpert: bald Satyr, bald Kyklop. Es handelt sich also um eine darstellende Kunst. Umso auffälliger ist aber das Verb, das hier gebraucht wird, nämlich die Passivform *movetur* (125), die hier notgedrungen eine transitive Bedeutung annimmt. Diese aussergewöhnliche Wortwahl weist auf die grundlegende Rolle der Bewegung hin. Man kann das Wort als Gräzismus verstehen, als Entsprechung von κινεῖται und somit als Medium, doch damit ist noch nicht viel erklärt.⁴³ Wichtig ist, dass auch hier, ähnlich wie beim Bild des Gladiators, der Körper und seine Bewegungen in den Vordergrund gestellt werden. Die Bewegungen des Tänzers ermöglichen seine rasanten Verwandlungen von der einen in die andere Figur. Der Akzent liegt nicht auf den verschiedenen Stoffen, Figuren oder Emotionen, die dargestellt werden; der behende Satyr und der schwerfällige Kyklops bezeichnen lediglich einen grösstmöglichen Gegensatz an motorischem Verhalten, der choreographisch wirkungsvoll umgesetzt werden kann. Wir wissen aus mannigfaltigen Quellen zum Pantomimus, dass gerade die Virtuosität und Wandelbarkeit der Tänzer grosse Bewunderung hervorriefen, Qualitäten, die schon mit *vehemens et liquidus* (120) vorausgenommen werden.⁴⁴

Die Angleichung des lyrischen Dichters an einen Pantomimen zeigt, dass Horaz diesem Genre gegenüber keineswegs nur feindlich eingestellt war, wie eine Passage der *Ars poetica* über das Theater nahelegen könnte (*ars* 182–188). Dort wird der dramatische Dichter angewiesen, nicht auf die Bühne zu bringen, was besser erzählt werden kann: „Nicht soll Medea ihre Kinder vor dem Publikum töten oder der Frevler Atreus

39 Zum Pantomimus s. o. S. 20–21 (Introduction). Zur Hypothese einer Anspielung auf Polyphem und Akis s. Kiessling/Heinze 1961, 264; Brink 1982, 347–348; Lada-Richards 2019, 96 denkt insbesondere an den Stil des Pantomimen Bathyllus.

40 Brink 1982, 345–346.

41 Kiessling/Heinze, 1961, 264 bemerken, dass „dadurch ungezwungen der Vergleich mit dem Pantomimen herbeigeführt“ wird.

42 Pasoli 2009, 411–413 hebt hervor, dass die Passage genau die Qualitäten aufweist, die sie auch empfiehlt; die *callida iunctura* lässt die verschiedenen Konnotationen der Wörter hervortreten.

43 *movetur* „ist ganz in die Bedeutung eines transitiven *salta*t übergegangen (*pastorem saltaret uti Cyclopa, sat. 1.5.63*)“ (Kiessling/Heinze 1961, 264). *moveri* als intransitives „Tanzen“ begegnet zuerst bei Horaz; vgl. *ars* 232.

44 Zum flexiblen und formbaren Körper des Pantomimen z. B. Lukian, *salt.* 67.

menschliche Eingeweide vor aller Augen kochen oder Prokne in einen Vogel verwandelt werden, Kadmos in eine Schlange“ (185–187).⁴⁵ Diese Verse enthalten keine Kritik am Pantomimus per se, sondern an einem ganz bestimmten Aspekt dieses Genres, nämlich an der Inszenierung von Gewalt und Tod auf der Bühne, von Verwandlungen von Menschen in Tiere. In dieser Hinsicht durchbrach der Pantomimus die Konventionen der Tragödie, wo Gewalt im allgemeinen hinter der Skene stattfand. Die Ablehnung wird aber nicht moralisch begründet, sondern ästhetisch: das Zeigen von Mord, Leichenschändung oder Metamorphose in Tiere kann nicht überzeugen, lässt den Zuschauer „ungläubig“ und unwillig zurück (*incredulus odi*, 188) – wohl kaum, weil die Darstellung allzu direkt und echt wäre, sondern weil sie dies in Bezug auf die genannten Inhalte eben gerade nicht ist, nicht sein kann.⁴⁶ Die Darstellung von äusserster physischer Gewalt und Tod auf der Bühne *kann* nur simuliert sein. Doch jenseits dieser Kritik, die den ästhetischen Diskurs der Kaiserzeit über die Grenzen des Darstellbaren im Pantomimus vorausnimmt, interessierte Horaz offensichtlich die schiere Virtuosität des Pantomimus.⁴⁷ Ihn scheint nicht so sehr die semiotische Ebene des Schauspiels zu faszinieren, als vielmehr die phänomenale Ebene.⁴⁸ Aus einer modernen Perspektive ist bemerkenswert, dass der Dichter selbst, dass sein Körper beschrieben wird, wenn es um den Stil der Dichtung geht. Diese Überlagerung von Dichter und Werk, in der das Dichten wie eine Körperkompetenz und eine körperliche Aktivität begriffen wird, lenkt den Blick weg von darzustellenden Inhalten und hin zur Erscheinung des Dichters selbst. Dieser verkörpert sozusagen seinen Stil (*vehemens et liquidus*, 120), und sein Können (*ludentis speciem dabit et torquebitur*, 124) wird am besten durch das Bild eines virtuosen Tänzers beschrieben.

Auch in *Epistel* 2.1 an Augustus, ein paar Jahre später publiziert (möglicherweise im Jahr 12 v. Chr.⁴⁹), wird deutlich, dass Horaz an der phänomenalen Dimension von Tanz und Performance interessiert ist. Im Abriss der römischen Literaturgeschichte, der den mittleren Teil dieser Epistel ausfüllt, erscheint die vollendete Kunst des dramatischen Dichters wie die atemberaubende Leistung eines Seiltänzers (*epist.* 2.1.210–213):

45 *Ne pueros coram populo Medea trucidet / aut humana palam coquat exta nefarius Atreus / aut in avem Procne vertatur, Cadmus in anguem. / quodcumque ostendis mihi sic, incredulus odi* (185–188).

46 Anders Lada-Richards 2019, die Horaz eine moralisierende Ablehnung des Genres als „low culture“ zuschreibt (87, 94). Man sollte jedoch den Pantomimus, genau wie z. B. die Oper, nicht einfach als „subliterary“ bezeichnen (mit der in diesem Begriff implizierten negativen Wertung), sondern als choreographisches, dramatisches und audio-visuelles Medium, dessen spezifische Qualitäten mit grossem Interesse beobachtet wurden, auch von Horaz.

47 Dass der Tod im Pantomimus lediglich gespielt ist, kritisiert z. B. ein Epigramm zu Kanake von Lukillios (*Anth. Pal.* 11.254); zum ästhetischen Diskurs rund um die Grenzen der Darstellbarkeit vgl. Schlapbach 2018, 193–200.

48 Zu diesem Begriffspaar vgl. Fischer-Lichte 2004, 128–239.

49 Rudd 1989, 1–2.

*ille per extantum funem mihi posse videtur
ire poeta, meum qui pectus inaniter angit,
inritat, mulcet, falsis terroribus implet,
et, magus ut, modo me Thebis, modo ponit Athenis.*

Dieser scheint mir auf einem gespannten Seil gehen zu können, der Dichter, der mein Herz umsonst ängstigt, reizt, ihm schmeichelt und es mit falschen Schrecknissen erfüllt, und wie ein Magier lässt er mich bald in Theben, bald in Athen auftreten.

Das Bild des Seiltänzers, der die Zuschauer in seinen Bann zieht, erinnert an den Prolog von Terenz' *Hecyra*, der sehr schön beschreibt, wie eine erste Aufführung der Komödie daran scheiterte, dass das Publikum von einem Seiltänzer abgelenkt wurde und reihenweise zu diesem hineilte.⁵⁰ Doch es fällt auf, dass es hier einmal mehr der Dichter selbst ist, der als Körperkünstler daherkommt; er selber ist der Performer, der sich in einen Wettbewerb der Spektakel einfügt und die Aufmerksamkeit des Publikums auf sich zieht wie ein waghalsiger Akrobat.⁵¹ Wie beim Gladiator und dem Rennpferd wird auch mit dem Seiltänzer eine vor-narrative oder vor-semiotische Ebene angedeutet – man könnte sagen, eine spektakuläre Ebene.

Zwar geht es dem dramatischen Dichter selbstverständlich um die Darstellung von Inhalten; diese werden in der Nennung der sagenhaften Orte Theben und Athen angedeutet. Doch der Akzent scheint auf der Interaktion mit dem Publikum zu liegen. *ponere*, „setzen“, wird z. B. vom künstlerischen (literarischen oder figurlichen) Schaffen gebraucht und heisst somit auch „darstellen“.⁵² Interessanterweise ist hier der Akkusativ dazu aber nicht das Drama oder eine Figur auf der Bühne, sondern ein exemplarischer Zuschauer (*me*, 213). In gewisser Weise schafft der Dichter zuallererst sein Publikum, das sich bald in Theben, bald in Athen wähnt, je nach Mythos, der gezeigt wird. Im Zentrum steht die Interaktion mit dem Publikum. Und auch im Bild des Seiltänzers wird etwas anderes privilegiert als fiktionale Inhalte, nämlich die Emotionen, insbesondere Furcht und Schrecken, die der dramatische Dichter wie auch der Akrobat beim Zuschauer zu erzeugen weiss. Diese sind insofern „nichtig und falsch“ (cf. *inaniter, falsis*, 211–212), als sie vom Dichter-Magier durch seine Kunst hervorgerufen werden; man könnte von ästhetischen Emotionen sprechen, vom Schaudern, das para-

50 Ter. *Hec.* 1–5. Rudd 1989, 111 verweist ausserdem auf Plin. *epist.* 9.26.3: *vides qui per funem in summa nituntur quantos soleant excitare clamores, cum iam iamque casuri videntur, sunt enim maxime mirabilia quae maxime insperata, maxime periculosa*; Manil. *astr.* 5.653–655. Weitere Belege und Bildquellen zu Seiltänzern bei Dasen 2019, 135–137.

51 Diese eigenartige Verschmelzung von Dichter und Werk gemahnt an Aristophanes' Porträt des Tragödiendichters Agathon (*Thesm.* 148–171), doch während sich der Dichter dort mit seinen Figuren identifiziert, wird der Dichter hier als ein Performer gedacht, der keinen Inhalt darstellt.

52 ThLL s. v. *pono*, Caput prius, I. A.1.a.β.III: „-untur scripta, ficta, picta sim.“

doxerweise mit Lust verbunden ist, wie schon Platon und Aristoteles und später Augustin bemerken.⁵³

Wie aus *epist.* 1.1 und 2.1 klar wird, bewirkt die Körperbewegung eine emotionale Reaktion, jenseits (oder besser diesseits) von dargestellten Inhalten. Die Reaktion des Publikums ist im übrigen ebenso physisch wie die Performance des Dichters: Gelächter oder eine zusammengezogene Brust (1.1.9; 2.1.211–212). Die Körperbewegung erscheint hier als die Matrix der öffentlichen Interaktion, einer Interaktion, in der es darum geht, andere zu beeindrucken und zu faszinieren, sich ihrem spontanen Urteil auszusetzen. In *epist.* 2.2.120–125 kommt der Zuschauer mit seinen Emotionen hingegen gar nicht in den Blick, sondern der Fokus liegt ganz auf dem Pantomimen und seiner Verwandlungskunst.

An allen drei Stellen treten die Körperperformer nicht einfach in der Form eines Vergleichs auf; vielmehr muss man aus dem Kontext erschliessen, dass sie Bilder für den Dichter sind. Nur im zweiten Beispiel wird ein Wort für „wie“ verwendet (*ut*, 2.2.124), doch erst nachdem der Vergleich schon durch *ludentis speciem dabit* eingeführt worden ist (*ibid.*). Die Sprache vollzieht gleichsam die Verschmelzung des Dichters mit einem Gladiator, Tänzer oder Akrobaten.

Was drücken diese Paradigmen des Dichters aus? Die Kommentare heben zu Recht das Können, die Virtuosität, die Risikobereitschaft der verschiedenen Figuren für den Dichter hervor.⁵⁴ Doch was ist mit der Verankerung all dieser Qualitäten im Körper? Was hat es zu bedeuten, dass es immer um eine Körperkompetenz geht? Nicht von Schaffen oder Hervorbringen ist hier die Rede, sondern von Vollzug, von einer kinetischen Aktivität, die dem Dichten in Worten auf geheimnisvolle Weise verwandt ist. Darüber hinaus fällt auf, dass wir es hier mit einer römischen, zeitgenössischen Performancekultur zu tun haben. Die Griechen hatten keine Gladiatoren; die Pantomimen kamen zwar aus dem Osten, wurden aber in Rom berühmt, und auch die Seiltänzer scheint man dort besonders geschätzt zu haben.⁵⁵ Horaz' Dichter wird in diesem römischen Umfeld angesiedelt.

Es sollte nicht unterschlagen werden, dass Horaz die Dichterfigur in den *Episteln* aus einer Distanz heraus charakterisiert. Das wird in *epist.* 1.1 am deutlichsten, wo die lyrische Dichtung explizit zurückgewiesen wird. Auch in *epist.* 2.2 erklärt Horaz, er habe sich von der lyrischen Dichtung verabschiedet, er sei jetzt wieder „bei Sinnen“, d. h. nicht inspiriert (*mente recepta*, 104). Und in der Textpassage aus 2.1 beschreibt er ein Genre, das er zwar würdigt, das Drama, in dem er sich selber aber nie versucht

53 Pl. *Rep.* 10, 605c–d; Arist. *Poet.* 14, 1453b; Aug. *conf.* 3.2–3. Zur Natur dieser Emotionen z. B. Munteanu 2009.

54 Kiessling/Heinze 1961, 234 betonen v. a. die Gefährlichkeit des Seiltanzes und setzen diese in Bezug zu Horaz' „eigenen stilistischen Wagnissen“, Brink 1982, 346 hebt die zu verbergende Anstrengung des Pantomimen hervor.

55 Neben Plinius (s. o. Anm. 50) auch Sen. *de ira* 2.12.4; Suet. *Galba* 6.1; Aug. *ep.* 120.5; *Anth. Lat.* 101 Shackleton Bailey.

hat.⁵⁶ Es verwundert nicht, dass der athletische oder virtuose Soloperformer, der uns in den Episteln vor Augen geführt wird, denn auch nicht eine Figur ist, die wir in den lyrischen Gedichten selbst antreffen.

Dichten und Tanzen in den Oden

Wie schon erwähnt, begegnet die Verbindung von Dichten und Tanzen in der programmatischen Ode 1.1, die wohl kurz vor der Veröffentlichung der ersten Odensammlung im Jahr 23 entstanden ist.⁵⁷ Die Passage ist insofern typisch für das Tanzmotiv in den Oden, als der Dichter-Tänzer hier kein Soloperformer ist, sondern sich in eine Gruppe einfügt; und anders als die Virtuosen der Episteln ist er nicht so sehr ein Akteur als ein zugleich aktiver und passiver Teilnehmer (c. 1.1.29–36):

*Me doctarum hederæ præmia frontium
dis miscent superis, me gelidum nemus
Nympharumque leves cum Satyris chori
secernunt populo, si neque tibus
Euterpe cohibet nec Polyhymnia
Lesboum refugit tendere barbiton.
quod si me lyricis vatibus inseres,
sublimi feriam sidera vertice.*

Mich mischt der Efeukranz, die Zier gelehrter Stirn,
unter die Götter, mich trennen der kühle Hain
und die behenden Tänze der Nymphen mit den Satyrn
vom gewöhnlichen Volk, wenn weder ihre Flöten
Euterpe verstummen lässt noch Polyhymnia
sich weigert, die lesbische Leier zu stimmen.
Wenn du mich aber unter die lyrischen Dichter einreihen magst,
Dann stosse ich wohl mit stolz erhobenem Haupt an die Gestirne. (Übers. Fink 2002, mod.)

Tanzt der Dichter hier? Und betreffen die hier genannten Vorgänge das Dichten selbst oder sind sie lediglich eine Folge davon? Der Text ist weder in der einen noch in der anderen Hinsicht eindeutig, und die ersten anderthalb sowie die letzten beiden Verse des Auszugs scheinen sich weniger auf das Dichten als auf den (künftigen) Lohn des Dichters zu beziehen. Allerdings zeichnet der Efeukranz den Dichter als Anhänger des Bacchus aus und deutet seine Ergriffenheit an – kaum lediglich eine zukünftige

⁵⁶ Zu Horaz' Auseinandersetzung mit dem Drama vgl. Lowrie 2009.

⁵⁷ Kiessling/Heinze ¹⁴1984, 2.

bacchische Ergriffenheit. Die Musik von Flöten und Leier, die die Szene erst möglich macht, muss im Hier und Jetzt erklingen, und die Nennung der Musen verweist auf den Moment des Dichtens selbst. Der Dichter ist Teil dieser musikalischen und poetischen Performance, und es gibt keinen Grund anzunehmen, dass er den tanzenden Nymphen und Satyrn lediglich zuschaut.⁵⁸ Es sollte nicht übersehen werden, dass der Dichter das grammatikalische Objekt des Tuns des tanzenden Chors ist (*me ... secernunt*, 30–32), und die Nennung eines spezifischen Ortes (*gelidum nemus*, 30), der ebenfalls als grammatikalisches Subjekt dient, legt nahe, dass das Verb *secernunt* eine konkrete räumliche Dimension hat und eine Bewegung im Raum impliziert. Der Tanz der Nymphen und Satyrn entrückt den Dichter quasi physisch der Gesellschaft und platziert ihn in einem dionysischen Umfeld, so wie der Efeukranz ihn als quasi göttlich auszeichnet.⁵⁹ Als Bedingung wird eine weitere Handlung formuliert, deren Objekt ebenfalls der Dichter ist und die nicht eindeutig in die Zukunft gehört, sondern vielmehr als *Eventualis* formuliert ist: „Wenn du mich aber unter die lyrischen Dichter einreihen magst ...“ Das Verb *inseres* (35) könnte auf das hellenistische Bild des Kranzes für den Kanon der lyrischen Dichter anspielen, wobei es auch mit der Vorstellung des Chors in Einklang bleibt.⁶⁰ Es verweist daher zurück auf den Reigen der Nymphen und Satyrn und voraus auf die „Reigen der Dichter“ der Ode 4.3 (s. u.). Die Handlung dieses verallgemeinernden „du“, mit dem wohl jeder Leser und jede Leserin des Gedichts angesprochen wird, sanktioniert den Gesang des Dichters und gewährt ihm Eingang in den Dichterkanon.⁶¹ Sie ist das Gegenstück zur Loslösung des Dichters aus der Gesellschaft durch die Nymphen und Satyrn; es sind die geneigten Leserinnen und Leser, die den Dichter nach seiner Entrückung durch mythische Wesen einer neuen, idealen Gemeinschaft zuführen können, deren Ruhm unsterblich ist.

Anders als in den Episteln ist der Dichter hier weder ein Soloperformer, noch fügt er sich in eine typisch römische Schauspielkultur ein. Aber auch der Dichter der Oden ist eine öffentliche Figur, er wirbt um die Gunst seiner Leserinnen und Leser und steht in einem Netz von Beziehungen und Abhängigkeiten. Auch das Dichten selbst wird als kollektiver Moment dargestellt, wobei dieser Moment in eine mythische Welt entrückt ist, die vom „demi-monde“ der Nymphen und Satyrn bevölkert wird.⁶²

58 Wie ein Blick auf c. 2.19 suggerieren könnte (*Bacchum in remotis carmina rupibus / vidi docentem*, Vv. 1–2).

59 Auch das Efeu (V. 29) ist Bacchus zugeordnet. Dazu Barchiesi 2000, 177; Curtis 2017, 135. Kiessling/Heinze ⁴1984, 8 ziehen eine direkte Linie vom kühlen Hain der Ode 1.1 zu Horaz' eigenem Rückzug aufs Land und zu seiner Distanzierung vom gewöhnlichen Volk; damit ist jedoch noch nichts über das Bild des Tanzes gesagt.

60 Zu *inserere* als Pendant zum ἐγκρίνειν der hellenistischen Philologen vgl. z. B. Nisbet/Hubbard ²1975, 15; Curtis 2017, 134; zum „Kranz“ *ibid.* n. 8. Hingegen warnt Kovacs 2010, 308 und 313 davor, dem Verb eine allzu technische Bedeutung zuzuschreiben.

61 Dazu Kovacs 2010.

62 Der Ausdruck stammt von Lowrie 2009, 29.

Das dionysische Tanzen einerseits und der Kanon der lyrischen Dichter andererseits repräsentieren zwei Aspekte der Dichtung: ihre Performance in einem imaginierten Hier und Jetzt und ihr prospektives Weiterleben als geschriebener Text.⁶³ Diese beiden Aspekte, die in dieser Ode nebeneinanderstehen und in einer Spannung bleiben, sind in der Ode 4.3 vereint. Das vierte Odenbuch ist die letzte Sammlung lyrischer Gedichte des Horaz; es wurde wenige Jahre nach dem *Carmen saeculare* veröffentlicht (wohl um 13 v. Chr.).⁶⁴ Die Ode 4.3 spricht die Musen an und ist gleichermaßen programmatisch wie Ode 1.1. Im vorliegenden Zusammenhang sind die Verse 13–15 relevant:

*Romae, principis urbium,
dignatur suboles inter amabilis
vatum ponere me choros.*

Roms, der Fürstin aller Städte,
Nachwuchs achtet es wert, mich in die lieblichen
Reigentänze der Dichter zu versetzen.

Auch hier ist der Dichter das grammatikalische Objekt der Handlung anderer: es ist „Roms Nachwuchs“, der ihn in die „Reigentänze der Dichter“ einreicht. Diese Handlung ist hier nicht mehr als Bedingung formuliert wie in 1.1, sondern als Tatsache. Wie schon erwähnt, wurde diese Ode nach den Säkularspielen des Augustus komponiert. Für diese Spiele, die im Jahr 17 v. Chr. gefeiert wurden, hatte Horaz das *carmen saeculare* geschrieben, eine Hymne, die von einem Chor, bestehend aus 27 Mädchen und 27 Knaben, aufgeführt wurde. Die Rede in 4.3 von „Roms, der Fürstin aller Städte, Nachwuchs“, kann als Anspielung auf diesen Moment in Horaz' Dichterkarriere verstanden werden, für den wir auch das epigraphische Zeugnis der Akten der Säkularspiele besitzen, eine Monumentalinschrift, die den Ablauf der Spiele dokumentiert und in der wir lesen können: *Carmen composuit Quintus Horatius Flaccus*.⁶⁵

Neben der biographischen Interpretation besteht eine weitere Art, das Bild des Dichters, der in die „lieblichen Reigentänze der Dichter“ eingereiht wird, zu entschärfen und zu normalisieren, darin, es als Metapher für den Dichterkanon zu lesen.⁶⁶ Damit würde das Gedicht die Unsterblichkeit des Dichters vorausnehmen. Anders gesagt, man hat die Tendenz, das Bild entweder in der Vergangenheit zu verankern oder aber durch einen Bezug auf die Zukunft zu erklären. Was aber, wenn wir seine Zugehörigkeit zum Präsens, zum Moment des Dichtens, ernst nehmen? Die Erinnerung an

63 Curtis 2017, 134 arbeitet schön heraus, wie dieser Gegensatz allerdings sogar innerhalb der Formulierung *lyricis vatibus* aufgebrochen wird, denn *vates* evoziert eine römische Tradition des gesungenen Lieds. Eine Spannung besteht auch zwischen dem bacchischen Efeu und der „gelehrten Stirn“, Kranz und Kanon, Inspiration und gekonnter Ausarbeitung. Zur Problematik insgesamt s. o. S. 289.

64 Thomas 2011, 5–7.

65 So z. B. Fraenkel 1957, 478. Zur Inschrift (hier Z. 149) vgl. Schnegg 2020, 11–286.

66 Thomas 2011, ad loc.

den Chor der Nymphen und Satyrn der Ode 1.1 lädt ein, dies zu tun, ebenso auch der Rest der Ode 4.3, in der durchaus nicht nur der Ruhm des Dichters verhandelt wird, sondern vielmehr auch die Bedingungen, unter denen das Dichten möglich ist (Verse 17–24). Wenn wir das Bild in der Gegenwart verorten, dann weist es darauf hin, dass das Dichten, wie es hier imaginiert wird, kein einsamer Schaffensakt ist, sondern in der Interaktion und in der Pluralität entsteht. Anstatt das Bild auf einen vergangenen Moment der öffentlichen Anerkennung oder auf künftigen Ruhm zu beziehen, kann so der Blick auf die Interdependenz oder Reziprozität zwischen dem Dichter und seiner Umgebung gerichtet werden, die sich im Bild des Dichters ausdrückt, der durch die Abkömmlinge Roms in die „lieblichen Reigentänze der Dichter“ eingereicht wird (das Verb ist wiederum *ponere*, das auch für den Akt der künstlerischen Komposition gebraucht wird, s. o. S. 298).

Die Reigen oder Tänze – der Plural *choros* stellt die Handlung in den Vordergrund und bezeichnet nicht etwa lediglich eine Chorformation – haben gewisse Forscher mitunter so irritiert, dass eine Emendation vorgeschlagen wurde, um den Tanz der Dichter, obwohl durchaus eine Metapher, ganz zu eliminieren (*vatem* für *vatum*, z. B. von Bücheler und Heinze vertreten).⁶⁷ Die neueren kritischen Editionen lassen diesen Tanz unangetastet. Wenn man das Bild ernst nimmt, so signalisiert es, dass das Dichten als Praktik verstanden wird, die in ihrem Umfeld und in der körperlichen Erfahrung verankert ist – auch in Rom, und unter veränderten Produktions- und Rezeptionsbedingungen. Es muss weder wörtlich auf das einzige Gedicht von Horaz bezogen werden, das tatsächlich choral aufgeführt wurde, noch als Ausdruck von Nostalgie nach einer ursprünglichen, bei den Griechen verwirklichten Einheit von Dichten und Tanzen gelesen werden. Vielmehr weist es darauf hin, dass auch die moderne, verschriftlichte Lyrik ein Bewusstsein für die Verankerung des Dichtens nicht nur im Sprechen oder Singen, sondern in einer umfassend verstandenen Körperlichkeit mit transportiert.

Horaz zeichnet sich unter den römischen Dichtern durch seinen spärlichen Gebrauch von Bildern und Metaphern aus.⁶⁸ Die Bilder, der der vorliegende Beitrag untersucht hat, mögen gerade deswegen herausstechen. Darüber hinaus zeugen sie aber – paradoxerweise – von einem Interesse an einer jeglicher Bildhaftigkeit und Semantik vorgelagerten, performativen und spektakulären Dimension des Dichtens, in der sich das Können des Dichters, sein Wagemut und seine Virtuosität am klarsten manifestieren.⁶⁹ Bilder und Argumente sind immer situativ bei Horaz, und es wäre verfehlt, eine einheitliche Poetik der Tanzbilder bei Horaz suchen zu wollen. Dennoch

67 *vatem* Anchensen, „surely wrong“ gemäss Thomas 2011, ad loc. (mit Verweis auf 1.1.35: *lyricis vatibus inseres*), doch plausibel für Kovacs 2010, 306 n. 2.

68 Hardie 1993, 120 beschreibt Horaz als „one of the least pictorial of Latin poets.“

69 Horaz scheint damit ein Motiv voranzunehmen, das sich im 19. Jahrhundert grosser Beliebtheit erfreut, wie Jean Starobinski 1970 in *Portrait de l'artiste en saltimbanque* gezeigt hat (Starobinski 2004).

hat sich gezeigt, dass Horaz wiederholt und in verschiedenen Kontexten auf Tanz und Körperperformance zurückgreift, um das Dichten zu charakterisieren. Dabei erscheint der Dichter bald als hochvirtuoser Soloist, bald als Teil eines Reigen, zu dem andere ihm Zugang gewähren. Den Tanzbildern ist jedoch gemeinsam, dass sie den Dichter selbst ins Blickfeld rücken und seinen Körper zum Schauspiel machen. Sie zeigen den Dichter als öffentliche Figur und als Teil einer Gemeinschaft, mit der er in einem unmittelbaren Austausch steht.

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Roman Rhythms*
*Music, Dance, and Imperial Ethics in Suetonius’
Life of Augustus*

LAUREN CURTIS

Abstract: This chapter examines the popular politics of solo dance in early Augustan Rome. In an anecdote from Suetonius’ *Life of Augustus*, an audience compares a Gallus dancer playing a hand-drum onstage to Octavian’s wielding of global *imperium*. The audience uses dance discourse – especially language of control, regulation, and harmony – to conceptualize and respond to emerging forms of political power. The chapter explores how the artist’s control over his body and instrument provided a paradoxically appropriate mode for popular critique of the *princeps*’ merging of political control and bodily and ethical excess. I conclude that theatrical dance is not just symbolic of political order; rather, according to Suetonius, it enacts and actively intervenes in the wider tensions between the future emperor and his soon-to-be subjects.

When we think about the connections between dance and political power in the ancient Mediterranean world, our attention might turn most naturally to archaic and classical Greece, where music and dance were tightly woven into civic and political culture – from the dramatic and dithyrambic contests of fifth- and fourth-century Athens to the choral *theōria* that took place at panhellenic sites such as Delos and Delphi. By contrast, the interconnections between dance and political – and especially imperial – power in the Roman Empire are ripe for much more discussion than they have so far received.¹ Performance culture certainly intersected with Roman political agendas

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¹ See Naerebout 2009, who argues that dance was a medium intimately connected with the dissemination of Roman culture and ideology throughout the Empire. Alonso Fernández 2016 and 2017 focuses on the city of Rome itself, demonstrating that the choreographed bodies of priestly *collegia* such as the Salii and Arval Brethren were significant carriers of male identity and elite status in the

and ideologies. For instance, the choral culture of the Greek world was pressed into the service of Rome's imperial goals from early on in its expansionist history – a glimpse can be found in the paeon to the Roman general Titus Flamininus performed by the inhabitants of Chalcis in Euboea, in the second century BCE (Plut. *Flam.* 16.4). And, as the Empire grew, the art of pantomime dance became, as Marie-Hélène Garelli has argued, “une langue de communication et moyen d'entente entre les peuples” under a succession of emperors.²

At the center of the Roman Empire's vast and complex currents of political power was the figure of the *princeps* himself – his will, his personality and, crucially for our purposes, his body. In this chapter, I am interested in how the sonic, kinetic and somatic aspects of *mousikē* could act as a means for Roman subjects to understand and interpret the global power orchestrated by the emperor. The appropriation of the performing arts by Rome's rulers would reach its height with Caligula and especially Nero, who performed as a kitharode and tragic soloist in front of mass audiences.³ Here, by contrast, I focus on an early moment in the rise of the Principate, the relationship of the young Octavian with the actors and audiences of the popular theatre. Unlike Nero, Octavian did *not* perform in public (although he was a champion of popular dance forms, especially pantomime). But dance discourse still played a role in popular Roman conceptions of Octavian's rise to power. A brief but fascinating anecdote from Suetonius' *Life of Augustus* compares the emperor-to-be to a dancer on the popular stage – one whose musical and somatic actions are explicitly said to be cognate with his own wielding of imperial authority. The biographer does not make the connection from his own, third-person perspective; rather, Suetonius attributes to Octavian's contemporary audience, comprising large numbers of the common people, the interpretive move of comparing performer and *princeps*.

It was hardly unusual, in these last days of the Republic, that theatrical dance should become a magnet for such political debates. During the late Republic, before the emperors appropriated the theatre for their own spectacular and political purposes, it was a hotbed of lively and potentially explosive political interaction between Roman elites and the *populus*. Cicero discusses how expressive the crowd could be in their applause (*plausus*) or hissing (*sibilus*) at generals and politicians, many of whom funded the *ludi* and even the very theatre buildings themselves as a public gift for the masses.⁴ Actors themselves could be drawn into the fray, such as when the *tragoedus* Diphilus was

realm of public religion. On the political and social dimensions of music in the Roman world, see Morgan forthcoming.

2 Garelli 2007, 190.

3 Suet. *Cal.* 54–55; Suet. *Nero* 12, 20–25, 38, 54. On Nero as kitharode, see Power 2010, 3–184. On his role as a tragic actor, see Bartsch 1994, 36–62.

4 Cic. *Sest.* 105, 115. Pompey's stone theatre – the first in Rome – was funded from the spoils of his foreign campaigns, and the whole complex of which it formed part was probably planned as a victory monument connected to his triumph in 61 BCE (see Russell 2016, 163–164). As Russell

repeatedly urged by the crowd to decry Pompey's title, *Magnus*, from the stage with the line, *nostra miseria tu es magnus* ("because of our misfortune you are great", Cic. *Att.* 2.19.2–3). The Republican theatrical stage, then, could be a site of carefully orchestrated, yet often volatile, political spectacle.

Within this context, Suetonius' anecdote about Octavian – which has rarely been discussed – is worth our attention:

*sed et populus quondam uniuersus ludorum die et accepit in contumeliam eius et adsensu maximo conprobauit uersum in scaena pronuntiatum de gallo Matris deum tympanizante, uidesne ut cinaedus orbem digito temperat?*⁵

But once, on a day of theatrical games, the whole people understood as an insult against him [i. e. Octavian], and applauded with the greatest approval the verse declaimed onstage about a priest of the Mother of the Gods who was beating his drum: "do you see how the *cinaedus* controls the globe with his finger?" (Suet. *Aug.* 68)

This scene offers insight into a key moment between late Republican and imperial use of theatrical artforms as a vehicle for political contestation, centered around the figure of Octavian/Augustus. Moreover, and perhaps more importantly for this volume, it demonstrates that not just theatre in general, but more specifically theatrical *mousikē* and the language and discourse that surrounded it, played a role in conceptualizing and responding to newly emerging forms of Roman political power.

In Suetonius, I contend, the similarities the crowd sees between Octavian and the dancer lie in their shared techniques of control, regulation, and authority. The dancer, as a consummate artist with full control over the movements and sounds that he creates, is therefore twinned with the *princeps* specifically in his guise as imperial ruler. The assimilation of these two figures is rife with complications. In Suetonius' telling, the comparison of Octavian to a Gallus dancer is meant by the crowd as an insult, and the episode is one in a series of accusations of effeminacy and moral degeneracy attached to the *princeps* during his youth. There is therefore something deeply subversive at the heart of this story. I argue that in this moment of spectacle, as recounted by Suetonius, the Roman audience lays bare Augustus' emerging power and forces it out into the public discourse through a model that reveals its problematic merging of political control and bodily and ethical excess.

observes, "Pompey's decision to build a theatre as part of his monument was an overtly political act" (169).

5 I use Kaster's 2016 Oxford Classical Text of Suetonius. All translations are my own, unless otherwise specified.

The Performer and the *Princeps*: Musical and Political “Control”

The episode in Suetonius, in which the gestures of a dancer on the public stage are understood to apply to the actions of the young Octavian, hinges on an act of wordplay: the dancer’s ability to manipulate the circular skin of his drum (*orbem*) is read by the audience as a direct analogy for how Octavian, the future ruler of the Roman empire, governs the *orbis terrarum*.⁶ The musical instrument is compared to the spatial mass of the globe, and the dancer’s skilled act of handling it is said to be akin to Octavian’s manner of wielding his own political and military power.

In order to understand the audience’s interpretive move, let us consider first the broadly cultural, and then the specifically linguistic, valences of music and movement at work in this passage. The dancer is explicitly said to be a Gallus, one of the self-castrated priests of Cybele who danced through the streets of Rome, singing hymns and playing music, during the Megalensia festival in April. Loud percussion, especially the *tympanon* and *cymbala*, were typical of the Phrygian music associated with them.⁷ But the Galli, with their wild music and aberrant bodies, were also the subject of more formalized theatrical genres such as pantomime, which told mythological stories through the combination of silent dance and accompanying music (in the case of the Galli, this would have been the story of their mythological first priest, Attis, and his transformation into a castrated celebrant of Cybele).⁸ Suetonius does not specify the choreo-

6 The phrase *orbis terrarum* is first found in Latin texts of the late Republic (Caesar, Cicero), where it is frequently used of the wielding and spread of Roman *imperium* over the *oikoumenē*. Its earliest attestation in Latin literature reveals this strongly ideological dimension: Cato the Elder condemns the use of luxuries to bribe the electorate, asking whether “you [i. e. the candidate] were seeking the job of pimp from a gang of pleasure-addicted youths, or *imperium* over the globe from the Roman people?” (*utrum lenocinium a grege delicatae iuventutis, an orbis terrarum imperium a populo Romano petebas?* Cato, *Orationes* 12 f.5, quoted at Cic. *Mur.* 74.5). On the iconography of the globe in Greece and Rome, see Arnaud 1984; on the developing symbolism of Roman rule over global space, Nicolet 1991, 29–56. The physical globe was often shown in the context of Roman victory on Republican coinage, pressed under the right foot of various symbolic figures: the *genius populi Romani* (70s BCE, *RRC* 397/1), helmeted Roma as she looks towards the figure of Italia (70s BCE, *RRC* 403/1) and Roma seated on a pile of weapons (40s BCE, *RRC* 449/4). On Octavian’s development of such visual language, see n. 18 below.

7 Scullard 1981, 97–101 gives a concise account of the Megalensia. See Nauta 2004 and Latham 2012 on the literary, cultural, and religious significance of Galli at Rome.

8 For instance, in an epigram by Dioscorides from the third century BCE (*AP* 11.195 = Dioscorides 36) probably refers to pantomime when it records that a certain Aristagoras “danced the part of a Gallus” (Γάλλον Ἀρισταγόρης ὠρχήσατο, 1). Mimes titled *Galli* were put on at Rome (Laberius 49–50 *CRF*², although it is unclear whether this title refers to priests of Cybele or Gauls; see Panayotakis 2010, 263–264). There is also evidence of a *fabula togata* called *Megalensia* by T. Quinctius Atta (*CRF*², p. 161–162) which may have included Galli as characters. Some scholars have seen Catullus 63, which narrates the story of Attis and was composed in the galliambic verse used by the Galli’s hymns, as composed either for performance at the Megalensia festival (Wiseman 1985, 198–206) or as the “quasi-script” for a pantomime performance (Newman 1990, 357–366). Neither argument has won wide acceptance.

graphic style, theatrical genre, or dramatic *mis-en-scène* in which this dance artist was working; since he is performing at the *ludi*, perhaps it is one of the more formalized theatrical spectacles that would have taken place at the Megalensia itself.⁹ Whatever the exact context and genre, it is clear from the deictic language of the other character in the scene that the Gallus is visible to the audience onstage (*uidesne*).

The Roman audience's equation of the onstage actions of Cybele's priest with the offstage behavior of the *princeps* works because of their astute reading of the specific musical language employed in the scene. They reapply the language of musical regulation, expressed by the verb *temperat*, to a different realm, political governance. When used in strictly musical terms, *tempero* can involve "control" or "governance" in two different senses. First, it may be used of the regulation of pitch, especially the act of tuning the strings of a lyre. For instance, at *Odes* 4.3.17–18, Horace calls the Muse "the one who regulate the sweet noise of the lyre's golden sound-box" (*o testudinis aureae / dulcem quae strepitum, Pieri, temperas*). In order to create ordered music out of "noise" (*strepitum*), the Muse tunes the lyre's strings, thereby creating its specific range of notes. The word's second musical meaning involves the ordering not of pitch but of rhythm. Again, an example can be found in Horace (*Epist.* 1.19.26–29), where the poet says that both Sappho and Alcaeus "govern" (*temperat*, repeated twice in lines 28 and 29) the Muse (*Musam*, 28) first developed by Archilochus.¹⁰ The soundful potential of nature is transformed, as in the case of pitch, into organized human "music" by imposing a certain kind of artificial order – this time, the ordering of time into musical tempo.

When applied to the Gallus' *tympanum*, *tempero* may carry meanings related to either (or both) of these areas of musical control. Hand-drums were made of skin stretched over a frame, just as a lyre-string is strung in tension, and so the musician's control over his drum required attention if not exactly to a specific pitch, at least to the quality of its timbre as he beat it with his fingertips or knuckles.¹¹ Another possibility is that the Gallus, as he beats the drum, controls the rhythm of the resulting sound. The Galli were known, after all, for the complex beat of their songs' galliambic meter (as famously rendered into Latin in Catullus 63). On this reading, the musician's skill lies in his perfect control over the instrument's wide-ranging and intense rhythmic possibilities.

When they punningly transfer such language of musical control to Octavian, Suetonius' audience takes the verb *tempero* back to its wider and more usual meaning.¹² One

9 Ribbeck includes the line proclaimed onstage among fragments of *incertae [...] fabulae* (CRF², p. 122), suggesting that it might belong to a *fabula togata* or a mime along the lines of the fragmentary works of Atta and Laberius mentioned above, n. 8.

10 In the lines immediately above (26–27), Horace makes it clear that his subject-matter is *modos* ("rhythms") and *carminis artem* ("the art of song").

11 On the *tympanon* and its mode of playing, see West 1992, 124 (with plate 32).

12 It can be used intransitively of moderating oneself and one's behavior (*OLD* 1, "to exercise restraint, behave with moderation") or transitively of moderating, regulating, or controlling something else

of its basic meanings, when used transitively, is to “rule” or “govern”, often as a near-synonym of *regere*. In many contexts, in fact, *tempero* is an explicitly political word. It can be used of humans’ control over their society; at the beginning of his *Tusculan Disputations*, for instance, Cicero talks about how the ancestors used to “govern” the Republic (*rem vero publicam nostri maiores certe melioribus temperaverunt et institutis et legibus*, “In truth, our ancestors certainly governed the Republic with better institutions and laws”, *Tusc.* 1.1.2). It can also be used of the similar but more global control that is wielded by the gods. At *Metamorphoses* 1.769–771, Ovid uses a phrase that is extremely similar to what we find in Suetonius: the sun-god swears to Phaethon that he is descended from the sun “who regulates the globe” (*qui temperat orbem*, 1.770).

The audience’s interpretive move does not only depend on a clever pun. Rather, it draws on the longstanding relationship in Greek and Roman thought between musical, political, and even cosmic order. Whether *temperat* refers to the dancer’s control over the drum’s timbre, rhythm, or both, the passage clearly engages with a long tradition that connects musical regulation to a more global sense of order. Take, for instance, this passage in Livy, which narrates how a chorus of young girls sang and danced through Rome in honor of Juno in 207 BCE, as part of the rites that were intended to expiate a series of dreadful prodigies that had befallen Italy in the wake of the advancing Punic army (Liv. 27.37.13–14, excerpted; see also Prescendi in this volume):

tum septem et uiginti uirgines, longam indutae uestem, carmen in Iunonem reginam canentes ibant ... a porta Iugario uico in forum uenere; in foro pompa constitit et per manus reste data uirgines sonum uocis pulsu pedum modulantes incesserunt.

Then twenty-seven young girls, dressed in long robes, proceeded singing a hymn for Juno Regina ... From the gate they came into the forum by way of the *vicus Iugarius*; in the forum the procession halted and, passing a rope through their hands, the girls advanced, regulating the sound of their voice with the beat of their feet.

The language of the girls’ rhythmic “regulation” (*modulantes*) is reminiscent of Suetonius’ use of *tempero*, as the girls pause their procession and perform their dance in the Roman Forum. In musical terms, *modulor* is a near-synonym of *tempero*.¹³ Livy’s maidens create organized, regulated sound through the rhythm of their feet dancing together, a pattern which forms the metrical basis for their song. Given the hymn’s context of ritual purification, the wider importance of their dance’s well-regulated rhythm

(OLD 4–9). Note that OLD does not distinguish the word’s musical use, discussed above in terms of the regulation of pitch and rhythm, from its meaning of physically “controlling” an object like a bow, sail, or bridle (OLD 8).

13 So TLL in its primary definition of *modulor*: *modulor aliquid, fere i. q. modulis temperare* (VIII.1246.50, Busch-Ehlere). As the rest of the TLL entry shows, the primary meaning of *modulor* is in the realm of music where, like *tempero*, it encompasses the regulation of both pitch (*i. q. συμφωνία*, 1246.65) and rhythm (*εὐρύθμως*, 1246.60).

is clear. While they come from a narrow segment of Roman society – and although they represent a usually silent demographic of unmarried girls – the performance of their well-regulated group music and movement is a civically orchestrated attempt to enact the wider peace, harmony, and good order that is the desired outcome of the rite on both a political and cosmic level. Such a dynamic is further enhanced in their choreography through their use of the rope – its continuous thread, that connects all the dancers, is surely a symbol of indissoluble connection between the performers and, by extension, the members of the wider community (see also Bellia in this volume).

This Roman Republican example is, of course, deeply informed by other ancient Mediterranean – and especially Greek – norms about the harmonious potential of specifically *choral* singing, dancing bodies.¹⁴ Participants in a chorus, who inhabited “the juncture of individual and collective self” were often imagined to embody wider civic and cosmic harmonies with their well-regulated group song and movement.¹⁵ Suetonius’ anecdote draws on this wider discourse, already evident in the Livy passage, but diverges significantly from it. For the Gallus dancer is, crucially, a soloist. There is no group dance here: the rhythm implied by the use of *temperat* is not the sound of the community’s feet in lock-step, as in Livy.¹⁶ Rather, the focus is on a solo artist – and, moreover, on a single part of his body (*digito*) as he alone controls his instrument.¹⁷ The parallels in the realm of Octavian’s power are clear. In both the Greek and Roman worlds, group dance embodied collective social forms, whether the radical democracy of fifth century Athens or Rome’s Republican system of government. In Suetonius, who represents a world poised on the cusp of one-man rule, the virtuoso solo dancer models the potential for the authoritative rule of a single figure over global space (*orbem*).¹⁸

14 As several scholars have noted, the maiden song of 207 BCE was inflected by Greek practices on several levels. Wissowa 1912, 426 characterizes the rites as “griechisch [...] von Anfang bis zu Ende.” Gruen 1990, 85–92 and Feeney 2016, 225–232 focus, rather, on their innovative blending of cultural practices. On the rite, see Curtis 2021.

15 Kowalzig 2013, 173. The ancient and modern bibliography on the civic and cosmic values embodied in *choreia* is enormous; Plato’s understanding of its relationship with social harmony is neatly summed up in the *Laws*, when he says that the gods gave humans the chorus, and thus “joined them to each other” (ἀλλήλοις συνείροντας, *Leg.* 654a). As Wilson 2003, 165 puts it, the chorus “remained for centuries a major cultural institution for social re-creation and reflection, particularly for reflection on issues of social cohesion.”

16 The crowd, as we will see in this essay’s final section, bears a complex and interesting relation with a “chorus.”

17 The specific focus on the artist’s fingers may evoke the ancient discourse of pantomime, in which *chironomia* (the art of hand gestures) was especially important. See e.g. Garelli 1995, 33–34.

18 This accords with other imagery of Octavian/Augustus asserting sole control over the globe, for example the silver coinage from 31–29 BCE depicting his portrait on the obverse, and on the reverse Victory standing on the globe (*RE* 1, 602; see Zanker 1988, 53–57). The most famous and influential iconographic description of Octavian/Augustus’ control over the terrestrial and cosmic globe is the shield of Aeneas (for which the term *orbis* is used at Verg. *Aen.* 8.448 and 673, and in

In this, Octavian acts more like a god than a human. A surprisingly apt parallel, which likewise presents musical regulation as a form not of communal human order but of divine control over the world, is found in the Orphic Hymn to Apollo (no. 34 Fayant, lines 16–23, roughly dated from the late Hellenistic to early imperial period):

Παντοθαλής σὺ δὲ πάντα πόλον κιθάρη πολυκρέκτωι
 ἀρμόζεις, ὅτε μὲν νεάτης ἐπὶ τέρματα βαίνων,
 ἄλλοτε δ' αὐθ' ὑπάτης, ποτὲ Δώριον εἰς διάκοσμον.
 πάντα πόλον κινᾶς κρίνεις βιοθρέμμονα φύλα,
 ἀρμονίηι κεράσας παγκόσμιον ἀνδράσι μοῖραν, 20
 μίξας χειμῶνος θέρεός τ' ἴσον ἀμφοτέροισιν,
 ταῖς ὑπάταις χειμῶνα, θέρος νεάταις διακρίνας,
 Δώριον εἰς ἕαρος πολυηράτου ὄριον ἄνθος.

You who nurture all, you make harmonious the whole firmament with your much-sounding *kithara*, when you approach the limits of its lowest string, and then at another time the highest, and then at times in accordance with the Dorian order. Tempering the whole firmament, you determine the life-nurturing tribes, blending in harmony the all-ordered fate for men, and mingling an equal portion of winter and summer with each string – distinguishing winter by the highest, and summer by the lowest, and in accordance with the Dorian, the timely flower of lovely spring.

In the Orphic hymn, the tuning of Apollo's lyre determines the seasons and therefore the fate of all mankind. Language of musical governance and control is found throughout the passage, including the language of "tempering" (the participle κινᾶς at line 19), as Apollo's music "tempers" the firmament.

The divine associations of Octavian's control over the *orbis* in Suetonius' passage may go even further. In some ancient contexts, Cybele's *tympanon*, like other musical instruments such as the lyre, held global significance as part of her cosmic role as Great Mother of all. Roman-era iconography of Cybele makes clear the visual affinity between globe and drum: we might compare late Republican coinage on which her portrait is accompanied on the right by a small, free-floating globe (figure 1) with iconography showing the goddess holding her simple, round *tympanon*, exemplified by the famous bronze statuette in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (figure 2).¹⁹ Some Ro-

the center of whose circular form Augustus himself is depicted). On Aeneas' circular shield as a "cosmic icon," see the classic treatment of Hardie 1986.

19 On the coin in figure 1, Cybele's global and/or cosmic realm is explicitly tied to Roman political symbolism, since the reverse depicts a curule chair. A globe depicting Cybele may also have been carried during the *Megalensia* procession (Summers 1996, 341–342). Lucr. *DRN* 2.658–659 alludes (albeit dismissively) to Cybele as the allegorical instantiation of the global realm: *concedamus ut hic terrarum dicitur orbem / esse deum matrem* ("let us allow that he should call the globe of the earth the mother of the gods").

man writers apparently made an explicit allegorical analogy between Cybele's *tympanon* and the terrestrial *orbis*.²⁰ According to Augustine, Varro made the following claim:

Eandem, inquit, dicunt Matrem Magnam; quod tympanum habeat, significari esse orbem terrae; quod turres in capite, oppida; quod sedens fingatur, circa eam cum omnia moveantur, ipsam non moveri.

The same goddess, he [i. e. Varro] says, is called the Great Mother. The timbrel which she carries means that she is the circle of the earth, the towers on her head stand for fortified towns, and she is represented as seated because, while all things move about her, she herself is unmoved.

(Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 7.1.24, trans. Green 2014).²¹

It would not be surprising if the shape of the drum in the hands of Cybele's worshipper could evoke this more specific nexus of cosmic, musical, and political control for a contemporary audience. Just as in the Orphic hymn to Apollo, the effect is godlike, with a single tap of the *princeps'* finger sending off vibrations that are felt across the world.

Musical Bodies and Political Subversion

The gestural and musical skills of the dancer are mapped onto the figure of Octavian in Suetonius' passage, then – imbued with the Graeco-Roman language and iconography associated with regulation and control at the intersection of musical, civic, and cosmic spheres. Such connections, further, highlight the individual, and even potentially autocratic, nature of Octavian's rule. And indeed, it is clear from the whole tenor of the passage that the comparison with the Gallus dancer is not at all complimentary to the *princeps*. The subversive, even polemical, aspects of the passage are worthy of deeper examination, suggesting, as they do, both the attitude to Octavian's imperial power that is being expressed and the way in which dance is used to express that power.

In Suetonius' narrative, the crowd understands and approves of the use of the language of music and dance language to insult Octavian (*contumelia*). And indeed, its associations are deeply negative: the crowd's response draws on the deep-seated combination of dancing and gender and sexual deviance (especially effeminacy) that was associated at Rome with the figure of the *gallus* and with the word *cinaedus* with

20 Wille 1967, 59; Vendries 2001.

21 According to Augustine, Varro goes on to say that Cybele's other distinctive instrument, her bronze *cymbala*, represents the sound of agricultural instruments used in the cultivation of the earth. In contrast, Servius at Verg. *G.* 4.64 explains that her cymbals also have a cosmic connotation: *quae in eius tutela sunt ideo, quod similia sunt hemicycliis caeli, quibus cingitur terra, quae est mater deorum* ("they [i. e. the *cymbala*] are in her domain because they are similar to the semi-circles of heaven, by which the earth – which is the mother of the gods – is surrounded").

which they characterize the dancer.²² Their use of this language in relation to Octavian is pointed: this theatrical anecdote forms part of a longer section in Suetonius that details Octavian's many youthful transgressions – adultery, gambling, even sex with his adopted father, Julius Caesar. As Suetonius makes clear, such behavior led to Octavian being labelled “effeminate” by his enemies at the time (*prima iuventa variorum dedecorum infamiam subiit. Sextus Pompeius ut effeminatum insectatus est*, “in his earliest youth, he incurred the disgrace of various shameful acts. Sextus Pompey accused him of being effeminate”, Suet. *Aug.* 68). For example, he is accused of burning the hair on his legs to make it grow back softer (68). Except in certain circumstances, such as the dance of priestly *collegia* such as the *Salii* or the *Arvals*, dancing in general was seen as the antithesis of proper elite male behaviour in late Republican and early imperial Rome.²³ The Gallus, a castrated Phrygian priest of Cybele, took such associations to their furthest extreme.²⁴

But the insult is even more complex than this. The dancing Gallus does not simply embody musical and sexual deviance *per se*. For within the context of the language of musical and political regulation that we considered before, both the dancer and Octavian combine a peculiar and unsettling mixture of control and expertise, on the one hand, and a lack of bodily and even ethical restraint on the other. It is this uneasy combination that the crowd perceives in the dancer – and, as they also understand, underlies Octavian's rise to power.

It is important to note that the passage's main verb of “control”, *tempero*, brings together not just the musical and political realms, but also the semantic field of bodily restraint and appropriate behaviour with regard to Roman social and ethical codes of moderation. In the *Pro Fonteio*, for example, Cicero hyperbolically attributes to his client every possible virtue of Roman manhood, especially moderation and self-control (*in omnibus vitae partibus moderatum ac temperantem*, “moderate and self-controlled in all aspects of life”, 18.41). And elsewhere in his *Life of Augustus*, Suetonius applies the word as an adjective to Augustus' speech, characterizing it as “refined and restrained” (*elegans et temperatum*, 86). The actions of the Gallus dancer and the characterization of Octavian in Suetonius' narrative highlight an uncomfortable tension between such self-control, on the one hand, and on the other an anxiety-provoking bodily excess.

22 On the mutable figure of the *cinaedus*, see Williams 2010, 193–197; Sapsford 2022.

23 See Curtis 2017, 8–10. Out of many examples, particularly vivid is Cicero's characterization of his enemy Clodius as “that great showmaster” (*ipse ille maxime ludius*, *Sest.* 116). Clodius is not just a spectator when he goes to the theatre, but an “actor and spectacle” (*actor et acroama*). Moreover, he knows all his sister's *embolima* (“dances”), an unpleasant allusion to the deviancy of both him and Clodia, and a swipe at their alleged sexual relations.

24 On the overlapping vocabularies and identities of *gallus* and *cinaedus* in Greek and Latin, see Williams 2010, 193–197; Sapsford 2022 (esp. 7, 19, and 119–121; he discusses the Suetonius passage briefly at 151–152). Suetonius' language also connects the Gallus' sexual effeminacy with the foreignness of his musical practices by means of the unusual Greek loan-word, *tympanizo*.

Dance operates as a medium for understanding this complicated and sinister side of the future *princeps*' power because of how it displays the dancer's finely-calibrated control over his body, even as he may seem to lose himself to the form's apparently unrestrained sensuality. The Gallus' celebration of Cybele, in Roman literature in culture, was a mode particularly associated with emotional excess and lack of restraint. To gain a sense of this, one need only look at how Attis is presented in Catullus 63 (31–34):

*furibunda simul anhelans vaga vadit, animam agens,
comitata tympano Attis per opaca nemora dux,
veluti iuvenca vitans onus indomita iugi:
rapidae ducem sequuntur Gallae properipedem.*

Raging, panting, wandering at once goes Attis, driving on her spirit, accompanied by the drum through the dark groves, as their leader, just like an unbroken heifer, avoiding the burden of the yoke: the Gallae swiftly follow their leader, with her hurrying foot.

Attis is *furibunda*, *vaga*, *indomita* – all attributes that show a lack of ability to restrain or control oneself in the presence of pain, fear, and possession by the mother goddess.²⁵ And yet, when it comes to the dancer onstage, underpinning this performance of frenzy is a deep musical and somatic expertise – a professionalism and knowledge-base that allows the artist to “control the drum” (*temperat orbem*) even while creating an effect of extreme frenzy and uncontrolled passion.

The dissonance between unmoderated excess and self-control can be felt in relation to Octavian, as well. The bodily pleasures to which Octavian succumbs in Suetonius' account of his early years – sex, feasting, changing the very appearance of his body to be softer – are, as we know, marked as excessive by Roman standards. Yet what is quite sinister here is that even Octavian's moral bankruptcy, which seems to show him at his most out-of-control, often turns out to be calculated for political ends. In the chapter which immediately follows the Gallus anecdote, Octavian's adulterous affairs with aristocratic Roman wives are said by his friends to have been “committed not out of desire but by design” (*non libidine sed ratione commissa*), “so that he might more easily find out the designs of his enemies by means of each one's wife” (*quo facilius consilia aduersariorum per cuiusque mulieres exquireret*, 69.1). Here is a portrait of a disturbing hunger for power in which rationality and seething desire become inextricable from one another. Only such a man, perhaps, could end up ruling over the whole globe. Octavian and the Gallus, in short, have in common a shared aesthetic of disarray that is underpinned by a deep and careful expertise and, ultimately, control.

25 Cf. Eur. *Bacch.* 123–134, where the chorus sing about the Corybantes' invention of the drum (the “skin-stretched circle”; βυρσοτόνον κύκλωμα) and its theft by satyrs who are described as “frenzied” (μαινόμενοι, 130).

The *Principes* and his Public: Staging Political Subjecthood

The theatrical audience, as we shall see, is both an interpreter of, and participant in, Octavian's rise to power. Unlike the private machinations in Octavian's adulterous bedroom, our theatrical episode takes place in public space and is framed through the viewpoint of the audience.²⁶ Indeed, their subversive interpretation of Octavian's political goals grows directly out of their experience in the theatre. This episode is very much about who is in "control" – of the performance and, more broadly, of Roman imperial space. When the audience takes control of the theatrical space and the meaning that is created there, they talk back to Octavian in the very domain that he will later use to disseminate his political messaging. And it is not just a question of "talking back". For the audience proves itself to be not only a spectator and interpreter in Suetonius' scene, but also a dynamic agent within the space of the theatre. By this means, dance becomes not simply a metaphor for political power, but a medium where, according to Suetonius, the tensions and struggles of political communication play out in real time.

The theatre was always an extraordinarily powerful yet complicated place for Augustus. Scholars have examined how the theatre formed an important part of Augustus' "pageantry of power";²⁷ from his re-organization of audience seating to reflect the hierarchy of Roman society, to his understanding that the imperial persona can be crafted like a role in a theatrical production. His promotion of pantomime, in particular, was legendary: the mention of Pylades in chapter 45 of Suetonius' *Life* reminds us that it was apparently Augustus who introduced the high style of pantomime to Rome, with Pylades and his fellow-artist Bathyllus.²⁸ As Tacitus tells us at *Annals* 1.54, not only did Augustus have a personal appetite for pantomime; he also considered it a sound practice to be seen as sharing the tastes of the *vulgus*.²⁹ Yet popular entertainments were not allowed to go unchecked; by the time Augustus solidified his singular authority

26 Wardle 2014, 439 notes that the theatrical anecdote forms a climax to this section, as it brings the allegations against Octavian into the most public of arenas, the theater.

27 The phrase is from Beacham 2005.

28 On Augustus' relationship with pantomime, see Querzoli 2006; Hunt 2008. On the introduction of pantomime at Rome, see esp. Jory 1981; Leppin 1996.

29 Tac. *Ann.* 1.54: *ludos Augustales tunc primum coeptos turbavit discordia ex certamine histrionum. indulserat ei ludicro Augustus, dum Maecenati obtemperat effuso in amorem Bathylli; neque ipse abhorrebat talibus studiis, et civile rebatur misceri voluptatibus vulgi* ("At that time the *ludi Augustales*, which were then instituted for the first time, were disturbed by the commotion caused by rivalry between the actors. Augustus had exercised indulgence towards that kind of production out of accommodation for Maecenas, who had fallen in love with Bathyllus. And he himself was not averse to such pastimes, and moreover he considered it gracious to take part in the pleasures of the crowd"). On this passage, see Leppin 1996.

over Roman society, theatrical entertainments were an important domain in which the *princeps* exerted literal and symbolic control.³⁰

As one of the places where the *princeps* came most directly into contact with the *vulgus* during his rise to power, the theatre was a dangerous and unpredictable site for political communication – just as it had been for other Roman leaders, such as Pompey, except that now Augustus had to reckon with it as he sought to expand his rule and authority beyond recognized Republican limits. Such difficulties can be seen, in a somewhat more benign form, in a passage from Suetonius' *Life* that seems to record a much later episode (*Aug.* 53):³¹

domini appellationem ut maledictum et obprobrium semper exhorruit. cum spectante eo ludos pronuntiatum esset in mimo,
o dominum aequum et bonum!,
et uniuersi quasi de ipso dictum exultantes comprobassent, et statim manu uultuque indecoras adulationes repressit et insequenti die grauissimo corripuit edicto.

He always recoiled from the title “master” as an insult and a reproach. Once, when he was an audience member, the line was spoken during a mime, “O just and excellent master!” And everyone leapt up in approval as if it had been spoken about him. But immediately he checked their inappropriate flattery with a gesture of the hand and with his expression, and on the following day he reproached them in a very stern decree.

As in the theatrical anecdote about the Gallus, the meaning of this story also hinges on the audience's interpretation of the words spoken onstage. They leap to their feet in applause because they think the mime artist's salutation applies to their emperor. Although this might seem like desirable flattery, Augustus is gravely displeased, and quashes it first in person, immediately, and then later in writing. The crowd's enthusiasm is dangerous because although Augustus studiously avoided any language associated with kingship or overt authoritarianism, he could not completely control the crowd and keep them on message in the moment.

30 For example, although members of stigmatized professions such as acting, dancing, and music were liable even under the Republic to legal discrimination (see Edwards 1997, 74), Suetonius' *Life* records a flurry of instances in which actors and pantomime artists were subject to severe sanctions imposed directly by the *princeps* because of the perceived *licentia* of their behavior both in private and onstage: punishments ranged from public flogging to exile (45.4, with Carter 1982 and Wardle 2014 *ad loc.*). Actors, dancers, and musicians were also singled out for especially harsh penalties under Augustus' adultery legislation: an adulterer could be put to death if he had previously engaged in one of these occupations (*Dig.* 48.5.25[24] pr. Macer). I am grateful to Harry Morgan for these points about Augustus' close control of the theatrical realm.

31 Carter (1982 *ad loc.*) notes that the reference to Augustus' children and grandchildren immediately afterwards (“after that” [*posthac*] he did not allow himself to be called ‘master’ even by his children or grandchildren either seriously or in jest”) dates the anecdote to the period after 17 BCE, since this was the year in which Gaius and Lucius were adopted.

In the story about the young Octavian and the Gallus dancer, the crowd exhibits a similar independence of will, but it is even more daring because their response to the spectacle is intended not as flattery towards Octavian but rather as an insult. It is significant that just as their critique of Octavian is overtly political, so does Suetonius characterize them as a political entity in relation to their future ruler. If we return to the anecdote as it is recounted by Suetonius, we might note that he calls them *populus universus*. In the story about their flattering salutation (*Aug.* 53), a similar term was used, *universi*.³² But now the collective noun *populus* also gives the group a political identity which sharpens their political message.³³ Furthermore, even though the adjective *universus* was also used in chapter 53, here it gains particular resonance in a context where, as we have seen, the whole point of the comparison is Octavian's reach over the globe (*orbem*). The object of the drum is a microcosm for the world over which he will rule, and the term *universus* helps add to the impression of universality. The citizens who inhabit this globe, and who will be his subjects, are sitting right there in the audience of the theatre. It is in their role as imperial citizens, in other words, that Suetonius frames the audience's understanding of Octavian's rising power.

As spectators making sense of what they see on stage, the audience stands outside of the performance. Their interpretive act, as we have seen, makes the *cinaedus'* dance a potent metaphor for political control. It is important to note, however, that once the audience becomes involved in interpreting the scene, things do not remain in the realm of metaphor. The way in which the crowd reacts to the Gallus dancer draws them into the theatrical space and makes them a fellow participant in the performance. Their assent to the line's implied comparison between the *cinaedus* and the *princeps* is strongly marked: *adsensu maximo comprobavit*³⁴. As a crowd, the way they would most naturally display their assent is through the noisy, mass clamor of their own bodies – the clap-

32 Cf. also the similar anecdote at *Aug.* 56.2, where the members of the theatre audience rise up (again, *universi*) to applaud Augustus' sons, at which he expresses strong disapproval. In at least theatrical context, at *Aug.* 58.1 the people spontaneously and, once again, *universi*, offer him the title of *pater patriae*, which he declines. The tenor of all these passages is of universal acclamation by the people, which Augustus conspicuously declines.

33 In Suetonius, as elsewhere in Latin, the term *populus* has broadly political connotations. See Mouchová 1991 on the term in Suetonius (in contrast to words such as *plebs* and *vulgus*), and see the definition at *Cic. Rep.* 1.39: *populus autem non omnis hominum coetus quoquo modo congregatus, sed coetus multitudinis iuris consensu et utilitatis communione sociatus* ("the 'people', though, is not every collection of persons, gathered in any which way, but rather the assembly of a large number of people brought together in agreement with respect to law, and in mutual participation for the common good"). Soon thereafter, Cicero glosses *populus* as *omnis civitas* (*Rep.* 1.41), a definition that is picked up by *Serv. Auct. ad Verg. Aen.* 1.148 (*quidam 'populum' totam civitatem [...] significari putant*). See *TLL* X.1.2714.55–70 (Ottink) for further ancient definitions and glosses of the term *populus*.

34 *Comprobavit* adds further echoes of chapter 53 (cf. *comprobassent*); a fairly coherent political and performative vocabulary runs through Suetonius' various accounts of Octavian's/Augustus' theatrical interactions with the *populus*.

ping of their hands and the stamping of their feet. Their act of interpretation adds a further layer of movement and gesture to the scene: the *universus populus* acts noisily and with a rhythm of its own in contradistinction to Octavian's apparently tight, controlling hold over the globe.

The interplay between the bodies of the actors, of the audience, and of the *princeps* himself can be seen even more clearly in the anecdote cited above about the audience's excessive flattery (*Aug.* 53.1). There, both audience and *princeps* are drawn into the spectacle. When the crowd hears the actor say the word *dominus*, they "leap up", *exultantes* – a verb that has strong resonances of dance in Latin.³⁵ Augustus, in turn, uses gestural, nonverbal communication to reproach them: he checks them "with a gesture of his hand, and with his expression" (*manu vultuque*).³⁶ In the passage about Octavian and the Gallus, the language is not quite so explicit, but such loud, somatic crowd dynamics are clearly implied.

Later emperors would seize on the potential for the theatrical crowd to play an active role as performers in a politically-charged spectacle.³⁷ According to Suetonius (*Nero* 20.3), Nero was taken with the "rhythmic applause" (*modulatis [...] laudationibus*) of some Alexandrians who had flocked to Naples.³⁸ Calling more of them from Alexandria, he combined these crowds with young Roman equestrians and over 5,000 members of the *plebs* and had them learn, in groups, several different Alexandrian styles of applause: *bombos* ("bees"), *imbrices* ("roof-tiles") and *testae* ("bricks"). These groups' choreographed applause accompanied his singing. The crowd's sounds and movements were pressed into the service of their imperial impresario, providing a kind of chorus to accompany his solo *kithara*-playing.³⁹

In Suetonius' anecdote about Octavian, the interplay between the *populus* and the *princeps* is radically different. By standing up and asserting their noisy collective rhythm in this way, the Roman people actively transform what is experienced within the live, dynamic space of the theatre, and thereby create a counterpoint – one might almost say, an alternative chorus – to the solo modes they see and hear onstage.

35 Extensive discussion at Alonso Fernández 2011, 85–89, with an appendix of passages at 521.

36 Octavian's gestures can be read, more specifically, as a metatheatrical nod to the art of pantomime: he controls the crowd in the theatre using the bodily language of his favourite artform.

37 See Bartsch 1994 on how the theatrical "audience" becomes the "actor" in their interactions with successive emperors beginning with Nero, and the "new theatricality" of spectatorship that this dynamic ushers in (3).

38 Cf. a similar description of the crowds at Nero's kitharodic performances at *Tac. Ann.* 16.4.4: the "city plebs" (*plebs [...] urbis*) "began to sound with certain rhythms and regulated applause" (*personabat certis modis plausuque composito*).

39 Cf. Power 2010, 102 on the musical nature of Nero's audience in the Suetonian passage: "The enthusiasts in the audience themselves become active participants in the performance [...] imprinting their own rhythmic soundmaking on the sonic texture of the musical event as it unfolds."

Conclusions

The theatre was a microcosm of Rome's global power and imperial reach. Theater's affinity for staging global and imperial politics is readily visible in settings such as Early Modern England, where Shakespeare's theatre, The Globe, was named after the wider world that "we cram / within this wooden O" (*Henry V*, Prologue 13).⁴⁰ At Rome, too, the theatre and its modes of spectatorship were closely involved in positioning the city and its citizenry in relation to the rest of the *orbis terrarum*. This could be metaphorical, such as when Cicero describes his impression, while acting as quaestor in Sicily, that he and his office were "staged in the theatre of the globe" (*ut me quaesturamque meam quasi in aliquo terrarum orbis theatro versari existimarem*, *Verr.* 2.5.35.10).⁴¹ Or it could be very tangible, for instance when Pompey displayed in his theatre – the first permanent stone theatre at Rome – statues of the fourteen nations over which he had triumphed.⁴²

Here, I have been interested not so much in the space of the Roman theatre as the political valences of the gestures, movements, and sonorities of the bodies within it. I have sketched out some ways in which Suetonius' short but thought-provoking anecdote prompts us to consider how theatrical solo dance, in particular, could provide a model for understanding the power invested in one ruler. The artist's control over his body and instrument provided a paradoxically appropriate mode for popular critique of the *princeps'* emerging authority. Theatrical dance, then, is not just representative or symbolic of political order. Rather, this artistic medium, which comprises bodies moving through space and time, is made to enact and actively intervene in the wider tensions between the future emperor and his soon-to-be subjects.

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- 40 See further Huang 2013 on both Early Modern and twenty-first century conceptions of Shakespeare's Globe as a "globally conceived playhouse" (275).
- 41 Such an image may have Hellenistic precedents. Cf. Quintus Curtius Rufus' speech of Alexander the Great, who looks to acquire military glory in the "theatre of the globe" (*in theatro terrarum orbis*, 9.6.21.7–8).
- 42 Suet. *Nero* 46; Plin. *HN* 36.41. It is unclear whether the statues stood in the theatre itself, or in an adjacent portico.

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Figures



Figure 1 Roman *denarius* minted by M. Plaetorius Cestianus, 67 BCE.

Obverse: Head of Cybele. Reverse: Curule chair. British Museum 2002,0102.4024.
 Photograph © The Trustees of the British Museum. Shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence



Figure 2 Bronze statuette of Cybele on a cart drawn by lions. Roman, second half of the second century CE. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Henry G. Marquand, 97.22.24. Photograph © The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

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