

# The Past Sets the Context for the Present

*Preserving the Legacy of Musical and Poetic Tradition  
in the Hellenistic Period*

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## Abstract

This contribution examines musical and poetic tradition, in so far as it influenced the culture and society of the Hellenistic period. Epigraphy attests to the recollection of traditional heritage as one driving force for public-at-large performances. Extra-agonistic and agonistic performances pursued by the so-called *poeti vaganti*, travelling all over the cultural centres of Greece chasing fame and rewards, attest to different ways to preserve the legacy of musical and poetic tradition, by lingering on it or re-modulating its *facies*. Re-performing ancient times, through selections of dramas and lyric poetry, and demonstrating the musical structures and poetic ways of former days, had the purpose of strengthening social identity and reinvigorating communal knowledge. Inscriptions allow us to envisage the nuances and potentialities of these thoughtful revivals, highlighting the ways this concept could shift with time, context, and place.

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## Keywords

musical and poetic tradition – Hellenistic culture – *poeti vaganti* – dramatic and lyric re-performances – collective memory – cultural memory

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We all were sea-swallow'd, though some cast again,  
 And by that destiny to perform an act  
 Whereof what's past is prologue

W. SHAKESPEARE, *The Tempest*

◦◦

Popular entertainment played a multimodal role in shaping the artistic life and cultural identity of the Hellenistic world. Flanking court literature, this phenomenon gravitated between extra-agonistic performances and large-scale movements towards the ἀγῶνες. The main cultural centres were prestigious venues for the musical and literary performers who spread culture, trends, and professionalism all over Hellenistic Greece. Their activities are mainly documented by the epigraphic sources, which provide a large spectrum of valuable clues for the reconstruction of a cultural phenomenon “on-the-move”, as artistic travel featured the careers of the majority of the so-called *poeti vaganti*.<sup>1</sup>

We are used to portraying the Hellenistic period as an age focused on virtuosity, showmanship, and professionalism in music, poetry, and theatre.<sup>2</sup> The spectacular trend in performative arts described by the literary sources is only part of the picture though, as epigraphic evidence attests to an inclination towards traditional music and literature that aimed at reviving social identity and localism. Among the *poeti vaganti* inscriptions, the recollection of traditional heritage is a frequently recurring feature, encompassing information connected to the suitable ways in which music and poetry should convey it. Artistic innovation was welcome too, through new forms of artistry

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<sup>1</sup> Guarducci 1927-1929. The expression is evocative though it does not fit perfectly to this movement, as performers did not take erratic journeys but carefully planned their artistic endeavors. Plus, in some cases they participated in the artistic life of their own city.

<sup>2</sup> West 1992, 356-85.

or compositions adhering to a fresher musical language (see *infra*), but sticking to tradition had its own circumstantial functionality. In the research on *poeti vaganti*, we can select three territorial approaches to tradition that describe, in different and representative ways, the music and poetry of the ancients as a “performative ground”. Through the inscriptions herein analyzed, this contribution aims to offer a sneak peek at the value of tradition in Hellenistic culture and to discuss the conservative power that the performing arts convey, bending to a cultural environment. The way we carry on the past defines our present.

## 1 Tradition as Interpretative Style

Towards the end of the 3rd century BC, the Mouseia festival of Thespiae started to grow in importance and the ἀγών renovation was set in motion, so that the thymelic competition became *stephanites*, pentaeteric, and isopythic.<sup>3</sup> In that phase, the support of the Ptolemaic dynasty<sup>4</sup> and the contribution

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<sup>3</sup> The reconstruction of the phases of the Mouseia is based on the epigraphic sources. Inscriptions attesting to the life of the ἀγών are not few, though often in a fragmentary state. For this reason, various scholars have attempted a reconstruction over time. To sum up different positions, Feyel (1942, 88-132) and Rigsby (1987) admit an annual celebration before the 230 BC, when a pentaeteric ἀγών was set. Between 215 and 208 BC, a thymelic ἀγών was established with five categories (aulodic, auletic, kitharistic, kitharodic, and epic poetry), retaining the scenic ones too. According to Knoepfler's reassessment of the discourse (Knoepfler 1996), a dramatic ἀγών existed before the pentaeteric re-organization of the mid-220s and afterwards both scenic and thymelic competitions coincided every four years. In his reconstruction of the Mouseia, Schachter (2010-2011) proposes three different stages of the Mouseia: the first one, dated 230-225 BC, as the institution of a thymelic and trieteric competition; the second one (225 or 217 ca.), as a re-organization of the thymelic ἀγών elevating the five categories to isopythic and *stephanitai* while the others (likely rhapsodes; heralds or trumpeters) were kept *chrematitai*; the third stage (late 210s) setting the institution of a pentaeteric dramatic ἀγών.

<sup>4</sup> The cultural *trait d'union* between Boeotia and Egypt consisted of the cults of Dionysus and the Muses. The central place reserved in Boeotia for Dionysus—one of the most relevant divinities of the Lagides pantheon—and his association with the Muses especially in Thespiae, caught the attention of the Attalids other than the Ptolemies (Barbantani 2000, 163f.; Manieri 2009, 321). The engagement of Ptolemy IV and his sister-wife Arsinoe III in generously funding the Thespian Mouseia and the Heliconian sanctuary with a donation of prizes for the dramatic ἀγών and lands was meant to strengthen the image of the Lagides throughout Hellenistic Greece under the flagship of the Muses. Also poetry was likely engaged in promoting this sponsorship, as attested by P. Heid. 189 inv. 435 *verso*, a composition in elegiac distics to be read at the Lagides court and connecting the sovereigns to the Boeotian ἀγῶνες (Barbantani 2000). In return for the Ptolemies' intervention, Thespians celebrated Arsinoe with a statue of her on a bronzed ostrich ἐν Ἐλικῶνι (Paus. 9.31.1: whether the statue represented Arsinoe II or III is not specified; for recent bibliography on the matter see: Barbantani 2000, 154 n. 110; Prioux-Trinquier 2015) and with the dedication of coinage

of the *koinon* of the Isthmus and Nemea in the organization were crucial in elevating the festival from its regional level.<sup>5</sup> Before this late 3rd century enhancement, the ἀγών was conceivably annual and included musical and dancing competitions.<sup>6</sup> At this early stage, victors were awarded a tripod: many of these Pausanias saw himself<sup>7</sup> and some inscribed bases attesting to tripods' dedication to the Muses were found.<sup>8</sup> Among them is one offered by Straton, victorious in his homeland at the aulodic contest of the Mouseia. His dedication, in iambic trimeters,<sup>9</sup> thoroughly describes his art beyond celebrating the excellences of Thespiae.

Vottéro 2002, 102-103 n° 41

3rd century BC (*ante mid-220s*)

[—]ει δ' ἐμὲ  
 [ἀείρατ' ἀ]θλογ, ἀλλὰ τὰι τέχναι σοφὸς  
 [αὐλῷδ]ός, αὐλῶι φθόγγον εὖ προσαρμόσας,  
 [Μουσᾶ]ν ὅπ[ω]ς μελιχρὸν ἀπύσαι μέλος  
 5 [βάσ]ιν τιθ[εὶ]ς πρὸς τέρμα καίριον ῥυθμῶι.  
 [ἄπας δ' ἔβα ?] παρεῖμεν οἵς ἀειδ' ἀεί.

(Schachter 1961; Knoepfler 1996, 154; Barbantani 2000, 155; Manieri 2009, 322; Schachter 2010-2011, 39 n. 22). For an exhaustive reconstruction of the Lagides support of the Mouseia, see Manieri 2009, 321f., 357-62, 370-4 Thes. 10, 15, 16; Schachter 2010-2011, 38, 43-5.

5 The involvement of this artistic guild is attested from the start: see Manieri 2009, 318-22; Schachter 2010-2011, 34.

6 As for evidence of agonistic categories before the re-organization of the Mouseia, epic poetry (Epainettos and the Boeotian Aristides, 3rd cent. BC) and aulody (Straton, see below) are attested. Beyond them, Bakchiadas of Sikyon (Ath. 14.629a, 4th cent. BC?) and the *technites* Pythokles of Hermione (Nachtergael 1977, 317-323 n. 15-15bis, 265-255 BC) might document dithyrambic performances (Schachter 2010-2011, 56f.). Nevertheless, their specialties could be interpreted differently, as Bakchiadas might have been a dancing professional and Pythokles might have performed as well in the aulody and rhapsody (ll. 9-10). See Manieri 2009, 349f., 354-7 Thes. 2, 7-9. Before the renovation, we could thus suppose the existence of a thymelic ἀγών including at least some of the five categories of the renovation phase. As for the dramatic ἀγών also included in the program, the positions are conflicting in recognizing for it an early phase as an annual and prized competition (Manieri 2009, 317-19), or a late activation as a pentaeteric competition promoted by the Lagides intervention (Schachter 2010-2011, 38f.). For a reconstruction of the ἀγών based on previous studies, see Manieri 2009, 313-40.

7 Paus. 9.31.3.

8 Other than Straton, two epic poets, and an anonymous victor: *I.Thespiae* 205-7.

9 Cf. *I.Thespiae* 1245. The iambic trimeter remained in fashion throughout the Hellenistic period in both literary and epigraphic compositions (Barbantani 2017, 368). As for dedications and funerary epigrams, this choice might be related to the realistic feature of iambus, resembling spoken language, so that reading of death or victory on stone kept together formality of the record and lyricism.

Οὕτως ἐνῆς ἐν τῷ μέλει πολλὰ φάσις.  
 Τοιόσδ' ἐών ἀείρατ' ἐγ Μουσᾶν ἔμε,  
 Στράτων, ἀγῶνος, σφάι πάτραι μέγα κλέος.  
 10 Α Θεσπία δ' ἔοικεν οὐ μόνομ φέρειν  
 ἢ[νδ]ρας [μ]α[χ]ητάς, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐμ Μούσαις ἄκρους.

l.3: [μελωδ]ός Dittenberger (*IG* 1818); Vottero 2002; Roesch (*I.Thespiae* 204)

... raised me as a prize, but an αὐλωδός skilled in his art, thoroughly attuning his voice to the *aulos* to sing the honey-sweet melody of the Muses, setting to perfection the metrical cadence suitable to the rhythm. Everyone always came? to attend his vocal performance. There was so much resonance in his singing. Straton, as such, raised me at the ἀγών of the Muses, great glory for his fatherland. It appears that Thespiae not only produces warriors but also excellent men in the art of the Muses.

In the literary fiction of this epigram, missing the first verse,<sup>10</sup> the prize speaks for the winner, describing his talents. Straton's skills are defined through a technical lexicon not frequently attested: they pivot towards the musician's accuracy of the pitch according to the *aulos* (l. 3), the melodic cadences matching the rhythm (l. 5), and the richness of sound in his singing (l. 7). Accepting this reconstruction of the text for l. 6,<sup>11</sup> Straton obtained great success inasmuch as members of the public came to Thespiae for his performances. The main difficulties in interpreting this text converge around lines 5 and 7. As for line 5, whereas we are allowed to integrate [βάσ]ιν by virtue of its attested association with ρύθμος (Arist. *Metaph.* 1087b.37),<sup>12</sup> the expression πρὸς τέρμα<sup>13</sup> might rest upon two main possibilities referring to 1/ the perfection in art, accomplished at the highest level through constancy of technical skills and

<sup>10</sup> The epigram shall begin with an antithesis, the αὐλωδός compared to another agonistic category, as the athletic one or one unworthy of the prize: Peek 1937, 234; Manieri 2009, 356f.

<sup>11</sup> L. 6: ~ ~ ~ παρ[χ]ειμένοις ἀειδ' ἀεί Roesch (*I.Thespiae* 204); [—]ΛΙΣΔΕΙΑ παρ[κ]ειμένοις ἀειδ' ἀεί Dittenberger (*IG* VII 1818). Only substantial differences in the editions of the inscription are herein considered (l. 3, see above, and l. 6).

<sup>12</sup> Vottéro 2002, 103 n. 90. The couple βάσις - ρύθμος might also refer to dancing in time (Barbantani 2018, 75 n. 74), admitting that dance was a feature of this aulodic performance. Cf. the (dancing or singing?) chorus added to the kitharistic performance by Lysander of Sykion: Ath. 14.638a.

<sup>13</sup> The expression πρὸς τέρμα, as such or as πρὸς τέρμασιν (τέρματι), usually indicates the end of life (Eur. *Andr.* 1081; Plut. *Phil.* 18.4; Anth. Gr. App. ES 635; *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 13113; *I.Cret.* I xvi, 24) or the highest point (Ar. *Av.* 705).

the artistic choices taken throughout Straton's career;<sup>14</sup> 2/ the skill of matching rhythm and cadences towards the turning point<sup>15</sup>—i.e. the turning strophe—, thus respecting the structure of strophic responsion. The former interpretation appears to be the most likely as it recalls in a figurative sense the further occurrences—both literary and epigraphic<sup>16</sup>—of the expression *πρὸς τέρμα*, since excellence in art could be intended as the ultimate goal, the highest point achieved by this Thespian *αὐλωδός*. As for line 7, *φάσις* pairs up with *μέλος* and describes the utterance of the singing voice.<sup>17</sup> Straton's was rich, resonant, and powerful.

So Straton was a singer but his specialty, gaining him victory at the Mouseia, was the aulodic one, which is regularly recorded in the lists of victors of the Mouseia since the 3rd to the 1st century BC.<sup>18</sup> This justifies the integration of *αὐλωδός* qualifying Straton at the beginning of l. 3, as *μελωδός* is not otherwise attested in catalogues and thus far no further comparisons are documented in Boeotia.

Thus, this epigram describes a professional skilled in the *technē* of singing, for the rigorous intonation and the remarkable sonority of his voice, but also provided with the *epistēmē* of music (and movement?),<sup>19</sup> as he was capable of appropriately matching a metrical sequence to the rhythm set by a wind instrument.

In this celebratory epigram, the main focus explaining the agonistic victory is entailed in one crucial quality: the appropriateness of Straton's resounding singing, consisting in the rhythmic correspondence between music and words as it was suitable to the traditional musical arrangement, which had been deconstructed by the trends of the New Music, beginning with the experimentations in auletic virtuosity.<sup>20</sup> The description of Straton's talents seems to function as the definition of a specific musical tradition, the artistic taste in keeping with the context of the Mouseia. By the time of Straton's victory, this festival was defined by a local feature that conceivably had an impact on the

<sup>14</sup> *Tέρμα* as the goal, the destination: Hom. *Il.* 23.333, 358; Archestr. fr. 34.10.

<sup>15</sup> Hom. *Il.* 23.309, 462, 466.

<sup>16</sup> See notes 13-14.

<sup>17</sup> In advancing this interpretation, Aristotle comes in handy once again. In Περὶ Ἐρμηνείας, *φάσις* defines the spoken utterances while carrying out the discussion on words and names and the nature of sound, speech, and thought: Arist. *Int.* 16b.27-9, 17a.18-20. Whitaker 1996, 9-12, 42-50.

<sup>18</sup> IG VII 1735, 1760, 1762, 3197; *I.Thespiai* 156, 157, 161, 163, 164, 170-2, 182. Furthermore, as Straton's dedication should be dated before the Mouseia renovation, we shall include the aulody among the specialties performed with continuity at the ἀγών (see note 6).

<sup>19</sup> See note 14.

<sup>20</sup> Csapo 2004, 5, 9, 13-16, 22 (with further literature on the matter). Pl. *R.* 298d; Arist. *Po.* 1449b.28f.; D.H. *Comp.* 19.

way contests were set up and on the aspects that were then appreciated in the evaluation stage. According to this text, we gather that a certain conservatism of matching rhythm and voice and excellence of singing technique for intonation and utterance were the very talents expected by judges and audience at the aulodic contest of the Mouseia. Furthermore, the honey-sweet melody of the Muses (l. 4) might refer to a specific repertoire typically performed at this Boeotian ἀγών and this element would define, beyond the form, the content of performance that the virtuosi had to deliver at the Mouseia. At any event, just like nowadays, every contest had its own distinctive characteristics appealing to the competing specialties and categories. The aspects connected with the artistic essence of this specific festival and with localism, which Straton could fit very well being from Thespiae himself, determined his victory and deserved the memory of a detailed epigrammatic celebration on stone.

## 2 Tradition as Preservation of Common Knowledge

In the 2nd century BC, Delphi was one of the most dynamic centres of the artistic circuits of the Hellenistic world, as a significant turnout of artists attests.<sup>21</sup> The praise of the god is the *leitmotiv* featuring the cultural and performative life of Hellenistic Delphi and all performances of the itinerant virtuosi took place under the auspices of Apollo. Whereas the lists of participants and victors at Delphian contests support us in reconstructing the impact of the turnover of artists throughout the Hellenistic period, the extra-agonistic performances allow us to gain insight into the panorama of popular entertainment. We can find a whole roster of specialists of music and literature: young artists chasing affirmation in their careers and the most celebrated competitors searching for further accomplishments. These performers used to give public exhibitions<sup>22</sup> or to show off at conventions of top players in between the demonstrations and competitions with which we are acquainted, especially in Delphi.<sup>23</sup> Hellenistic Delphi hosted a double-faced cultural scene fostering traditional tendencies and some new artistic waves.<sup>24</sup> As a matter of

<sup>21</sup> For insight into the itinerant artists visiting Delphi in the Hellenistic period, see Cinalli 2018.

<sup>22</sup> Mostly, ἀχροάστεις and ἐπιδείξεις.

<sup>23</sup> For an in-depth analysis of these *kermesses* with a spirit of competition taking place between the 3rd and the 1st centuries BC in Delphi and abroad, where artists were bestowed with special rewards by the city and obtained great success, see Cinalli 2014.

<sup>24</sup> E.g., the experts of the ὕδραινλις and of the μαγῳδία (*Syll<sup>3</sup>* 737; Robert 1938 7, 1). We also acknowledge artistic products in between musical conservatism and novelty, as the vocal

fact, the recollection of tradition, through either poetry or music, was strongly preferred by popular audiences, and this is reflected in the awards bestowed by the city. But there are different ways of keeping tradition alive, by re-shaping it to entertain the audience (a) or by re-performing it to offer a demonstration of the music and poetry of the ancients (b, c).

**a/ FD III 3, 128 (200-175 BC):** Σάτυρος Εύμενου Σάμιος·| τούτωι πρώτωι συμβέβηκεν μόνωι ἀνευ ἀνταγωνιστῶν αὐλῆσαι| τὸν ἀγῶνα καὶ ἀξιωθέντα ἐπιδοῦ|<sup>5</sup>ναι τῷ θεῷ καὶ τοῖς "Ελλησι μετὰ| τὸν γυμνικὸν τῇ θυσίᾳ ἐν τῷ σταδίῳ τῷ Πυθικῷ ἀισμα μετὰ χοροῦ| Διόνυσον καὶ κιθάρισμα ἐκ Βακχῶν| Εύριπίδου.

Satyros from Samos, son of Eumenes. It happened to him for the first time to play the *aulos* alone without competitors in the ἀγών and, being regarded worthy, to offer to the god and the Greeks, after the athletic contest during the sacrifice in the Pythian stadium, the *Dionysos*, song with the chorus, and a song on the *kithara* from the *Bacchae* of Euripides.

**b/ FD III 1, 49, ll. 1-3 (160 BC):** ἐπειδὴ Θράσων καὶ Σωκράτης Πάτρωνος Αἰγιράται παραγενόμενοι ποθ' ἀμὲ ἐπιδείξεις ἐποήσαντο τῷ θεῷ διὰ τῶν λυρικῶν συστημάτων προφερόμενοι [τ]ῶν ἀρχαίων πο[ητ]ᾶν ἢν πρέποντα ποτί τε τὸν θεὸν καὶ τὰν πόλιν ἀμῶν, κτλ.

... since Thrason and Sokrates from Aigeira sons of Patron, who came to us, delivered the demonstrations for the god applying the melodic and harmonic systems (i.e. intervals and scales) of the lyric poets, presenting what of the ancient poets fits to the god and to our town ...

**c/ Syll<sup>3</sup>703, ll. 3-12 (118 BC):** ἐπειδὴ Κλεόδωρος| καὶ Θρασύβουλος οἱ Θεοξενίδα Φενεάται παραγενόμενοι ποθ' ἀμὲ ἐπιδείξεις ἐποήσαντο τῷ θεῷ διὰ τὸς μουσικὰς τέχνας, ἐν αἷς καὶ εὐδοκίμουν, προφερόμενοι ἀριθμοὺς τῶν ἀρχαίων ποιητῶν, οἵ ἡσαν πρέποντες ποτί τε τὸν θεὸν καὶ τὰν πόλιν ἀμῶν ἔτι δὲ καὶ τὰν ἐνδαμίαν καὶ ἀναστροφὰν| καὶ διδασκαλίαν τῶν παίδων ἐποήσαντο ἀξίως| αὐσωτῶν τε καὶ τᾶς ἴδιας πατρίδος καὶ τᾶς ἀμετέρας πόλιος, κτλ.

... since Kleodoros and Thrasyboulos from Pheneos, sons of Theoxenidas, who came to us, delivered demonstrations for the god through the

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and instrumental ensembles orchestrated by the *technitai* Limenios and Athenaios (?) for the Pythais celebrations (*CID* 3, 1 and 2). Richer tonal and melodic arrangements (West 1992, 383) and formal extravagances went along with certain traditionalistic approach: Pöhlmann 2018.

musical art, in which they were highly esteemed, presented the rhythmic patterns of the ancient poets which were appropriate to the god and to our city and conducted their stay, their behavior, and served a lesson to the children in a honorable way for themselves, for their fatherland, and for our city ...

Satyros from Samos was a performer of multiple talents who, in the early decades of the 2nd century BC, arrived at Delphi to participate in the auletic contest, conceivably of the Pythia.<sup>25</sup> However, he got caught in peculiar circumstances and found himself competing alone with the *aulos*. Nonetheless he could put to good use this unexpected situation and stay in town to offer more of his art at one of the most relevant Pan-Hellenic displays: the sacrifice of the Pythian festival. There, he performed two *pièces de répertoire*<sup>26</sup> for which the inscription stresses the prominence of the voice: the ἀισμα μετὰ χοροῦ named *Dionysos*, which could be either a traditional song or a composition of his own, and the κιθάρισμα from the *Bacchae* of Euripides as a solo re-performance.<sup>27</sup> For the κιθάρισμα, which adds the *kithara* to his artistic skills, Satyros presented to the audience a Euripidean revival sung on the strings. This is further testimony of the preference Euripides<sup>28</sup> and the *Bacchae*<sup>29</sup> continued to collect over time, and the execution on the *kithara* testifies to the “anthological way”

<sup>25</sup> This hypothesis is explained at length in Cinalli 2017 and resumed in Cinalli 2020.

<sup>26</sup> Both the ἀισμα—gleaned from a choral repertoire (cf. FD III 3, 86)—and the κιθάρισμα—a solo *pièce* of the tradition—drew a parabola of the Dionysiac celebration and contributed to a poetic representation of the cohabitation between Apollo and Dionysus in Delphi, as stated by the paean of Philodamos: Cinalli 2018. The paean, which attests to the cult of Dionysus strengthening in Delphi, has been interpreted as a tool of Macedonian propaganda, Athenian power or Amphictyonic influence. For an in-depth discussion of the matter, see Manieri 2015, 29ff.

<sup>27</sup> We need to highlight the divergence of opinions on the extra-agonistic performances. Some scholars interpret the ἀισμα and κιθάρισμα as different parts of the same re-performance from the *Bacchae*: Eitrem *et al.* 1955, 27; Gentili 1977, 17-19; Dihle 1981, 31; Xanthakis-Karamanos 1993, 125f.; Tedeschi 2003, 111f.; Prauscello 2006. In particular, Gentili (1977, 17) reads the ll. 7-9 as: “uno spettacolo consistente nel canto delle parti di Dioniso nelle *Baccanti* di Euripide, con l’accompagnamento della cetra e con l’intervento del coro”. Even though it is not possible to propose a final solution on this matter, reading in the ll. 7-9 two different *pièces* (after Nachtergaele 1977, 327, followed by Csapo-Slater 1994, 45; Perrin 1997, 213 n. 64; Chandezon 1998, 50-53, Wilson 2002, 63; Hall 2002, 13; Chaniotis 2009b, 84), would seem more consistent and respectful of the symmetric sentence structure. In this way, the Διόνυσος of line 8 would be interpreted as a title for the ἀισμα rather than the dramatic role of Dionysus. See Cinalli 2017.

<sup>28</sup> E.g. Ath. 12.537d-e. Nachtergaele 1977, 483f. n. 69. See Pickard-Cambridge 1968, 286f.; Nervegna 2013, 18-20, 85-7, 11-113 *et passim*.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Plut. Crass. 33.2-7.

dramas were also approached in the Hellenistic period and beyond by professionals and theatre companies, depending on need and occasion.<sup>30</sup>

It is worth bringing into the discussion a later though extremely representative document allowing us to better envisage the ways the old poetic tradition could be re-shaped. Conceivably in the first half of the 2nd century AD, the Milesian Themison was praised by his fellow-citizens for the victories achieved as a *periodonikēs* and for the artistic endeavors he carried out for the first time ever: μόνον καὶ πρῶτον Εύρειπίδην, Σοφοκλέα καὶ Τειμόθεον ἔαυτῷ μελοποιήσαντα (ll. 8-10).<sup>31</sup> Among the various interpretations advanced for these lines,<sup>32</sup> the one inferring that Themison re-phrased the well-known melodies of Euripides, Sophocles, and Timotheos' works seems the most compelling.<sup>33</sup> We might imagine a medley of the most popular tunes composed as a whole *pièce* in content and harmonic form.<sup>34</sup> So the public-at-large could enjoy a selection of fast-clip scenes of dramatic and lyric poetry to be sung as a continuum, in the way operatic medleys are arranged nowadays.

The re-performances of the Samian Satyros and the Milesian Themison show that tunes of renowned poetry could be recast as selections and medleys.

Nevertheless, musical and poetic tradition could also be demonstrated without reshaping it. In the second half of the second century BC, two pairs of artists arose as champions of the tradition and during their stay in Delphi they made a point of it through their art. The siblings Thrason and Sokrates from Aigeira gave demonstrations (ἐπιδείξεις)<sup>35</sup> focused on the intervals and scales of ancient lyric poetry (b). About forty years later, Kleodoros and Thrasyboulos, siblings from Pheneos, displayed their *technē* through the rhythms of the ancient poets that were suitable to the god and the *polis* (c).

<sup>30</sup> Gentili 1977, 8-23, Nervegna 2007, 18-21, 25-31 (criticizing Gentili and commenting on this inscription, see 31). Nervegna reasonably points out that the “anthological” remakes and the process of the fragmentation of drama can be suggested for music and educational performances but less certainly for theatrical re-performances.

<sup>31</sup> Broneer 1953, 192f.

<sup>32</sup> For the history of the studies since on the edition of the inscription and the interpretation of its ambiguous lines, see Bélis 1999, 174-7. Bélis herself has suggested that Themison set to music all the works of the three great authors. Later, Prauscello (2009, 111-16) proposed that Themison composed his own music on the texts of Euripides, Sophocles, and Timotheos, inferring that at that stage the original lines of music were already lost.

<sup>33</sup> L. Lomiento, *BMCR* 2007.04.57.

<sup>34</sup> For an excursus on terminology indicating ancient composers of vocal and instrumental music (μελῶν ποιητής = μελοποιός / μελογράφος, ποιητής χρουμάτων), see Bélis 1994. Ancient composers were skilled both in music theory and practice and could write for other musicians or for their own performances.

<sup>35</sup> For an analysis of the typologies of performances in the Hellenistic Delphi, see Cinalli 2018.

Even casting a glance at the documents, the parallel elements are clear-cut. Each is a pair of *μουσικοί* possessing the *technē* rather than the *epistēmē* of music: accordingly, they could play proficiently but their skills in composition are not declared. Their task consisted in giving an account of the poetic and musical heritage, specifically what of the ancient poetry was considered decent and appropriate to Apollo and Delphi, but in different and complementary ways. The first pair from Aigeira demonstrated the intervals, scales, and chords of lyric poetry (b, l. 2: *τῶν λυρικῶν σύστηματα*):<sup>36</sup> the musical system founded on the fingerings of the lyre;<sup>37</sup> these siblings properly selected those most suitable to tradition. The latter pair reached the same outcome by focusing on the rhythmic and metric cadences (c, l. 7: *ἀριθμοὶ τῶν ἀρχαίων ποιητῶν*).<sup>38</sup>

A passage from the *De musica* supports us in better acknowledging how the music of the ancients was intentionally more developed in the rhythmic aspects than in the melodic ones.

Πάλιν δ' αὖ εἴ τις καὶ περὶ τῆς ποικιλίας ὄρθως τε καὶ ἐμπείρως ἐπισκοποίη, τὰ τότε καὶ τὰ νῦν συγκρίνων, εὔροι ἄν ἐν χρήσει οὖσαν καὶ τότε τὴν ποικιλίαν. τῇ γάρ περὶ τὰς ῥυθμοποιίας ποικιλίᾳ οὕσῃ ποικιλωτέρᾳ ἔχρήσαντο οἱ παλαιοί ἐπίμων γοῦν τὴν ῥυθμικὴν ποικιλίαν, καὶ τὰ περὶ τὰς κρουσματικὰς δὲ διαλέκτους τότε ποικιλώτερα ἦν· οἱ μὲν γάρ νῦν φιλομελεῖς, οἱ δὲ τότε φιλόρρυθμοι. Δῆλον οὖν ὅτι οἱ παλαιοὶ οὐ δι’ ἄγνοιαν ἀλλὰ διὰ προαιρεσιν ἀπείχοντο τῶν κεκλασμένων μελῶν.

Again, take also the matter of complexity and study it properly and with a thorough acquaintance with the subject, comparing the compositions of a former day with those of the present, and you will find that complexity was current in those days too. Thus in the conduct of the rhythm the ancients employed a complexity greater than that in use today, for they set great store on complexity in rhythm. Further, the interplay of the accompaniment was then more varied, as moderns like music for the tune, whereas the ancients were interested in the beat. It is clear then that the ancients abstained from overmodulated music not from ignorance but on principle.

Ps.-Plut. *Mus.* 1138b-c, transl. EINARSON-DE LACY 1967

36 LSJ 1996, 1735 col. II, s.v. *σύστημα*: “system of intervals, scale”.

37 Grout 1984, 43.

38 LSJ 1996, 240 col. I, s.v. *ἀριθμός*: “rhythm”.

Standing by the fact that mode and rhythm were servants to *logos* in ancient music,<sup>39</sup> this passage emphasises that the ancients took into great consideration the rules of consistency and formal symmetry and devoted their efforts to an enhancing complexity of rhythmic patterns. In particular, the decree praising the brothers from Pheneos sees eye to eye with this excerpt from the *De musica*, as it confirms the crucial role of the ἀριθμοί in performing and teaching ancient theory. Furthermore, the decree for the brothers of Aigeira (b) adds another *tessera* in reconstructing the fundamentals of ancient music, consisting also of harmony beyond rhythm and despite μέλος. Combining the technical features demonstrated by the two pairs of specialists of the tradition, we obtain a vision of the essentials in ancient music. It does not seem coincidental that the educational value of the performances by the siblings Kleodoros and Thrasyboulos in Delphi is emphasised in the decree (c, ll. 10-12). In fact, while for the pair from Aigeira the ἐπιδείξεις seem to be focused on the performative aspect, in the case of the pair from Pheneos they appear as successful<sup>40</sup> demonstrations particularly addressed to the youngest part of the audience. They, in fact, enriched their stay in Delphi also with a διδασκαλία for children, demonstrating to the young audience the decorum and gravitas of ancient poets, in particular the ones pleasing to Apollo and the city. In this way, the element of decency joins localism in defining Delphic poetic and musical heritage, in so far as it strengthened social identity.

The decrees honouring these siblings show a technical lexicon that is connected with musical appropriateness and the argument that this concept was important is supported by the Boeotian dedication of the Thespian Straton (above) which, by the way, also corroborates the priority of metrics and rhythm as the crucial flagships of tradition (l. 5).

### 3 Tradition as a Liquid Heritage: Prologue Becoming Past

Pivoting to performances recalling ancient times, we shall consider one more document, which contains crucial proof that communal heritage was a main feature of popular performances in the Hellenistic period. From the Archaic age to Roman times, music and poetry were prime aspects in the cultural life of Crete. Virtuosi of all performative arts were welcomed in all cities of the island, which was the homeland of the pioneers of rhythms, poetry, dance, and experts

<sup>39</sup> Pl. R. 399d-e.

<sup>40</sup> For the verb εὐδοκιμέω, used to praise the successful pursuits of men of culture and doctors, see Chaniotis (2009b, 88).

of both string and wind instruments. We may just recall renowned personalities such as Thaletas, introducing the paean and the rhythm of the Cretic foot in Sparta,<sup>41</sup> or the κιθαρωδός Ametor from Eleutherna, first to sing erotic songs on the strings.<sup>42</sup> In the Hellenistic age and beyond, several Cretans stood out in the most famous ἀγῶνες and in extra-agonistic performances all over Greece and—as observed for Delphi—the epigraphic evidence shows that the mainstream of tradition was also featured with a more modern professionalism.<sup>43</sup>

The recollection of traditional poetry and literature occurs in a very representative way in the 2nd century BC decrees attesting to the performative activity of the κιθαρωδός Menekles, sent from Teos as ambassador, with the assignment of reconfirming the good relationships with the cities of Crete. Among the texts documenting the diplomatic and artistic activity of this Teian delegation,<sup>44</sup> the inscriptions of Knosos and Priansos thoroughly describe the endeavors of Menekles. Although the two decrees are quite specular, the one from Priansos proves the most meticulous:

*I.Cret.* I xxiv, 1

170-140 BC

Πριανσίων. | ἔδοξε Πριανσίων τοῖς κόσμοις καὶ τᾶι πόλει. | ἐπειδὴ Ἡρόδοτος  
Μ<η>νοδότου καὶ Μενεκλῆς Διονυσίω ἐξαποσταλέντες πρεγγευταὶ πορτὶ<sup>45</sup>  
άμε πα[ρ]ὰ Τηίων οὐ μόνον ἀνεστρά[φεν] <πρ>επ<ό>ντω<ς> ἐν τᾶι πόλει  
καὶ [διελέγ]εν περὶ τᾶ[ς ἀμῶν ἵσ]το[ρί]ας,<sup>45</sup> ἀλλὰ| καὶ ἐπεδείξατο Μενεκλῆς  
μετὰ κιθάρας τά τε Τιμοθέου καὶ Πολυύδου καὶ τῶν ἀμῶν παλαιῶν ποιη[τᾶν]  
καλῶς καὶ πρεπόντως, εἰς<ή>νεγκε δὲ κύκλον<sup>10</sup> ιστορημέναν ὑπὲρ Κρήτας  
κα[ὶ τ]ῶν ἐν [Κρή]ται γεγονότων θεῶν τε καὶ ἥρων, [ποι]ησάμενο[ς τ]ὰν|  
συναγωγὰν ἐκ πολλῶν ποιητᾶ[ν] καὶ ιστοριαγράφων· διὸ δεδόχθαι τᾶι πόλει  
ἐπαινέσαι Τηίος(!) ὅτι| πλεῖστον λόγον ποιῶνται περὶ παιδείας, ἐπαι[15]νέσαι  
δὲ καὶ Ἡρόδοτον καὶ Μενεκλῆν ὅτι καλὰν| καὶ πρέπονσαν πεποίηνται τὰν

41 Ps.-Plut. *Mus.* 1133f, 1134d, 1146b; Paus. 1.14.4; Strab. 10.4.16, 18.

42 Ath. 14.638b.

43 For example, specialties referable to particular typologies of dance, poetry, and mime, as the μυθῶν ὀρχηστής, the μοσχολόγος, and the ρωμαϊστής (*I.Cret.* 222, 223; Le Rider 1966, 258f.). A collection of the epigraphic evidence on the *poeti vaganti* in the Hellenistic Crete is forthcoming in *QUCC* 126.3 (Cinalli forthcoming).

44 The *antigraphoi* of the eight decrees recording the actions of this delegation are preserved in Teos: *I.Cret.*: II iii, 2\*; I v, 53\*; I vi, 2\*; I xix, 2\*; II xv, 2\*; *SGDI* 5182. Apart from the inscriptions of Knosos (*I.Cret.* I viii, 11\*) and Priansos, the others only focus on the status of political relations between Teos and Cretan cities, mostly confirming friendship and sacredness of Teos and granting *isopoliteia*.

45 Waddington *ap.* Le Bas; Jacoby (*FrGrH* 466 T1). Περὶ τᾶ[ς] ...7...το..ας Guarducci (*I.Cret.*).

παρεπιδημίαν| ἐν ταῖς πόλεις ἀμῶν· διασαφῆσαι τε ταῦτα καὶ Τηῆοις ὅ<π>ως ἐπιγινώσκωντι.| ἔρρωσθε.

Decree of the Priansians. It was resolved by the *kosmoi* and the city of Priansos. Since Herodotos, son of Menodoros, and Menekles, son of Dionsios, who were sent to us as envoys by the Teians, not only dwelt in our city appropriately and held conversations pertaining our culture (?), but Menekles also put on a display with the *kithara* of the compositions of Timotheos and Polyidos and our ancient poets finely and fittingly, and he presented a story-cycle about Crete and the gods and heroes who were born in Crete, creating a collection of many poets and historiographers; therefore it is resolved by the city to praise the Teians because they bestow great importance on culture, and to praise both Herodotos and Menekles because they conducted themselves during their residence in our city in a fine and fitting manner; and this shall be reported to the Teians so that they may be aware of it. Farewell.

The artistic activity of Menekles consisted of two main actions: he delivered ἐπιδείξεις on the *kithara* on traditional *pièces* of the kitharodic repertoire, from Timotheos, Polyidos, and other ancient poets of Crete; he also collected, from the ancient literature, a κύκλος ἱστορημένη<sup>46</sup> on gods and heroes of the island. As for this latter task, it might appear as a spoken narration. In fact, in all the decrees it is specified that both the ambassadors spoke properly about the relations between Teos and Crete, which they did for political matters and yet this cultural heritage might have applied also to the public-at-large, hinged upon the traditional local narrative, as public story-telling.<sup>47</sup>

As local culture was the focus of the narrative collection of Cretan stories, so it was for the demonstrations on the *kithara*, conducted in a fine and fitting manner, as is proper for a man of culture<sup>48</sup>—local culture with some nuances to bring into focus, though. A significant excerpt from the 19th Discourse by Dio Chrysostomus proves useful to this task.

<sup>46</sup> The expression is feminine (cf. *LSJ* s.v. κύκλος, ὁ and dor. ἄ, see *infra* II. 11; Schmid-Stählin 1929, 197 n. 5: κύκλος ἱστορημένων) and it does not seem elsewhere attested as such, although the middle form of ἱστορέω is of very common use. Since the first Hellenistic age onwards, the κύκλος was one way of bequeathing tradition: cf. the Κύκλος ἱστορικός by Dionysius Cyclographus (Meliadò 2005; Lulli 2013; Ceccarelli 2015) and the anthologies collected by Leon son of Ariston celebrating Hera and the naval ventures accomplished by the Samians (*IG* XII 6 1, 285).

<sup>47</sup> For an extensive discussion of Menekles' artistic personality, see Cinalli forthcoming.

<sup>48</sup> This expression occurs in the decree of the Knossians: *I.Cret.* I viii, 11\*, ll. 10-11.

τὸ μέντοι τῶν κιθαρωδῶν τε καὶ νὴ Δία τῶν ὑποκριτῶν οὐ παρ' ὀλίγον μοι δοκεῖ διαφέρειν πρὸς ἥδονήν. <ἢ> τε γάρ φωνὴ μείζων καὶ δῆλον ὅτι ἐμμελεστέρα ἡ τε λέξις οὐκ αὐτοσχέδιος, ὥσπερ ἡ τῶν ῥήτόρων ἐξ ὑπογύου τὰ πολλὰ πειρωμένων λέγειν, ἀλλὰ ποιητῶν ἐπιμελῶς καὶ κατὰ σχολὴν πεποιηκότων. καὶ τά γε πολλὰ αὐτῶν ἀρχαῖα ἔστι καὶ πολὺ σοφωτέρων ἀνδρῶν ἡ τῶν νῦν.

But I must say that the performance of those who sing to the *kithara*, aye, and of the actors too, seems to me in no small degree superior to the pleasure it gives. For their voices are louder and undoubtedly better modulated, while their language is not extempore like that of the orators, who generally try to speak without preparation; but poets have composed painstakingly and at their leisure. And the most of what they give us comes from ancient times, and from much wiser men than those of the present...

D. Chr. 19.5, transl. COHOON 1939

By means of this passage we grasp how, still yet in the 1st century AD, the activity of the *κιθαρωδός* was perceived. His professionalism was assimilated to the poet and entailed both skills of composition and of interpretation. The repertoire of wise and decent poets of ancient times was the *κιθαρωδός* forte and Menekles ἐπιδείξεις match this concept.

The content of the kitharodic re-performances delivered by this Tean ambassador paves the way towards two thematic cornerstones: the cultural education carried out by the Cretans (Timotheos and Polyidos) and the cultural heritage defined by a very local authorship (ancient Cretan poets). These concepts portray for Crete the high level of protection and control over memory.

We are aware that Cretan *παῖδες* received an education based on artistic and civic decorum, by virtue of an educational project aimed at training good citizens who were aware of their very own tradition (learning the laws through a musical support; a selection of the hymns and encomia, and the basics of music).<sup>49</sup> For a parallel example from the educational milieu, it is worth recall-

49 Ael. VH 2.39: Κρῆτες δὲ τοὺς παῖδας τοὺς ἐλευθέρους μανθάνειν ἐκέλευον τοὺς νόμους μετά τινος μελῳδίας, ἵνα ἐκ τῆς μουσικῆς ψυχαγωγῶνται καὶ εὔκολώτερον αὐτοὺς τῇ μνήμῃ διαλαμβάνωσι, καὶ ἵνα μή τι τῶν κεκωλυμένων πράξαντες ἀγνοίᾳ πεποιηκέναι ἀπολογίαν ἔχωσι. δεύτερον δὲ μάθημα ἔταξαν τοὺς τῶν θεῶν ὕμνους μανθάνειν· τρίτον τὰ τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἀνδρῶν ἐγκώμια.

The Cretans commanded all free-born children to learn the Laws with a kind of melody, in order to be allured by music and to learn them by heart more easily, so that if they committed anything contrary to the Law, they could not plead ignorance. The second thing that they were appointed was to learn the hymns of the gods; the third, the encomia of good men'.

ing the young Arkades whose didactic curriculum comprised learning the main structures of poetry and the *nomois* of Timotheos and Philoxenos<sup>50</sup> that were performed in *juniiores* and *seniores* contests.<sup>51</sup>

If the champion of the New Music is explicable in the Arcadian environment by virtue of the hostile relations with Sparta where Timotheos was fiercely opposed,<sup>52</sup> the Cretan decrees open up a wider perspective from a thematic and geographic point of view. Timotheos was by then considered a classic of Hellenic poetry<sup>53</sup> but his association with Polyidos in Crete suggests a readjusting heritage that by that time had become traditional. More documents in fact confirm the conceptual association of Timotheos and Polyidos:

καθόλου δ' εἴ τις τῷ μὴ χρήσθαι τεκμαιρόμενος καταγνώσεται τῶν μὴ χρωμένων ἄγνοιαν, πολλῶν ἀν τι φθάνοι καὶ τῶν νῦν καταγιγνώσκων, οἷον τῶν μὲν Δωριωνείων τοῦ Ἀντιγενείδειου τρόπου καταφρονούντων, ἐπειδήπερ οὐ χρωνται αὐτῷ, τῶν δὲ Ἀντιγενείδειων τοῦ Δωριωνείου διὰ τὴν αὐτὴν αἰτίαν, τῶν δὲ κιθαρωδῶν τοῦ Τιμοθείου τρόπου· σχεδὸν γάρ ἀποπεφοιτήκασιν εἴς τε τὰ κατατύμματα καὶ εἰς τὰ Πολυείδου ποιήματα.

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Strab. 10.4.20: παιδαῖς δὲ γράμματά τε μανθάνειν καὶ τὰς ἐκ τῶν νόμων ὡδὰς καὶ τινὰ εἰδῆ τῆς μουσικῆς.

'The children must learn, not only their letters, but also the songs prescribed in the laws and certain forms of music'. (Transl. Jones 1928).

<sup>50</sup> On the possible interpretation of these Arkadian *nomois* in the style of dithyrambs, see Ceccarelli 2013, 168; Ps.-Plut. *Mus.* 1132e.

<sup>51</sup> Polyb. 4.20.8-11: ταῦτα γάρ πᾶσιν ἔστι γνώριμα καὶ συνήθη, διότι σχεδὸν παρὰ μόνοις Ἀρκάσι πρῶτον μὲν οἱ παιδεῖς ἐκ νηπίων ἔδειν ἐθίζονται κατὰ νόμους τοὺς ὑμνους καὶ παιάνας, οἵς ἔκαστοι κατὰ τὰ πάτρια τοὺς ἐπιχωρίους ἥρωας καὶ θεοὺς ὑμνοῦσι· μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα τοὺς Φιλοξένου καὶ Τιμοθέου νόμους μανθάνοντες πολλῇ φιλοτιμίᾳ χορεύουσι κατ' ἐνιαυτὸν τοῖς Διονυσιακοῖς αὐληταῖς ἐν τοῖς θεάτροις, οἱ μὲν παιδεῖς τοὺς παιδικοὺς ἀγῶνας, οἱ δὲ νεανίσκοι τοὺς τῶν ἀνδρῶν λεγομένους.

'For it is a well-known fact, familiar to all, that it is hardly known except in Arcadia, that in the first place the boys from their earliest childhood are trained to sing in measure the hymns and paeans in which by traditional usage they celebrated the heroes and gods of each particular place: later they learn the measures of Philoxenus and Timotheus, and every year in the theatre they compete keenly in choral singing to the accompaniment of professional *aulos*-players, the boys in the contest proper to them and the young men in what is called the men's contest'. (Transl. Paton 1922, slightly modified).

The αὐληταί accompanying the choruses of boys can be interpreted as the *technitai* of Dionysus (if with the dative τοῖς Διονυσιακοῖς are not intended the Dionysia ἀγῶνες; cf. transl. by C. Tartaglini, Roma: Newton 1998). We can understand the presence of the *technitai* in a children's contest more easily if we recall young virtuosi playing at the final rounds of contests nowadays with the minor casts of the most renowned orchestras.

<sup>52</sup> See Prauscello 2009 for a detailed analysis of the matter.

<sup>53</sup> Csapo-Wilson 2009, 279f.

In short, if ignorance is to be imputed to anyone who does not follow a certain practice, that will involve you in a hasty verdict against many moderns—as against the school of Dorion, since (holding it in contempt) they do not employ the style of Antigeneidas in turn, who on the same ground do not employ the same manner of Dorion, and against the singers to the *kithara* who have no use for the style of Timotheus, for they have to all intents abandoned it for the “patches” and the composition of Polyidos.

Ps.-Plut. *Mus.* 1138a-b, transl. EINARSON-DE LACY 1967

Πολυίδου δὲ σεμνυνομένου ὡς ἐνίκησε Τιμόθεον ὁ μαθητὴς αὐτοῦ Φιλωτᾶς,  
‘Θαυμάζειν ἔφη, εἰ ἀγνοεῖς ὅτι αὐτὸς μὲν ψηφίσματα ποιεῖ, Τιμόθεος δὲ νόμους.

When Polyidus was boasting because his pupil Philotas had carried off the prize instead of Timotheus, Stratonicus said, ‘I am surprised that you don’t know that Philotas merely makes decrees, while Timotheus makes laws.’

Ath. 8.352b, transl. GULICK 1969

These professionals, who at the *akme* of their careers stood out in the dithyramb at Athens in 398 BC, represented the old and the new.<sup>54</sup> After being considered avant-garde for arranging eleven strings on the lyre and for taking the ancient music ἐπὶ τὸ μαλακώτερον,<sup>55</sup> Timotheos became a statement, as documented by the re-performances of his work spanning the centuries.<sup>56</sup> He was then replaced by Polyidos’ new techniques. Athenaeus in fact describes them as opponents and Stratonicos’ motto does not seem to show that Polyidos was not capable of “making laws”, unlike his pupil. It rather gives the impression of difficult understanding of Polyidos’ novelty as a crucial moment in the re-arrangement of tradition that remained stuck in memory. Nonetheless, this does not mean that the further passage of crystallization of Polyidos production into traditional repertoire did not happen. The Cretan inscriptions in fact acknowledge quite the opposite, in so far as both Timotheos and Polyidos appear as two sides of the same coin: they both were by then essentials of the

<sup>54</sup> D. S. 14.46.6; *Marm. Par. FrGrH* 239. 68A.

<sup>55</sup> Sud. T620e; e.g., Plut. *Inst. Lac.* 17.238c. Vd. West 1992, 361-4, 372, 381; Prauscello 2009, 181-8.

<sup>56</sup> *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 3055: in 320/319 BC, the παιδεῖς χορός of the Kekropis tribe gained the victory at the Great Dionysia singing Timotheos’ dithyramb *Elpenor*, accompanied by the *aulos* player Pantaleon from Sikyon; Plut. *Phil.* 11: the *kitharōidos* Pylas performed Timotheos’ *Persians* (ca. 206 BC) at the Nemean ἀγών; the inscription praising the Milesian Themison (see above) also attests to the enduring life of Timotheos’ works afterwards.

repertoire on the strings. Hence, the kitharodic selection played by Menekles<sup>57</sup> included two divergent artistic scenarios, still yet both constituent parts of the traditional poetic collection of both Crete and the whole of Greece shaped between the 4th and the 2nd centuries BC. Moreover, the performances of the ancient Cretan poets complete the palette of this ambassador's artistic display, ranging from a more general Hellenic repertoire to local poetry.

#### 4 Final Remarks

In this overview, the artistic variants falling within the attempt to comply with musical and poetic tradition share the same principle: relying on common heritage guarantees the outcome of a performance. The way musical forms and poetic contents evolve, generating the formalization of a practice, reflects something about society: recalling and transmitting the past over time pertains to communal identity. The epigraphic evidence herein analyzed shows a limited though representative segment of a long process of crystallization that spread with several nuances throughout the Hellenistic period and beyond. The areas considered tended to focus on the preservation of tradition insisting on poetry hinged upon a specific authorship and musical technicality. Metrical cadences, musical rhythms, systems of intervals and scales, proper expression and intonation were key elements of ancient music revivals, together with authors by that time considered traditional in Hellenic and local memory.

In re-performing the music and poetry of the ancients, the two pairs of siblings in Delphi, especially the one from Pheneos because they performed for educational purposes (c), deliberately carried out the task of preserving tradition, responding to the criteria of decorum and appropriateness, inasmuch as it pleased the local community. The city of Delphi charged the Samian Satyros with the same task, but from a different starting point: in his case the preservation of common knowledge was not the purpose of a display but fell into the traditional custom of the Pythian festival. We thus acknowledge a double preservation of tradition, direct and indirect, which matches the way tradition was re-performed, by *re-shaping* it through a selection of tunes or an adaptation of the musical arrangement and by *re-presenting* it as it was (or as it was meant to be) in order to put on a display.

The re-performances of Timotheos, re-shaped into a selection by Menekles and in a medley by the Milesian Themison or displayed at contests, allow us

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57 For the possibility that the genre performed by Menekles was the dithyramb, which both Timotheos and Polyidos practiced, see Ceccarelli 2013, 168.

to propose the following: extra-agonistic performances seem to be the suitable *locus* for remodeling tradition differently from the ἀγῶνες where the contest programme included original excerpts of the great tradition. Timotheos and Polyidos, representatives of the ex-musical-avant-garde, and the μύθοι ἐπιχωρίοι were the twofold content of the kitharodic entertainment set up by the ambassador Menekles in Crete: this must be read from the perspective of both localism and an ever-changing concept of tradition shifting across artistic trends. Yet Timotheos (and Polyidos) is in fact an example of prologue becoming past.

As for localism, it was the main factor determining trends in repertoires and taking an active part in their modification, depending on the spheres where tradition was re-enacted. In fact repertoires were modeled on a geographic and thematic basis: at recitals the programme was arranged to reinforce local prestige, whilst in sacred contexts repeating traditional choral songs and performing renowned excerpts of the classics somehow associated to a specific cultural environment emphasized the sense of belonging.<sup>58</sup> As for ever-changing tradition, the testimonies herein analyzed demonstrate a sense of awareness at employing and remolding themes and structures, other than “anthologizing the classics”. This highlights an osmotic communication between the two spheres of literary and epigraphic production and shows that the “process of survival” was made up by communities and *élites* in selecting and performing repertoires.<sup>59</sup>

In an illuminating work on travelling memory in the Hellenistic world, A. Chaniotis has proposed a distinction between *collective memory*, as experiences of the past shared by a community, and *cultural memory*, as a mythical or remote past whose knowledge is shared by a community.<sup>60</sup> Adapting this twofold interpretation to the artistic milieu, we suggest that the agonistic and extra-agonistic actions pursued by Straton and Satyros in Thespiae and Delphi rely upon a *collective* knowledge of skills, abilities, and proper repertoire that

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<sup>58</sup> In organizing the “playlist” of traditional repertoire on a local basis, the hometown poets were the focus of performance: τῶν ἀμῶν παλαιοὶ ποιηταῖ in Cretan exhibitions (see above); Thaletas, Alcman, and the unknown Dionysodotos at the Spartan Gymnopaedia (Sosib. *FGrH* 595 F ap. Ath. 15.678b-c: see Massaro 2018, 83, 97-102). In his insight on transmission on Hellenistic poetry, D’Alessio 2017, 245ff. brings together epigraphic testimonies, spanning from the Hellenistic to the late Imperial age, of re-performances of the classics and of the συνήθεις / παλαιοὶ ὅμνοι (*I.Stratonikeia* 110; *IDidyma* 217, 2nd-3rd cent. AD), especially in ritual contexts.

<sup>59</sup> For a discussion of tradition and innovation in choral songs preserved on stone, see LeVen 2014, 283-329. On the concept of *élites* determining traditions, see also D’Alessio 2017, 257-9.

<sup>60</sup> Chaniotis 2009a, 255-9.

both communities expected to find each time they attended the Mouseia and the Pythian festival. On the other hand, the collection of the ancient poets of Crete and the Delphic ἐπιδείξεις pleasing the god and the city pertain to a *cultural* memory rooted in a remote past that faced a crystallization.

This liquid heritage, in so far as it modulated over time and place, insisted on the structures of music and poetic narration. By means of reiterating and re-evoking them, the past became prologue and in various ways preserved and strengthened social identity.

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61 The abbreviations of the epigraphic *corpora* follow the *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* system.

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