

SPHS-funded student bursaries for the conference ‘Music and the Body in Greek and Roman Antiquity’, Newcastle University, 29-31 July 2015



<http://conferences.ncl.ac.uk/moisa2015/>

Sum received: £450

Recipients: Anna Dolazza, Università di Siena
Elizabeth Lyon, Cornell University
Juan Pablo Mira, University of Edinburgh

* * *

REPORT

A council grant awarded to Newcastle University in 2015 allowed bursaries to be offered to three students who presented papers at the international conference ‘Music and the Body in Greek and Roman Antiquity’ (29-31 July 2015). Anna Dolazza (Siena) gave a paper on the body of the aulete and the production and perception of musical sound; Elizabeth Lyon (Cornell) spoke about ethical aspects of listening in Plato’s *Timaeus*; and Juan Pablo Mira (Edinburgh) discussed musical emotions in Aristotle.

The conference included a well-attended public concert featuring several new reconstructions of ancient instruments, among which the Louvre auloi, alongside music and instruments from other traditions (Sardinia, Northumberland, Scotland, Sweden).

Selected papers from the conference will be published in *Greek and Roman Musical Studies*, vol. 4 (2016), issue 2: <<http://www.brill.com/grms>>. A film of the concert will be published online shortly.

David Creese
Conference organiser
2 November 2015

Student Reviews: MOISA Annual Conference 2015

The 2015 Annual Conference of the International Society for the Study of Greek and Roman Music and its Cultural Heritage (MOISA) took place – for the first time outside Italy - at Newcastle University (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK) from July 29 through July 31, 2015. All sessions were held in the prestigious Armstrong Building, on the main campus of Newcastle University.

In the Call for Papers we were invited to submit proposals, in English or Italian, on the theme “**Music and the Body in Greek and Roman Antiquity**”: the result was a three-day conference about music as a bodily experience in antiquity, not only for the musician but also for the dancer, the listener, the worshipper, the healer, the poet and the philosopher. The event

was ably organised by Dr. David Creese, Lecturer in Classics at Newcastle University, who opened the meeting at 13.30 on Wednesday 29 July by welcoming the speakers and commemorating M. L. West (1937-2015), remembered also through the words of Prof. Egert Pöhlmann.

Each session consisted of two papers and each presenter was given 45 minutes altogether for the presentation and subsequent discussion, which was facilitated by a room set up to allow all participants to face one another around a large table.

“Music and the body in ancient medicine” was the first panel theme, developed through four different papers. The first one, by Dr. Francesco Pelosi, was dedicated to the remarkable use of musical terms and concepts in some passages of the Hippocratic *De victu* with reference to embryology and cookery: “The tongue resembles music in distinguishing of the things that touch it, the sweet and the acid, the discordant from the concordant” (Hipp. *Vict.* I.18/CMG I 2,4 p. 138.15-26). In the second half of the session, chaired by Dr. Tosca Lynch, Prof. Donatella Restani gave an intriguing talk on ‘human music’ in ancient medical – but not only - writings from conception to birth, demonstrating how often musical theories offered comparison terms for studies and reflections on human physiology and health: “*Humanam vero musicam quisquis in sese ipsum descendit intellegit*” (Boethius, *Inst. mus.*, I 2, 188, 26-189, 5 Friedlein).

The second afternoon session, chaired by Dr. Massimo Raffa, began with a valuable paper by Prof. Andrew Barker entitled “Reconstructing Galen’s lost treatise *On the Voice*”. Introducing the difficult topic, the founder and honorary president of MOISA affirmed that: “The only surviving source that might – underline ‘might’, ‘perhaps’ – tell something about the structure of the work is a passage with the title *Peri Phones* in the *Collectiones medicae* of Oribasius”; according to Barker’s analysis we can divide the material into four sections of different length focusing on the human larynx and the production of sound. The last paper of the day – “The Apotropaic Function of Music inside the Sanctuaries of Asclepios: Votive Offerings and Ritual Soundscape” - was by Dr. Sylvain Perrot and took us into the unexpectedly multi-colored soundscape of Asklepieia: sick people lamenting, gods whistling, hands clapping and dogs barking.

A Keynote Address by Prof. Pierre Destrée, “Aristotle on the Power on Music in tragedy”, concluded the first conference day disclosing the subject of Thursday (30 July) morning. **“Music and the body in ancient philosophy”** was, indeed, the title of the first session of the day consisting of two papers: “Aristotle on musical emotions”, by Juan Pablo Mira, and “Ethical aspects of listening in Plato’s *Timaeus*”, by Elizabeth Lyon (Chair: Prof. Andrew Barker).

The theme of the second panel was **“The aulos and the body”**, discussed by me, Anna Dolazza, and by Dr. Nadia Baltieri (Chair: Dr. Eleonora Rocconi). I gave a presentation entitled “The Body of the Aulete: the Production, Perception and Visualization of Sound”, in which, starting from some extracts of book IV of Pollux’s *Onomasticon*, I showed how the aulos-player’s organs (his breath, his lips and teeth, his fingers) were reshaped by the instrumental performance according to the physical and acoustical properties of the most important, popular and versatile of the Greek wind instruments, the aulos, seen as an extension of the musician’s body itself. In this perspective, we could uncover the rich visual culture of musical performance: if the sound of the aulos could already in itself be considered as *epagogon*, the additional effect of the movements, gestures, and facial expressions – those made intentionally, not those caused by the effort of breathing – resulted in a strong visual, as well as emotional, impact, and helped to produce a truly evocative experience for the audience. Dr. Nadia Baltieri spoke about the intense and furious bodily motions incited by the powerful and emotional music of the aulos in some particular contexts, presenting an extremely interesting paper on music, dance and Dionysian frenzy in Euripidean tragedy.

After lunch, it was time for MOISA ‘Free’ papers. In a session chaired by Sylvain Perrot, Dr. Armand D’Angour - “Swinging the Alphabet: music and vocables in ancient Greece” - collected examples of Solmisation (*i.e.* a system of assigning each note of a scale to a particular non-lexical syllable), Vocabelisation (*i.e.* using vocables, non-lexical sung sounds used to represent or transmit rhythmical and melodic motifs) and Vocables for instruments, as in the cases of

Ravi Shankar and Alla Rakha demonstrating *talas* (rhythmical vocables) on the tabla and Luigi Lai playing the launeddas¹. Prof. Egert Pöhlmann then gave a talk on “Ambrosian Hymns: Evidence for Roman Music of Late Antiquity?” explaining: “By bundling four iambic dimeters to a strophe Ambrosius invented the *metrum Ambrosianum*, thus transforming a metre of spoken poetry to a metre of song. [...] The rhythmical shape of the Ambrosian melodies is debated. [...] As the Ambrosian hymns were sung by great congregations, you have to suppose a simple and clear-cut rhythmical shape, which in every case was constrained to conflict with the basic iambic metre or the quantities of the spoken Latin”.

The rest of the afternoon was given over to the MOISA annual assembly and the concert “From Ur to Uppland”, in the impressive King's Hall, located in the historic Armstrong Building. The concert was a musical journey from the ancient Mediterranean to northern Europe, featuring new reconstructions of some of the world's oldest surviving instruments, and offering creative bridges between our deep musical past and the traditional music of Britain and Sweden. The performers were: Barnaby Brown on Ur silver pipes, Isturitz pipes, triplepipe and Highland bagpipe; Erika Lindgren Liljenstolpe (Fig. 8) on fiddle; Callum Armstrong on the Louvre aulos, double-chantered Scottish smallpipe and baroque recorder; Gina D'oyley on Northumbrian smallpipe. Thanks to this special event, we could contemplate musicians performing live on these precious reconstructed instruments and observe how strong the relationship between musical activity and the body is – and was in ancient time –, with the body's organs becoming instruments of music and dance during the performance.

The last conference day (31 July) was entirely devoted to the theme “**Music and the dancing body**”. In the first morning session, chaired by Dr. Armand D'Angour, Dr. Naomi Weiss presented a paper on “The choral body in Greek tragedy”, examining the relationship of the dancing body to the vocal element of tragic *choreia*. The second presentation, entitled “*Choreia*, dance, and the unruly body”, was by Sarah Olsen. Finally, the last speeches in the second panel (Chair: Dr. Naomi Weiss) analysed two more specific topics: the first one, by Dr. Zoa Alonso Fernández, was about dance and corporeality in Roman public religion; the second one, by Prof. Karin Schlapbach, dealt with “The fictionality of dance and the reality of musical performance in Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe*”.

By the end of the conference, I received many ideas, inspirations and useful suggestions for my next studies. It was a great opportunity to compare notes on the fascinating – however complicated – fields of ancient Greek and Roman music.

Anna Dolazza

MOISA Annual Meeting 2015, Newcastle, UK.

Let me try in a few lines to convince you about why you should participate in the next MOISA activity. I was asked to share some of my thoughts about the last MOISA Annual Meeting so here I go.

First of all, this is not only for people working in the hard-core academia. Yes, most are scholars and PhD students but any person interested in music or history would be interested. The richness of the papers presented and their variety assures that you will find something interesting for you. The main theme was music and the body and it was approached from different perspectives: technical aspects of music performance, dance, philosophy, emotions, religion...

Not only the nourishment for the mind, but also for the ears was excellent. The best part? At the end we had a concert with 4 incredible musicians doing a sort of jam session with reconstructed Ancient instruments and other modern ones. I am sure that I am not wrong if I say that the

¹ Respectively: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Joyk_EMtzn0 from 1.25; www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLZM9yT8vav_IVBfRzG-Yxkz621Dq98no6 from 1.10; 2.55.

performance (more than 1 hour) was unique. It was the perfect ending for three days talking about music and see how some of the topics discussed were materialized in live sound.

The field of Ancient Greek Music is not what we could call “enormous” but the quality of some scholars is outstanding. I had the chance, for example, to share a glass of wine (actually two) and some words with Professor Egert Pöhlmann. Besides his incredible contributions to the field we talked about music from other perspectives. He told me that one of his all time favourites was Bach and that he enjoys playing organ every Sunday. He, as well as all the people to whom I had the luck to talk, was not only passionate about Ancient Greece and Rome but also in love with music.

If you, like me, are a PhD student working on something related to Ancient music I extremely recommend you to approach the MOISA society and any of their activities. You will learn a lot from remarkable scholars in the field and get the chance to receive helpful criticism and advice for your research.

Juan Pablo Mira.

For the first time in the society's history, the Annual Conference of The International Society for the Study of Greek and Roman Music and its Cultural Heritage (MOISA) took place outside of Italy, meeting instead at Newcastle University in the North of England the last week of July, 2015. Concentrating on the topic of Music and the Body in Greek and Roman Antiquity, papers were given under the categories music and the body in ancient medicine, music and the body in ancient philosophy, the *aulos* and the body, and music and the dancing body. Scholars of music in antiquity were represented this July, including Andrew Barker and Egert Pöhlmann who presented on Galen's lost treatise *On the Voice* and on Ambrosian hymns respectively. Also speaking were several postgraduate students including Juan Pablo Mira and Elizabeth Lyon on philosophical topics, Anna Dolazza on the body of the *aulos*, and Sarah Olsen on *Choreia*, dance and the body. A highlight of the conference was a performance entitled "From Ur to Uppland" which featured reconstructions of ancient pipes such as the Louvre and Berlin *aulos* paired with traditional pipes of Britain. Following a day in which two papers on the *aulos* were read, hearing and seeing the living practice of this instrument was quite magical. The keynote address was given by Pierre Destrée on the topic of "Aristotle on Bodily and Emotional Pleasures in Music" in which a new position was offered upon the importance which Aristotle attaches to music in the context of tragedy. Also of note was a session offered by Armand D'Angour on music and vocables in ancient Greece.

Elizabeth Lyon



