

DITHYRAMB

KOWALZIG (B.), WILSON (P.) (edd.) *Dithyramb in Context*. Pp. xviii + 488, ills. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. Cased, £110, US\$199. ISBN: 978-0-19-957468-1.

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With its origins in a similarly-titled Oxford conference in 2004, this volume offers up no less than 20 articles, an offering so numerous and varied as to invite comparison with the sprawling (and apparently intractable) question of the dithyrambic genre itself. In their introduction, the editors provide useful overviews of extant evidence and recent scholarship, as well as what may be the overall thesis to the volume: ‘In the case of dithyramb, change is innate to the form itself’ (p. 23).

The first section, ‘Social and Religious Contexts’, begins with K.’s ‘Dancing Dolphins on the Wine-Dark Sea’, in which she argues for a dithyrambic genre that seeks to reconcile the late-archaic landed establishment with newer maritime trade (including spread of wine-culture); the ‘commodification’ of dithyramb, i.e. the treatment of music in popular imagination as cargo on ships, places the genre not with any particular *polis*, but with the larger world of maritime transport. S. Lavecchia, ‘Becoming Like Dionysus’, explores parallels in Argolid mysteries for what he sees in Pindar fr. 70b as the poet’s attempt to forward a Theban origin for much of Eleusinian cult, along with a Theban Iakchos associated with the Mother goddess. L. Prauscello, ‘Demeter and Dionysus in the Sixth-Century Argolid’, argues, in light of archaeological and documentary evidence, that the fragmentary opening of Lasus’ (likely cultic) *Hymn to Demeter* indicates a conscious importation of dithyrambic elements, perhaps in an effort to integrate Hermione’s supposed Dryopic past to the current social reality. L. Battezzato, ‘Dithyramb and Greek Tragedy’, elucidates a dithyramb of Ion of Chios, paraphrased in a hypothesis of Sophocles’ *Antigone* (=PMG 740), as being directly influenced by and in competition with Sophocles’ play, and the perplexing second stasimon of Euripides’ *Helen* as an example of an inset dithyrambic performance with elements that are specifically keyed to Spartan cult (or perhaps merely imagined by Euripides as representing authentic Spartan cult).

The next section, ‘Defining an Elusive Performance Form’, starts with G. D’Alessio ‘“The Name of the Dithyramb”: Diachronic and Diatopic Variations’, who observes that *διθύραμβος*, *κύκλιος χορός* and *νόμος* overlap in their application as far back as Herodotus’ and Hellenicus’ Arion stories, then explores the application of such terms to the corpus of Spartan ‘dithyrambs’. In ‘Athens and the Empire: the Contextual Flexibility of Dithyramb, and its Imperialist Ramifications’ D. Fearn focuses on Bacchylides 17, intriguingly hypothesising that the term *κύκλιος χορός* may have appealed to Athenians precisely because of its generic fuzziness and suitability for songs which might have been intended for multiple performances in various Athenian and colonial venues. In ‘Circular Chorus and the Dithyramb in the Classical and Hellenistic Period: a Problem of Definition’ P. Ceccarelli reviews the epigraphic evidence for *διθύραμβοι* (she finds only one case in which the term is clearly referring to choral performance) and chases down *κύκλιος χορός* in both inscriptions and literary sources, before concluding that the latter term broadly covered virtually any kind of choral lyric genre. In ‘The Semantics of Processional Dithyramb: Pindar’s *Second Dithyramb* and Archaic Vase-Painting’ G. Hedreen points out the difficulties of determining whether paintings on an intrinsically round medium (pottery) do in fact depict circular choruses; furthermore, the apparently processional (non-circular) choreography of early dithyramb is related to myths of Dionysus’ being received graciously (or not) by various parties

and *poieis*. In ‘Music and Movement in the Dithyramb’ A. D’Angour modestly proposes to track the increasing formality of dithyramb from Archilochus to Timotheus, but ends with an interesting application to Pindar fr. 70b of melodic principles argued for elsewhere.

The third section, ‘New Music’, begins with “‘Songbenders of Circular Choruses’”: Dithyramb and the “Demise of Music”, in which J.C. Franklin pursues a novel approach by charting the development of dithyramb and other lyric music against evidence for changing ancient approaches to tonality; by taking a broad view (Mesopotamian evidence for a truly ancient priority of heptatonic tonality) and by offering a convincing account of *kampe* (‘bend’) as a term involving both strophic structure and modality, he is able to locate both Arion and Lasus within a much more coherent narrative of musical development. T. Power’s ‘Kyklops *Kitharoidos*: Dithyramb and Nomos in Play’ is most useful in its demonstration that much of the criticism levelled against New Dithyramb (often by New Dithyrambists) has more to do with protecting musicians’ individual territories than with substantive objections to the music itself. M. Griffith expands the generic field of play in ‘Satyr-Play, Dithyramb, and the Geopolitics of Dionysian Style in Fifth-Century Athens’, in which he argues that satyrs, being both generic in character and yet closely identified with male citizenry, are particularly good carriers for self-referential discourse on both musical genre and social-political issues. In ‘Performance and the Drinking Vessel: Looking for an Imagery of Dithyramb in the Time of the “New Music”’ A. Heinemann provides an interesting discussion of fictional/allegorical musical performances in vase painting, including the possible use of (surprisingly non-violent) Marsyas imagery as an index for increasing musical professionalisation in late fifth-century Athens.

Leading off the fourth section, ‘Towards a Poetics of Dithyramb’, A. Ford, ‘The Poetics of Dithyramb’, focuses on the many compound epithets found in surviving dithyramb and in sources (such as Old Comedy) commenting on dithyramb; in these compounds he sees a basis for the common characterisation of the genre as extravagant, as well as a possible link both to cultic contexts and to the lexical interests (and wordy style) of sophists. In ‘The Dithyramb, a Dionysiac Poetic Form: Genre Rules and Cultic Contexts’, C. Calame is mainly concerned with using performative language and other elements designated as mimetic to place various dithyrambs of Pindar and Bacchylides within likely performance contexts, most of them cultic. A.-E. Peponi’s ‘Dithyramb in Greek Thought: the Problem of Choral Mimesis’ revisits much of the commonly-consulted ancient criticism dealing with dithyramb and other poetic genres; in most cases she finds good reasons to believe that the ancients’ discussions concerning issue of mimesis and narrative simply do not reflect modern scholars’ concerns. G. Ieranò in “‘One who is Fought over by all the Tribes’”: the Dithyrambic Poet and the City of Athens’ argues from victory dedications, ancient mentions and a re-evaluation of Aristophanes’ insulting treatment that dithyrambists – including those of the ‘New’ school – were as a rule honoured highly in Athens as wise and skilled, particularly after their deaths.

The final section, ‘Dithyramb in the Roman Empire’, begins with ‘Choruses and Tripods: the Politics of the Choregia in Roman Athens’, in which J. Shear discusses post-classical choral victory inscriptions and argues that, with their changing and yet often archaising formats, such inscriptions remain important markers of civic engagement and Athenian identity well into the Imperial period. Finally, I. Rutherford, ‘*Dithyrambos, Thriambos, Triumphus*: Dionysiac Discourse at Rome’, cautions that, while the two genres are occasionally associated in Roman literature, and while Dionysus may be an intrinsically good victory god given his associations with liberation, nevertheless we should not assume that Roman writers of triumph-songs conceived themselves as composing dithyrambs.

Although one gets the distinct impression that dithyramb – always the protean – has once again resisted being pinned down, the present volume is most welcome both as a sampling of current scholarship and a demonstration of how many varieties of evidence may be adduced to a literary historical question.

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MALE PREGNANCY

LEITAO (D.D.) *The Pregnant Male as Myth and Metaphor in Classical Greek Literature*. Pp. xii + 307. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012. Cased, £62, US\$99. ISBN: 978-1-107-01728-3. doi:10.1017/S0009840X14002121

L. explains that this volume began as an attempt to ‘write the prehistory’ (p. 1) of the metaphor of male pregnancy and birth so familiar to us from Plato’s *Symposium* – initially, it seems, in order better to understand the metaphor in that dialogue. What L. discovered, however, was a prehistory so rich and ‘robust’, as he says, that Plato recedes a little in importance, though the book ends with two long chapters on the *Symposium* and the *Theaetetus*, offering persuasive new readings of aspects of the metaphor there. L. tracks the development and deployment of male pregnancy myths and metaphors (and, indeed, the transformation of myth into metaphor) in the period 470–350 B.C.E., arguing that they constituted a well-established discourse that was recognisable as such to the authors who employed them and to their audiences. One of the major achievements of the book, then, is a definitive demonstration that, contrary to the claims of some commentators, Plato did not invent the metaphor of male pregnancy and birth, nor did he revive a moribund metaphor; rather, he drew on a substantial literary tradition.

There are three main aspects to the volume: the detailed presentation of the development of the relevant myths and metaphors; interpretations of the role of the myth and the metaphor in specific literary and philosophical texts; and an overarching claim concerning the rhetorical function of their deployment. This last is the claim that, contrary to the assumptions of the majority of the existing literature, the deployment of the male pregnancy metaphor is not necessarily to be understood in terms of what we might now call gender politics. That is, the metaphors are not necessarily deployed ‘to gain either some kind of political advantage over women or some kind of psychic advantage in their encounter with the female other’ (p. 4). L.’s aim is to understand how the metaphors function in particular texts where, he finds that, ‘during the classical period at least, they [often] had more to do with conceptualizing kinship and citizenship than with the intrapsychic conflicts of individual Greek men’ (p. 10).

In relation to the first two aspects, the book is outstanding. L. begins what he modestly calls a ‘survey’ (p. 18) of images of male pregnancy and parturition with a discussion of isomorphic developments in Anaxagoras’ embryological theory and cosmology in the middle of the fifth century B.C.E. L. explains Anaxagoras’ ‘one-seed theory of reproduction’, which posits the single male seed as the principle of reproduction, as part of a transformation of the agricultural metaphor of ‘seed’ into ‘a technical philosophical term to describe the potential for any given bit of matter, organic or inorganic, to be transformed into every other form of matter’ (p. 31). At the same time, Anaxagoras’ larger cosmology attempted to explain the origin of the cosmos and all life within it by way of a single ‘masculine