

## NEW MUSIC AND ITS MYTHS: ATHENAEUS' READING OF THE AULOS REVOLUTION (*DEIPNOSOPHISTAE* 14.616E–617F)

PAULINE A. LEVEN  
Yale University\*

**Abstract:** Scholarship on the late fifth-century BC New Music Revolution has mostly relied on the evidence provided by Athenaeus, the pseudo-Plutarch *De musica* and a few other late sources. To this date, however, very little has been done to understand Athenaeus' own role in shaping our understanding of the musical culture of that period. This article argues that the historical context provided by Athenaeus in the section of the *Deipnosophistae* that cites passages of Melanippides, Telestes and Pratinas on the mythology of the *aulos* (14.616e–617f) is not a credible reflection of the contemporary aesthetics and strategies of the authors and their works. Athenaeus is both following the structure of Aristotle's discussion of the topic of the *aulos* in *Politics* 8.1341a–1342b and accepting the élite ideological position given there. Athenaeus' text thus does not provide evidence for the historical context in which late fifth-century authors were composing, but rather constitutes an attempt to illustrate Aristotle's argument with poetic examples from late fifth-century poets.

In the course of a discussion on music that covers most of Book 14 of the *Deipnosophistae*, Athenaeus quotes three passages of late Classical melic poetry all related to *aulos* playing (616e–617f), one by Melanippides (*PMG* 758) and two from Telestes (*PMG* 805a–c and *PMG* 806), followed by a fragment attributed to a *hyporchêma* of Pratinas (*PMG* 708). Both the passages of Melanippides and Telestes and the historical introduction to these texts that Athenaeus offers appear in the dossier of texts and testimonia compiled by modern authors about the lyric poetry composed roughly between the last quarter of the fifth century and the last quarter of the fourth century BC,<sup>1</sup> and many scholars have commented on the contribution that the passages make to our understanding of the so-called 'New Music Revolution'.<sup>2</sup>

Yet, no study has focused on the overwhelming presence of Athenaeus in this dossier: of the approximately 250 lines of late Classical melic poetry which have survived in about 50 citations, around 70% come from the *Deipnosophistae*.<sup>3</sup> Nor has anyone underlined the peculiarity of the section in question in the Athenaeus part of the dossier: it is the only section of the *Deipnosophistae* that provides a historical context to situate and interpret the late Classical lyric

\* pauline.leven@yale.edu. I wish to thank A. Barker and D. Restani for their remarks and encouragement after the oral presentation of this paper at the second annual meeting of Moisa (Cremona 2008); A. Bowen, E. Bakker and V. Bers for their feedback on different versions of the article; and the editor and anonymous readers of *JHS* who saved me from many mistakes of various sorts. Remaining errors and infelicities are entirely my own.

<sup>1</sup> For a dossier of texts and testimonia, see Campbell's 1993 Loeb edition of the fifth and final volume of *Greek Lyric*, devoted to the 'New School of Poetry' (the text is, with very minor exceptions, that of *PMG*, but includes testimonia, on the model of Edmonds' third volume of *Lyra Graeca* (1927)). For a complete dossier on the lyric of the late Classical period, one should add the few lyric inscriptions of Hansen's second volume of *CEG* (1989) and the epigraphic poems collected by Powell in his 1925

*Collectanea Alexandrina* (the texts are now also available with commentary in the two-volume 2001 edition of *Greek Hymns* by Furley and Bremer).

<sup>2</sup> On the 'New Music Revolution', the most recent and stimulating overview is that of Csapo (2004). For commentary on the fragments, in the context of arguments about the history of the attitude towards the *aulos*, see Pickard-Cambridge (1962) 52–53; McKinnon (1984) 208–09; Wilson (1999) 63–68; Martin (2003) 160–61; Wallace (2003) 83–88; Csapo (2004) 216–29; Battezzato (2005) 99–100.

<sup>3</sup> As far as the number of citations goes, 60% (or 30 passages) come from Athenaeus. Very far behind in terms of frequency comes Plutarch, who quotes about eight passages (or 16%) amounting to ten lines (4% of the total number of lines quoted; the pseudo-Plutarchian *De musica* is excluded from this count), and Stobaeus, who quotes three passages amounting to nine lines (3.5%).

passages quoted, all the other passages being cited without an introduction. Starting from these two observations, can we infer from Athenaeus' apparent familiarity with the passages that he had first-hand acquaintance with this lyric corpus and that we can trust his remarks on the historical context of the fragments to explain them? The goal of this paper is to suggest that we should not, not so much because Athenaeus is only worth pillaging for his collection of quotations and should systematically be discredited for anything that is not a cited text, but because, I argue, Athenaeus in this passage is not using first-hand knowledge but creating a historical scenario following an agenda of his own. In order to define this agenda more specifically, we need to consider the precise relationship between the three citations, the historical context that Athenaeus ascribes to their composition and his overall discussion of music in Book 14.

In paying close attention to Athenaeus' general contribution to music history, I am indebted to two previous studies, that of D. Restani in 'Problemi Musicali nel XIV libro dei *Deipnosophistai* di Ateneo' (1988) and that of A. Barker in 'Athenaeus on Music' (2000). Both scholars have underlined the limitations of taking Athenaeus as a reliable source for music history, an opinion best expressed in a sentence of A. Barker: 'it seems that the available material has been passed, whether deliberately or subconsciously, through a distinctly curious process of filtration, which has systematically sieved out everything that had ever been of interest to genuine students and connoisseurs of music'.<sup>4</sup> I propose to use the passage in question (616e–617f) as a case-study to qualify this 'curious process of filtration' and to analyse Athenaeus' method in introducing quotations, in order to understand the ideological filter(s) that might have been imposed on our vision of this particular moment of musical history.<sup>5</sup>

Book 14 of the *Deipnosophistae* starts with a presentation of entertainment (ἄκροάματα) of various sorts – buffoons, jesters, jugglers, jokers – followed by a few sections devoted to the subject of *auloi*. It is in this context that one guest starts by quoting the fragment of the fifth-century lyric poet Melanippides supposed to illustrate the poet's rejection of the *aulos*:<sup>6</sup>

ἄ μὲν Ἀθήνα  
 τῶργαν' ἔρριψέν θ' ἱερᾶς ἀπὸ χειρὸς  
 εἶπέ τ' ἔρρετ' αἴσχεα, σῶματι λύμα·  
 ὕμμε δ' ἐγὼ κακότατι δίδωμι.  
 4 Wilamowitz: ἐμὲ δ' ἐγὼ; codd., ἐμὲ δ' ἐγὼ <οὐ> ci. Maas

Athena cast the instruments away from her holy hand and said: 'away with you, shameful things, outrage to my body! I relegate you to the low!'<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Barker (2000) 437.

<sup>5</sup> Several studies of Athenaeus' method in Braund and Wilkins (2000) have introduced a welcome degree of sophistication in our way of reading the *Deipnosophistae*, especially the contributions that underline Athenaeus' use of the cultural memory of Classical Athens. McClure has also emphasized the complexity of the treatment of Athenaeus' citations, and the following passage from her book is useful to keep in mind when thinking about Athenaeus' method and what is at stake in selecting the passages he quotes, in the way he does: 'To grapple with Athenaeus is to confront problems of quotation and collection, authenticity and origin, cultural identity and dislocation. (...) *Quotation also very literally engages in the arena of social conflict as speakers compete for discursive status; through this process, they reconstruct classical Athens and its literary tradition and yet simultaneously diminish the*

*totality of that imaginary in a continual process of restoration and disillusionment'* (McClure (2003) 37–38, my emphasis).

<sup>6</sup> On the date of Melanippides, and the possibility of the existence of two poets of the same name, see Garrod (1920) 132; Pickard-Cambridge (1962) 18–19; especially West (1992) 357–58, for a summary of the primary sources about the lyricist.

<sup>7</sup> I provide Campbell's text and apparatus criticus from the Loeb edition. All translations are mine. The text of this fragment is uncertain but I choose to print Campbell's rather than Maas' (who follows the manuscripts and has Athena dwell on her attitude to the *aulos*: 'I do not give myself to debasement'). Campbell's text makes Athena's pronouncement a performative statement: by stating that she throws away the *aulos*, she consigns them to misery in the poetic tradition too.

In a manner typical of the progression of the *Deipnosophistae*, a second guest counters by saying that the dithyrambic poet Telestes, doubting this myth, ‘took up arms against Melanippides’ (ἀντικορυσσόμενος) and defended the art of *aulos* playing in his *Argo*:<sup>8</sup>

- (a) ἴδον ἴσοφόν σοφὰν λαβοῦσαν οὐκ ἐπέλπομαι νόωι  
 δρυμοῖς ὀρείοις ὄργανον  
 δίαν Ἀθάναν δυσόφθαλμον αἴσχος ἐκφοβη-  
 θεῖσαν αὐθις χερῶν ἐκβαλεῖν  
 νυμφαγενεῖ χειροκτύπῳ φηρὶ Μαρσῦαι κλέος·  
 5 τί γάρ νιν εὐηράτοιο κάλλεος ὄξυς ἔρωσ ἔτειρεν,  
 αἰ παρθενίαν ἄγαμον καὶ ἄπαιδ’ ἀπένειμε Κλωθῶ;

ὡς οὐκ ἂν εὐλαβηθείσης τὴν αἰσχρότητα τοῦ εἶδους διὰ τὴν παρθενίαν, ἐξῆς τέ φησι·

- (b) ἀλλὰ μάταν ἀχόρευτος ἄδε ματαιολόγων  
 φάμα προσέπταθ’ Ἑλλάδα μουσοπόλων  
 σοφᾶς ἐπίφθονον βροτοῖς τέχνας ὄνειδος.

μετὰ ταῦτα δὲ ἐγκωμιάζων τὴν ἀύλητικὴν λέγει·

- (c) ἂν συνεριθοτάταν Βρομίωι παρέδωκε σεμνᾶς  
 δαίμονος ἀερθὲν πνεῦμ’ αἰολοπτέρυγον  
 σὺν ἀγλαᾶν ὠκύτατι χερῶν.

(a) 1 τὰν, μοx σοφὰν σοφόν (post Bergk transp. Wilamowitz) ci. Page 4 χοροκτύπῳ ci. Meineke, χοροκτύπῳ anon.

(b) 1 Grotefend: αναχορευτος codd.

(c) 2 ἀερόεν ci. Bergk; Hartung: -πτερύγων cod.

(a) That the clever one took the clever instrument in the mountain thickets, I cannot fancy in my mind – that divine Athena, fearing the shameful sight unpleasant to see, immediately threw it away from her hands to be the *kleos* of the hand-clapping nymph-born beast Marsyas!<sup>9</sup> No, why would a keen love for lovely beauty distress her, to whom childless and husbandless virginity was the lot decided by Clotho?

[So he says,] because she, being a virgin, does not care about the ugliness of her features, and he goes on:

(b) But this is a tale unsuitable for the chorus that has idly flown to Greece, told by idle servants of the Muses, an invidious insult to the clever art among mortals.

Then he praises the art of *aulos* playing and says:

(c) The uplifted quick-fluttering breath of the august goddess gave it [the art of *aulos* playing] to Bromios as a most helpful attendant, along with the swift moving of her splendid hands.

<sup>8</sup> For philological remarks on the corrupt text of the poem, see Livrea (1975); Comotti (1980).

<sup>9</sup> Although I follow Page’s and Campbell’s text, Meineke’s conjecture χοροκτύπῳ (ground-beating) is

tempting: it underlines the opposition between the loftiness of Athena (concerned with the upper limbs) and the lowliness of Marsyas (concerned with the lower limbs).

The general picture we thus get from Athenaeus' account of the two quotations is that, at the end of the fifth century BC, playing the *aulos* was a contested entertainment practice which prompted contemporary poets to take sides on the topic, either condemning or defending it in their poems.<sup>10</sup> In this context, Melanippides and Telestes are featured as representatives of these opposite positions, and their poetic treatment of the topic is praised for its literary quality, Melanippides being qualified as speaking *καλῶς*, Telestes (a few lines later) as speaking *κομψῶς*.

Athenaeus continues by quoting another passage of Telestes (*PMG* 806) presenting the art of *aulos* playing in a favourable light (ἔδηλωσε τὴν τῶν αὐλῶν χρείαν ἐν τούτοις, 617b), and bringing out more clearly the Dionysiac nature of the *aulos* and its eastern (Phrygian and Lydian) connections:

ἢ Φρύγα καλλιπνῶν αὐλῶν ἱερῶν βασιλῆα,  
 Λυδὸν ὃς ἄρμοσε πρῶτος  
 Δωρίδος ἀντίπαλον μούσας νόμον αἰολομόρφοις  
 πνεύματος εὐπτερον αὔραν ἀμφιπλέκων καλάμοις.

3 Dobree (νόμον), Wilamowitz (αἰολομόρφοις): νομοαἰολον ὀρφναι cod.; αἰόλον ὀμφᾶι Schweighäuser

Or the Phrygian king of the sacred beautiful-breathing *auloi*, who was the first one to fit together the Lydian tune, rival of the Dorian muse, weaving together the well-winged wind of the breath to the reeds of changing form.

After this citation, he goes back to the idea that *aulos* playing was becoming a socially contested practice at the end of the fifth century BC by quoting a fragment of Pratinas, in which the 'I' of the passage (presumably the chorus) deplores a change in the hierarchy between *aulos* music and song, song playing second fiddle to music, and calls for a return to the best *harmonia*, the Dorian one.<sup>11</sup> The fragment seems again to stage a debate over the place that the *aulos* should occupy and is contextualized as a reaction to the growing importance of the *aulos* player in lyric performance, epitomizing a general moral and cultural decline in society:

Πρατίνας δὲ ὁ Φλειάσιος αὐλητῶν καὶ χορευτῶν μισθοφόρων κατεχόντων τὰς ὀρχήστρας ἀγανακτήσας (Wilamowitz: ἀγανακτεῖν τινας cod. A) ἐπὶ τῷ τοῦς αὐλητᾶς μὴ συναυλεῖν τοῖς χοροῖς καθάπερ ἦν πάτριον ἀλλὰ τοῦς χοροῦς συνάιδειν τοῖς αὐληταῖς· ὃν οὖν εἶχεν κατὰ τῶν ταῦτα ποιούντων θυμὸν ὁ Πρατίνας ἐμφανίζει διὰ τοῦδε τοῦ Ὑπορχήματος (*PMG* 708).

Pratinas of Phlious, when hiring *aulos* players and *choreutai* were taking over the dancing-places, was angry at the fact that the *aulos* players did not play an accompaniment to the choruses anymore, as was the ancestral custom, but that the choruses sang an accompaniment to the *aulos* players. The irritation that he felt against those doing this is clearly shown in the following hyporcheme (*PMG* 708).

<sup>10</sup>This standard vision of a 'divided' musical culture at the end of the fifth century, where some vehemently opposed the playing of the *aulos* and others embraced it, is embodied in the figure of Alcibiades, whom Plutarch presents as rejecting the *aulos* in his youth, and inspiring this trend in other Athenian youths (*Alc.* 2). Also (ps.?)-Plato (*Alc.* 1.106e) on Alcibiades not learning to play the *aulos*.

<sup>11</sup> Pratinas' fragment is quoted here from Campbell's 1991 edition. For a discussion of *hyporchêma* as a subgenre of choral lyric, see Di Marco (1973–1974); Barker (1984) 39–40, n.4 (introduction to the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*), 214–15 (Pindar's writing of dithyrambs). On discussion of *hyporchêma* as 'a vague catch-all not found before Plato', see Ford (2006) 282.

Both the date and the interpretation of this latter passage have been discussed abundantly, but it is not the specific interpretation of the passage nor its contribution to the debate on genres or the evolution of lyric poetry that interest me here.<sup>12</sup> What I should like to focus on is Athenaeus' fashioning of a 'sociology of *aulos* playing' in this part of his book. To date, most critics still take this passage in conjunction with a segment of pseudo-Plutarch's *De musica* (1141c–d) to show that, at the end of the fifth century, *aulos* playing was actually such a hotly debated topic in society that poets took sides and either vehemently condemned or embraced it. Yet there are three objections to taking Athenaeus' account of the social context of Melanippides, Telestes and Pratinas as reflecting a historically true scenario.

The first reason has to do with the framing of the poetic dialogue in Athenaeus' text. The kind of mythological bout imagined happening between Melanippides and Telestes (in which the two poets offer first-person statements, either directly or through the mouth of Athena herself) strangely resembles in its form the conversation that Athenaeus' sophists hold with one another. In particular the verbs, διασύρω and ἀντικρούσσομαι, used to describe the dialogic relationship between the two poets, are typically Athenaeus; and in the eight other instances in which both appear in the *Deipnosophistae*, they indicate a response that one guest addresses to another in a battle of erudition.<sup>13</sup> This pattern is itself familiar from the *Deipnosophistae*, on subjects ranging from pastries to *hetairae* and beans to garlands.<sup>14</sup> This is the first, lexical, sign that Athenaeus may have projected onto the two late fifth-century poets – and the social reality to which they belonged – a polemical dialogue of the same type as the one that his characters are conducting at Larensis' party. Additionally, by accepting Athenaeus' view that there was a historical dialogue between the two poets, we implicitly accept that Melanippides and Telestes are both presenting their personal views on musical matters, and we ignore the narratological strategies of the poems and the rhetoric of the fragments, including the fact that the supposed censure of *aulos* playing might be taking place in a dithyramb called *Marsyas* presumably performed to *aulos* music.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Athenaeus' 'historical contextualization' of Pratinas and presentation of the poet after the two New Musicians have led some critics to make Pratinas a late fifth-century poet, connected to the New Musical Revolution. Among the main representatives of the debate, some offer an early date: Seaford (1977–1978); D'Alessio (2007) 118, who evokes the possibility of 'un testo pseudo-epigrafo, se ne possono trarre argomenti per una datazione più bassa del testo, ormai influenzato dalla commedia della seconda metà del secolo'. Others prefer an early fifth-century date: Ieranò (1997) 219–26; Napolitano (2000); Barker (2002) 56; Cipolla (2003). For a late fifth-century date: Pickard-Cambridge (1962) 17–20; Zimmermann (1986); (1989); Hamilton (1990); Csapo (2004) 243, who argues that the fragment is a pastiche of conservative critics; Franklin (forthcoming). I would defend an early fifth-century date, on the grounds among other things that Pratinas' use of compound adjectives (as much, of course, as we can infer from the 26 lines of his that have survived, *PMG* 708–13) is reminiscent more of Old Comedy than of the use of compounds by the New Music poets. Although the composition of the adjectives is not significantly different between Old Comedy and New Dithyramb, their use by the New Music poets corresponds to what I would call a 'synaesthetic poetics': the adjectives talk to the imagination rather than to reason (for example, αἰολοπτέρυγον σὺν ἀγλαῶν ὠκύτατι χειρῶν in

*PMG* 805c, πνεύματος εὔπερον αὔραν in *PMG* 806), while the compounds used by Pratinas are descriptive and capture realistic (albeit caricature-like: πολυπάταγα, 2; θυραμάχοις τε πυγμαχίαισι νέων, 8) aspects of the object described, and the poet accumulates them as terms of abuse (ὄλεσσιαλοκάλαμον / λαλοβαρύοπα παραμελο-ρυθμοβάταν, 11–12).

<sup>13</sup> The verb διασύρω is used six other times in the *Deipnosophistae*, to describe a literary polemic (real or not), and twice in parallel with κωμωιδῶ: 131a (of Anaxandrides about the symposium of Iphicrates); 187c (of Plato about Agathon, Alcibiades and many other 'neoi'); and in quotations of comic authors. A TLG search for διασύρω suggests that this verb is used in contexts related to comedy or literary polemic. The verb ἀντικρούσσομαι (which picks up on the ἀντιλέγων used to describe the guest's response to another) is used three other times, always of the *deipnosophists* responding to each other on matters of erudition, and in only two other (later) poetic pieces.

<sup>14</sup> For Athenaeus' characters' quotation habits, and the practices of quotations used in the *Deipnosophistae*, see Jacob (2001) especially his sections 13 (pratiche di letterati, LXXI–LXXXVII) and 15 (I *deipnosofisti* come testo: generi, usi, XCIII–C).

<sup>15</sup> Barker (1984) 93–94; Wilson (1999) 63–64; Martin (2003) 160, n.36, underline the limitation.



The second point has to do with the nature of the poetic dialogue and the poets' views on the musical art. Some verbal echoes between the fragments indeed prompt the reader to interpret the passage of Telestes as a form of response to the older poet:

	Melanippides	Telestes
Movement:	ἔρριπεν ἀπὸ χειρὸς (2)	χερῶν ἐκβαλεῖν (a3)
Description of hands:	ἱεραῖς χειρὸς (2)	ἀγλαᾶν χειρῶν (c3)
Reaction:	αἴσχεα (3)	δυσόφθαλμον αἴσχος (a3)
Moral judgment:	σώματι λύμα (3) (and possibly κακότατι δίδωμι (4))	ἐπίφθονον ὄνειδος (b3)

In each case, Telestes caps every singular noun used by Melanippides with either a plural expression or an accompanying epithet – with the only exception of line 2, where Melanippides' plural expression, τῶργαν(α) (line 2) is paralleled by a singular in Telestes' text, ὄργανον (line 2). But the verbal echoes actually trump the logic: there is a slight disjunction in Telestes' use of the Melanippidean vocabulary that would make him a rather sloppy (or superbly sophistic) reader of the older melic poet, if he were indeed responding directly and engaging in polemics. For example, whereas it is to the *aulos* that the outrage (λύμα) referred in Melanippides, ὄνειδος qualifies the tale about Athena in Telestes; while αἴσχεα and κακότατι in Melanippides has both a moral and aesthetic meaning, it is more explicitly aesthetic in δυσόφθαλμον αἴσχος; finally, whereas the hands were said to be 'sacred' in contrast with the degrading *aulos*, they are sacred in connection with the *aulos* in Telestes. Although the same type of vocabulary is used in reference to the same type of scenario, the disjunction in the use of the vocabulary hints that Telestes' response (if it is one) is not as straightforward a response as Athenaeus thinks: Telestes objects and responds to Melanippides' myth, but he also changes the grounds of the argument, and part, if not most, of his response to Melanippides has to do with poetic competition and mythical rewriting. The version that Telestes offers is a humorous and sexualized revision of the myth of Athena and the *aulos*, in a tradition of aetiologies of musical instruments.

Finally, a third reason for doubting the historicity of a debate over the role of *aulos* playing in society and the historical contextualization proposed by Athenaeus has to do with the overall structure of his argument in this passage. The hypothesis that I should like to explore in the rest of this paper is that, in this section of the *Deipnosophistae*, Athenaeus is not – seemingly randomly – collecting late Classical melic passages related to the topic of the *aulos* and providing us with first-hand information about the historical context to which they belong:<sup>16</sup> rather, I suggest, Athenaeus draws directly on the structure of the section of Aristotle's *Politics* Book 8 devoted to the use of the *aulos* in musical education, and illustrates it with passages from late Classical poetry that he had access to.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> For such a view on Athenaeus' contribution to the debate, see McKinnon (1984) 209: 'There are two rambling passages in his lengthy work [the *Deipnosophistae*] that cite the *aulos* on virtually every page [4.174–85, 14.616–39]. It is fair to say that he looks on music with consistent favour or at least with benign curiosity. Moreover, the *aulos* figures as one of the most prominent specific objects of his praise. Nonetheless, there are a few references that might be construed out of context as supporting the conventional view. For instance, he cites Athena's discarding of the *aulos* and in a nearby citation Pratinas' injunction that it not get out of hand in exercising its accompaniment function. One had best consider this an echo of Classical

Athens, keeping in mind Athenaeus' tendency to quote each and every reference he can muster. Moreover, he has Telestes immediately step into the breach with a spirited defense of the *aulos*'. The 'rambling' nature of this 'lengthy' work and the 'few references that might be construed out of context' have for the longest time been the only aspects critics commented on, and there is still work to do on understanding what Athenaeus' purpose and method was in writing this imposing work.

<sup>17</sup> Canfora (2001) points three times (3.1590, n.2, 1591, n.3, 1593, n.2) to a thematic parallel with Aristotle's *Politics* 8, but does not comment further on the structure of the Athenaeus passage nor on the implications of the Aristotelian parallel.

Three types of considerations lend their weight to this hypothesis, starting with the nature of Athenaeus' sources in this part of Book 14 of the *Deipnosophistae*. These paragraphs are the only ones in the section on *paidia*, opened at 616e by comments on the *aulos* and concluding at 623e, in which Athenaeus relies on poetic sources. Indeed, apart from fragments of comedy, all the information about musical practice in this section comes, via quotations ranging from several lines to several pages, from philosophers composing musical treatises, authors writing on musical topics, grammarians, compilers, lexicographers, biographers, historians and anecdotists;<sup>18</sup> no poetic passage other than those under consideration is quoted without intermediary in this section.

Secondly, the sequence of quotations about the reaction to the *aulos* strongly suggests that the passage is meant to be envisaged as an organic whole. For a few paragraphs later (618c), a second, and competing, story about the origins of the *aulos* is offered: Duris is quoted as having recorded in the second book of his *Agathocles and his Times* that the *aulos* was called Libyan because the art of *aulos* playing was invented by Seirites, a Libyan. Given Athenaeus' obsession over taxonomy and pertinence,<sup>19</sup> it is surprising that the Durian aetiology for *aulêtikê* is introduced in a section about *synaulia* and terms related to the *aulos* rather than being presented as opposing that of Athena. In the same way, the ethnologic associations introduced in the second Telesian passage with the adjectives Φρύγα, Λυδόν and Δωρίδος find a thematic echo in Heraclides of Pontus' presentation of the different modes in 625f; but again, the two passages are not linked. Instead, Athenaeus quotes the passage of Pratinas devoted to the *aulos*, after introducing it with a few lines on social decline and estrangement from Archaic song culture. This 'cluster'-organizing principle seems to oppose Athenaeus' other taxonomic trend, illustrated just above, where contrasting versions, etymologies or aetiologies on a topic are confronted with one another.

This brings me, finally, to the hypothesis suggested above, that the Athenian passage about the *aulos* is not a collection of quotes but is following a specific pattern and agenda. I shall now argue that it is inspired, directly or indirectly, by Aristotle's section of the *Politics* devoted to the *aulos*. An Aristotelian source is of course in itself not surprising, given the overall importance of Plato and Aristotle for Athenaeus.<sup>20</sup> But more specifically, the overall concerns of Athenaeus' presentation of music attest to the underlying importance of Book 8 of the *Politics* for Athenaeus since the latter combines reflections on instrumentation, sociology, psychology and ethics of music (four of the main themes of this section of the *Deipnosophistae*).

Indeed the thematic articulations of the deipnosophists' conversation in Book 14 correspond to the three dimensions of *mousikê* that Aristotle describes in this section of the *Politics*. To the question of where the power of *mousikê* resides, Aristotle offers three suggestions; in its being something for the sake of amusement and relaxation, just as sleep and heavy drinking (παίδις ἔνεκα καὶ ἀναπαύσεως, καθάπερ ὕπνου καὶ μέθης, 1339a.16–17); in its movement tending towards virtue (πρὸς ἀρετὴν τι τείνειν, 1339a.22) or in its contributing to our pastimes and to

<sup>18</sup> Apart from the six passages of comedy quoted, the great majority of authors quoted belong to the Peripatetic school (Aristotle himself, Heraclides of Pontus, Aristoxenus, Chamaeleon, Clearchus, Dicaearchus, Aristocles of Messene), with the quotes related to their work on music, poetry, lyric poets, competitions, etc. The other sources are anecdotists (Semus of Delos, Hegesander of Delphi), grammarians (Tryphon of Alexandria, Aristophanes of Byzantium, Lysanias of Cyrene), a biographer (Hermippus of Smyrna) and historians (Carystius of Pergamum, Nymphis of Heraclea, Jason of Cyrene, Sosibius of Sparta).

<sup>19</sup> See Jacob (2001) LXXV–LXXVI, on *táxis* and 'forma di indicizzazione mentale', and XCIX–CIII, on the 'principio di pertinenza', on which Jacob writes (CII–

CIII): 'Quest' ultimo, è vero, è interpretato con larghezza, e permetta una scelta aperta di strategie associative: per analogia, per fonti bibliografiche, per temi o parole-chiave, per antitesi, per mutua rettifica, per aggiunta successiva, di precisazioni, per ordine alfabetico, e così via'. Here, I propose another organizing principle: Athenaeus is following the argument of a 'master text' (Aristotle's *Politics* 8) and illustrating it by poetic examples.

<sup>20</sup> See Trapp (2000) 357: 'In terms of numbers of named references (admittedly a crude measure), Aristotle's name comes up about 170 times, Plato's about 140, Theophrastus' about 110, Clearchus' and Socrates' around 80, Posidonius' about 40, Epicurus' about 35, and Speusippus' and Aristoxenus' about 30 apiece'.

thoughts (πρὸς διαγωγὴν τι συμβάλλεται καὶ πρὸς φρόνησιν, 1339a.25–26). The first dimension suggested by Aristotle, amusement, is the theme of Athenaeus' first section (613a–623e) that deals with buffoons, jokers, *planoi*, songs, *auloi*, rhapsodists, hilarodists and more vulgar kinds of entertainment, such as *iamboi* and others.<sup>21</sup> The second suggestion, *mousikê* as a way to get closer to virtue, is the framework of discussion for the second section of Book 14 (623e–633e), focusing on ethical problems linked to music (music as training the mind, sharpening character, inciting courage, softening the heart, etc). As for the last section of Book 14 (633e–639b), it examines forms of entertainment and the educated reflections that they occasion concerning instrumentation, musical history and lyric genre taxonomy.<sup>22</sup> So although Aristotle is not directly acknowledged as a source in this passage, the framework for thinking about musical practice, from entertainment to philosophical contemplation and including gentlemanly conversation, precisely reflects Aristotelian concerns.

Even more specifically, it is possible, I think, to see the succession of quotations in the section cited (616e–617f) as a sort of collage that closely follows Aristotle's argument in 1341a–1342b and illustrates each main point made by the philosopher with a quotation from a poet.<sup>23</sup> If this hypothesis, which I have not seen examined anywhere else, is correct, it might provide us with a new lens through which we might better be able to evaluate Athenaeus' method, purpose and engagement with the Classical tradition.

After evoking the problem of whether *mousikê* should be included in education and whether the young should be able to play musical instruments themselves, Aristotle goes over the possible instruments used for that purpose. After rejecting the *aulos* among other technical instruments (ἄλλο τι τεχνικὸν ὄργανον, 1341a.18–19) for their exciting influence and interference with speech, the philosopher refers to old poets who have mythologized on the *aulos* (εὐλόγως δ' ἔχει καὶ τὸ περὶ τῶν αὐλῶν ὑπὸ τῶν ἀρχαίων μεμυθολογημένον 1341b.2–3):

φασὶ γὰρ δὴ τὴν Ἀθηνᾶν εὐροῦσαν ἀποβαλεῖν τοὺς αὐλοὺς. οὐ κακῶς μὲν οὖν ἔχει φάναι καὶ διὰ τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην τοῦ προσώπου τοῦτο ποιῆσαι δυσχεράνασαν τὴν θεόν· οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ μάλλον εἰκὸς ὅτι πρὸς τὴν διάνοιαν οὐθέν ἐστιν ἡ παιδεία τῆς αὐλήσεως, τῆι δὲ Ἀθηνᾶι τὴν ἐπιστήμην περιτίθεμεν καὶ τὴν τέχνην.

The story is that Athena found the *auloi* and threw them away. It is not bad to say that the goddess did that out of disgust for the ugliness of her features; but it is more likely that it was because education in *aulos* playing does not do anything for the intelligence, and we make knowledge and art the province of Athena.

Although in concluding his considerations about the use of the *aulos* in education Aristotle refers to the ancient poets' story about Athena and the *aulos* (with an adjective, ἀρχαίων, that leaves the dating or precise reference, if any, uncertain), he does not connect them to a larger synchronic controversy about the value of the *aulos* in society, in which two groups and their

<sup>21</sup> Not insignificantly, the opening words of Book 14 are τὸν Διόνυσον, and the book starts with considerations about drunkenness – the term of comparison used by Aristotle to describe entertainment.

<sup>22</sup> For a presentation of the main themes, see Restani (1988) 27, who describes 'quattro filoni tematici: una sorta di manualetto sull'*aulós*, il primo (616e–618c); una ricerca ad interesse etnomusicologico e socio-paideutico, il secondo (618d–620a; 623e–628c; 631f–633e); un'esegesi organologica (633f–637f) il terzo, ed infine, una sintetica rassegna di interpreti e *performances* (620d–623d; 637f–638d; 638d–640a)'.

<sup>23</sup> This 'collage' technique is even underlined by

Athenaeus' introduction (616e):

πολλῶν οὖν πολλάκις ὄντων τῶν ἀκροαμάτων καὶ τῶν αὐτῶν οὐκ αἰεὶ, ἐπειδὴ πολλοὶ περὶ αὐτῶν ἐγίνοντο λόγοι, τὰ ὀνόματα τῶν εἰπόντων παραλιπῶν τῶν πραγμάτων μνησθήσομαι.

So we had often many entertainments, not always the same, and since there was much talk about them, I will leave out the name of the speakers and talk only about what happened.

I would suggest that this ellipsis of the name of the speakers corresponds to the actual absence of different interlocutors: everything is an Aristotelian monologue.



poetic representatives would oppose each other, but rather to a diachronic narrative of the *aulos* craze.<sup>24</sup> His main consideration is about the *aulos* falling in and out of fashion in education, and the ancient story is only presented as an acceptable fiction (οὐ κακῶς ἔχει φάναι), a springboard to a more likely interpretation of the myth (οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον εἰκός), connected with the philosopher's concern in this part of the treatise – education. Athenaeus follows the same pattern, and even underlines, with expressions that are synonyms to the ones used by Aristotle (καλῶς and κομψῶς for εὐλόγως and οὐ κακῶς), the literary quality of the authors' poetry: he first presents Melanippides' quotation (a rejection of the *aulos*), then Telestes' version, which connects (as Aristotle does) Athena with the arts and technique, Telestes using σοφὸν σοφᾶν (PMG 805a.1) and Aristotle ἐπιστήμη and τέχνη (1341b.7–8).<sup>25</sup>

The Aristotelian passage (1341b.8–21) continues with two remarks, on the technical nature of the education in *aulos* playing (τῶν τε ὀργάνων καὶ τῆς ἐργασίας ἀποδοκιμάζομεν τὴν τεχνικὴν παιδείαν) and on the social status of *aulos* playing, considered menial (θητικωτέραν) because the professional player does not strive for his own betterment (οὐ τῆς αὐτοῦ μεταχειρίζεται χάριν ἀρετῆς) but for the pleasure of his audience (τῆς τῶν ἀκουόντων ἡδονῆς). This audience-oriented vision of virtuoso *aulos* playing is precisely the feature that the last part of the quotation from Telestes (PMG 805c) and the next (PMG 806, both quoted in full above) seem to illustrate: in these passages, the virtuosity of *aulêtikê* is suggested with the accumulation of images of winged, variegated and light things used for describing the hands and breath (ἀγλαᾶν ὠκύτατι χειρῶν, 805c; πνεῦμ' αἰολοπτέρυγον, 805c; καλλιπνῶων αὐλῶν, αἰολομόρφοις καλάμοις and εὔπτερον αὔραν, 806) and with the imitation of the difficulty of musical articulation, mimicked by the use of alliterations and alternation between the sounds πτ, πν and πλ.

The last section of Aristotle's *Politics* ends with some justification for the use of all the *harmoniae* (not only the Dorian but also the Phrygian and the Lydian), a description of the use of the one that belongs to the realm of the *aulos* (the Phrygian, 1342b.1) and a reference to the late fifth- and early fourth-century lyric poet Philoxenus (1342b.9). Similarly, the last two passages quoted by Athenaeus (the second Telestian quotation and the Pratinas fragment) wrap up all the themes examined by Aristotle in the last section of the *Politics*. The fragment of Telestes (PMG 806, quoted above) relies on the use of ethnic adjectives (the 'Phrygian' king, the 'Lydian' tune rival of the 'Dorian' Muse) which evoke the use of *harmoniae* – unless they properly describe these modes in a self-referential way. This interest in the topic of musical *harmoniae* is also illustrated in the Pratinas fragment (where the last line is an invitation to listen to the Dorian choral dance, ἄκουε τὰν ἐμὰν Δῶριον χορείαν, 16), but more generally the fragment condenses all the themes touched on by Aristotle: the connection with Dionysus (ἐμὸς ἐμὸς ὁ Βρόμιος, 3); the sneers at the technical aspect of *aulos* playing (ὀλεσισιαλοκάλαμον / λαλοβαρύσπα παραμελορυσθοβάταν, 11–12); and even the banausic status of its practitioner, if we adopt Harnung's ingenious reading θῆτα (adopted by Gülick) for the manuscripts' corrupt θυπα before τρυπάνωι δέμας πεπλασμένον (13).<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup> According to Aristotle, 'in earlier ages' people had rejected the use of the *aulos* by the young and the free but later accepted it (1341a.25–32). The turning-point in Aristotle's chronology is the period after the Persian Wars, when the Greeks, having more leisure in times of peace and very proud of their feat (σκολαστικώτεροι γὰρ γιγνώμενοι διὰ τὰς εὐπορίας καὶ μεγαλοψυχότεροι πρὸς τὴν ἀρετὴν 1341a.28–29) engaged in all sorts of studies, including *aulos* playing.

<sup>25</sup> There is a difference though between Aristotle's

and Telestes' interpretation of Athena's connection with *sophia* and *techne*: rejecting the *aulos* is interpreted by Aristotle as proving Athena's foreignness to mere technical skill and her connection with intellectual disciplines. Telestes associates Athena with technical skills: she would not reject the σοφὸν ὄργανον (805a.1–2) and her rejection of the *aulos* would be a disgrace to this σοφᾶς τέχνας (805b.3).

<sup>26</sup> Kaibel has θῶπα, and Campbell follows Page, printing ὑπαί.

Athenaeus' introduction to the fragment thus retrospectively summarizes, I propose, the Aristotelian historical elements discussed above and illustrated by the text of Pratinas: the idea that, at a certain point in time, *aulos* playing became the province not of the free but of the menial (θητικωτέρων, in Aristotle's words, μισθοφόρων in Athenaeus' text and possibly θῆτα in Pratinas' fragment *PMG* 708.13) and that some change was introduced in the good old choral tradition. Although it looks like Athenaeus introduces the last passage of the series of quotations about *aulos* playing with a piece of musical historiography, the poetic text itself is actually taken as the proof for the historical contextualization: what proves that there was a cultural change of attitude towards the *aulos* at the time of Pratinas, and that such cultural change actually occurred, is the text itself. In other words, Athenaeus offers a historicizing reading of the poetry that he had access to and presents the first-person statements laid out in texts as expressing historical reality. There is just one step from concluding that Athenaeus constructs (in the same way in which he had constructed a historical dialogue between Melanippides and Telestes) Pratinas' text as a reaction to changing times, whether this corresponds to an actual event or not.

So what do these few sections of the *Deipnosophistae* tell us about Athenaeus' method as an historian of music? In this case-study, I have argued that in his presentation of *aulos* playing Athenaeus does not offer a trustworthy historical 'contextualization' of three New Music fragments and a passage of Pratinas, but follows the structure of Aristotle's discussion of *aulos* playing in Book 8 of the *Politics* and illustrates the Aristotelian argument by poetic examples, which he reads in a historicist manner (as authors expressing their own opinions in the first-person and taking positions on contemporary issues). The statement that, rather than analysing or interpreting fragments, Athenaeus strings them together is not original of course; much more important, however, is the claim that there is an argumentative structure, and an ideological bias, behind an apparently loose stringing-together of quotations. Taking Athenaeus as a source for 'putting in context' the fourth-century fragments makes us victim of a methodological vicious circle, since the fragments are only illustrations and historicist readings of the musical historical discourse that Athenaeus borrows from Aristotle.

The second part of the answer to a 'so what?' question can only be adumbrated here: if we cannot rely on one of our main literary sources to interpret the context of the fourth-century fragments, what can we do with these fragments? On the one hand, instead of reading the fragments as metapoetic cues informing us about what music was 'really' like at the end of the fifth century, we can read the fragments for what they tell us about how poets engaged with the poetic past. Both Melanippides and Telestes, for example, do engage in conversation with a myth that Pindar had presented, in another version, in his Twelfth Pythian, which staged Athena's invention of *aulêtikê* at the death of the Gorgon, and they do so without necessarily having entered into an actual dialogue and without being spokespersons of contemporary cultural polemics over instrumental practice.<sup>27</sup> Telestes not only playfully engages with the motif of the female voice explored in Pindar's ode, but also uses the same kind of rhetoric of *recusatio* employed by Pindar, when refusing to present an august virgin goddess busy with petty cosmetic concerns. Additionally, Telestes uses to describe *aulêtikê* an expression (σοφᾶς τέχνας) used nowhere else in previous extant poetry except twice in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* (482–84, 511–12) where it serves to describe the invention of the lyre, and thus mixes two aetiological tales to legitimize and support his version of the invention of *aulêtikê*. Taken together, these three features of Telestes' engagement with his poetic predecessors open avenues for thinking about how much newness the 'New Music Revolution' actually introduced.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Wallace (2003) 79 argues that Pindar's version was itself not the mainstream version of the myth: 'Although the *aulos* had Boeotian associations and a common Greek tradition attributed its invention to the Phrygian Hyagnis, father of Marsyas, in 490 Pindar, a Theban, attributed its invention to Athena (*Pyth.* 12). Although we cannot prove

that Pindar himself invented this tale, it is nonetheless a rarity in the ancient sources. Pindar's story hellenizes, and possibly associates with Athens, an instrument which the Greeks typically regarded as foreign'.

<sup>28</sup> Recent scholarship had started re-evaluating the originality of New Music. It is best illustrated by

On the other hand, if my hypothesis is true, this case-study offers an insight into Athenaeus' stance as an historian of music in the *Deipnosophistae*. Rather than telling us anything about Athenaeus' actual knowledge of musical history, the use of the Aristotelian passage tells us something about Athenaeus' attitude towards the musical past and historians of music: when in need of elements of discourse about music and musical practice, Athenaeus goes back to the most classical source and embraces its ideological bias, the sense of élite reactionary attitude towards democratization of musical culture.<sup>29</sup> This is precisely illustrated in a passage of Aristoxenus (632a–b), quoted by Masurius a few sections further down in Book 14, which describes an oligarchic reaction to the democratization of music:<sup>30</sup>

ὅμοιον, φησί, ποιούμεν Ποσειδωνιάταις τοῖς ἐν τῷ Τυρρητικῷ κόλπῳ κατοικοῦσιν. οἷς συνέβη τὰ μὲν ἐξ ἀρχῆς Ἑλλησιν οὔσιν ἐκβεβαρβάρωσθαι Τυρρηνοῖς [ἢ Ῥωμαίοις] γεγονόσι, καὶ τὴν τε φωνὴν μεταβεβληκέναι τὰ τε λοιπὰ τῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων, ἄγειν δὲ μίαν τινὰ αὐτοῦς τῶν ἑορτῶν τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν ἔτι καὶ νῦν, ἐν ἧι συνιόντες ἀναμιμνήσκονται τῶν ἀρχαίων ἐκείνων ὀνομάτων τε καὶ νομίμων, καὶ ἀπολοφυράμενοι πρὸς ἀλλήλους καὶ ἀποδακρύσαντες ἀπέρχονται. οὕτω δὲ οὔν, φησί, καὶ ἡμεῖς, ἐπειδὴ καὶ τὰ θέατρα ἐκβεβαρβάρωται καὶ εἰς μεγάλην διαφθορὰν προελήλυθεν ἡ πάνδημος αὕτη μουσική, καθ' αὐτοῦς γενόμενοι ὀλίγοι ἀναμιμνησκόμεθα οἷα ἦν ἡ μουσική.

We likewise, says Aristoxenus, do as the denizens of Poseidonia, who live on the Tyrrhenian Gulf. Although they were originally Greeks they happened to become completely barbarized and became Tuscans or Romans, and changed their speech and the rest of their customs, but even nowadays they keep one Greek festival, during which they gather together and reminisce about the ancient names and custom, and after bewailing them and lamenting over them, they leave and go home. In the same way, [Aristoxenus says] now that the theatres have become completely barbarized, and since *mousikê* has become vulgar and undergone great demise, we do the same, and a few of us gathered together are reminiscing about what *mousikê* was like.

The position of the denizens of Poseidonia reminiscing on a very special occasion about their old Greek names and customs is evocative not only of 'the few' of the élite of Aristoxenus' days, expressing their laments in a discourse about the prostitution of music (ἡ πάνδημος αὕτη μουσική) and musical decline (εἰς μεγάλην διαφθορὰν προελήλυθεν), but also of the characters of Athenaeus' text themselves. Just as both remembering tales of the heroic past and sharing musical proficiency defined élite status in the Archaic and early Classical periods, in the same way in the fourth century BC, a new élite defined itself by its sharing the memory of what old *mousikê* was like and its mastery of musical discourse. Several centuries later, the educated man at Larensis' dinner, in a manner reminiscent of the happy few of Aristoxenus, defines himself by his mastery of Classical texts about musical practice and musical decline, and to start with, Aristotle's discourse in *Politics* 8.

d'Angour's suggestive title: 'The "New Music": so what's new?' (d'Angour 2006). See also Csapo and Wilson (2009), on Timotheus as a 'New' Musician.

<sup>29</sup> For a similar sort of conclusion about Athenaeus' position *vis-à-vis* musical history in the case of the Homeric singers, see Bartol (2007), especially 241–42.

<sup>30</sup> Ath. 632b = 124 Wehrli. On the fragment, see Visconti (1999) 100–63, especially 144–63; Meriani (2003) 15–48, especially 33–35, 42–43. For the idea of 'barbarization' of music used by an Imperial author, see

Bowersock (1995) especially 5–6. Bowersock's article sheds light on the culture in which Athenaeus was writing, and on Athenaeus' use of Aristoxenus' discourse on barbarization: 'the report of Aristoxenus would suggest that it consisted in the collective forgetfulness of Greek language as well as ritual. But manifestly not all of it disappeared, and the Hellenism of the late Republic received an infusion of new imperially fueled energy that animated a kind of Italian Hellenism in a way that had never been seen before' ((1995) 13).

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