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Author(s): Deborah Steiner

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DANCING WITH THE STARS: *CHOREIA* IN THE THIRD STASIMON OF EURIPIDES' *HELEN*

DEBORAH STEINER

AS HELEN AND MENELAUS make their way toward the Egyptian shore and the boat that will take them back to Greece, the chorus of captive Greek women performs its third and final stasimon, singing of the couple's return home escorted over the sea by the Dioskouroi. The song has figured in a number of recent fine discussions. While several readers have focused on its internal unity and pertinence to the larger structure and themes of the play,¹ others have mined its references to the cult of the Leukippides and the festival of the Hyakinthia as a means of reconstructing Spartan religious practices and Helen's status within those rites.² In Helene Foley's reading, the singers' turn to cult complements the drama's thematic design: while promoting Euripides' twofold presentation of his heroine as both archetypal *parthenos* and married woman and mother, the several roles that Helen claims in Spartan ritual, the song also suggests that recurrent and atemporal cult practice, perhaps more effectively than literary revisionism, may undo a damaging reputation and establish or restore an alternate and more primary version of events.³ For a third group of scholars, the stasimon's interest lies in its embrace of the diction, syntax, and motifs associated with the "New Music" in vogue in late-fifth-century Athens and in its deployment of elements characteristic of dithyrambic style, the mode of composition that accommodated the most radical musical innovations and genre-mixing experiments of the time.⁴ In one further set of accounts, the ode proves exemplary of the "choral projection" practiced by Attic tragedians, a device whereby the choreuts evoke the activities of other singing, dancing choruses, and so blend their current performance with that of the singers whom they describe.⁵ Since choral projection is common to both dithyramb and the New Music, it stands as fresh proof of Euripides' engagement with the musical avant-garde.⁶

This article benefited greatly from the suggestions made by Helene Foley, who very kindly read and commented on an earlier version; many thanks too to the editor of *CP*, whose patient but firm insistence on brevity much improved an overlong piece. My apologies are owed to Anton Bierl, whose ample discussions of texts and issues of central concern to this account came to my attention too late for inclusion here.

1. Padel 1974, 235–40; see too the brief but illuminating commentary on the song in Allan 2008, ad loc., and, particularly for the second strophe and antistrophe, Swift 2010, 227–29.

2. Calame 1997, 174–87 and passim; Pettersson 1992, 9–41.

3. Foley 2001, 320–24.

4. For particularly helpful accounts, see Csapo 2000; 2004; Wilson 2000; 2004.

5. See Henrichs 1994–95; 1996; Csapo 2000; 2003, 70–71; 2004.

6. Csapo 2000; 2004.

Choral projection and the New Music are also central to the discussion offered here, and to its threefold aims: I want at once to identify a central motif that unites the song's seemingly heterogeneous elements, to suggest what might have been the acoustic, kinetic, and choreographic dimensions to the performance as originally staged, and to read the song as proof of Euripides' interventions within the variegated and fractured landscape of late-fifth-century Athenian *mousikê*.⁷ More particularly, I focus on an aspect of the ode that has gone largely unexplored:⁸ the singers' repeated and emphatic appeals to the phenomenon of *choreia*—properly understood as, in Plato's phrase, "the totality of song and dance together" (*Leg.* 654b), or song-dance—in each of its four verses. As I argue, the stasimon offers an account, albeit in impressionistic and imagistic fashion, of the origins of choral activity, which traces the current performance at the City Dionysia back to several "original" or archetypal choruses, whose actions provide the paradigms and etiologies for the enactment of this song on stage.⁹

This privileging of *choreia*, I further suggest, serves a double purpose, both thematic and "metatheatric." As Ruth Padel has remarked of the stasimon, "although [the ode's] subject is a forward-moving journey . . . it suggests also a dancing motion round the central figure and ends with a *denial* of past movement on the part of Helen, the centre figure of the play" (italics in the original).¹⁰ This coincidence of progression and denial or revision, verbally and visually reinforced through the repeated conjunction of linear and circular motions in the song, not only signals what the drama aims to do—to rehabilitate Helen with an "authentic" version that claims precedence over the seemingly older, more canonical account—but also bears on the abundance of musical novelties within the stasimon. The retrojection of New Musical features back onto the primal choruses described in the song has the effect of "archaizing" the innovations, making it seem that what is musically/chorally new more properly restores *choreia* to the form and structure that it—in the late-fifth-century imagination—originally possessed. Nothing less, then, than Euripides' taming of the New Musical beast.

1. THE FIRST STROPHE

Φοίνισσα Σιδωνιάς ὦ
ταχεῖα κόπα, ῥοθίοισι Νηρέως
εἰρεσία φίλα,
χοραγὲ τῶν καλλιχόρων
δελφίνων, ὅταν αὖ- 1455
ρᾶν πέλαγος ἀνήνεμον ἦι,
γλαυκὰ δὲ Πόντου θυγάτηρ

7. See Wilson (2000, 431), who notes how at this period *mousikê* "was widely challenged in practice and questioned in theory."

8. Padel 1974 is a notable exception, and my reading owes much to her discussion.

9. Csapo (2008) makes an argument that in some ways coincides with mine; he too sees Euripides' choral imagery as part of a "conservative enterprise" (263), a return to a more authentic and originary form of choral activity. However, his discussion is chiefly focused on the efflorescence of Dionysiac and mystery cult in fifth-century Athens and does not include mention of the third stasimon of *Helen*.

10. Padel 1974, 239.

Γαλάνεια τάδ' εἴπη·
 Κατὰ μὲν ἱστία πετάσας, αὖ-
 ρας λιπόντες εἰναλίας, 1460
 λάβετε δ' εἰλατίνας πλάτας,
 ὃ νᾶται νᾶται,
 πέμποντες εὐλιμένους
 Περσείων οἰκῶν Ἑλέναν ἐπ' Ἀκτάς.¹¹

1a. Dolphins and Nereids

The song begins by invoking the “Phoenician” ship that will carry Helen and Menelaus back to their native Sparta, deploying the “floating apostrophe” typical of the New Music (note too the anadiplosis at 1462, another hallmark of that style of composition), and twice using a circumlocution or synecdoche for the larger vessel as it evokes the “oar” and “oarage dear to the waves of Nereus.”¹² Immediately that ship becomes a participant in a chorus: the singers explicitly style it “chorus leader” as it appears surrounded by “beautifully dancing dolphins.” In a rich discussion of dolphins in Greek art and song, Eric Csapo observes the link between the animals (regularly imagined circling around ships and jumping out of the water in the leaping motion that the dancer also executes), Dionysos, and choral performances in cult and drama;¹³ as he documents, the depiction in art of dolphins with human legs and feet, or of men with dolphin tails, symbolizes the powers of the dance and the fact that “to Greek eyes, dolphins are dancers.”¹⁴ Further suggestive of the choral projection occurring at the outset of the song is the adjective used of the dolphins, καλλιχόρων; commenting on this term as it appears elsewhere in Euripides, Albert Henrichs views it as evocative not only of choral dancing in general, but of the tragic choruses for which Athens was famous—including the dancing of the chorus using the term on the stage.¹⁵ A second set of dancers, frequently associated with dolphins in Euripides and other literary and visual sources,¹⁶ may also figure in glancing fashion in the strophe’s opening lines; the mention of Nereus calls to mind not only his link to the Egyptian ruling house, but also the Nereids, the maritime nymphs repeatedly portrayed by Euripides and others as choruses of fifty dancing maidens, often engaged in circular and, as their number suggests, dithyrambic-style dances. As Csapo notes, this circular formation “came increasingly to be figured as the original form of all dance.”¹⁷

11. “O swift Phoenician ship from Sidon, oarage dear to the surging waves of Nereus, chorus leader of the fair-dancing dolphins, whenever the sea is without the breezes’ wind, and the gray-eyed daughter of Nereus, Galaneaia, speaks thus, ‘unfurl the sails, leaving the sea-breezes out of the reckoning, take up the oars of fir, o sailors, sailors, escorting Helen to the well-harbored shores of Perseus’ home.’” Except where noted, I follow the text as printed in Diggle 1994; all translations are mine, unless indicated otherwise.

12. Such circumlocution is another typically New Musical feature.

13. Csapo 2003.

14. Csapo 2003, 81.

15. Henrichs 1996, 51.

16. Csapo 2003.

17. Csapo 2008, 285.

Evident in the choral projection in the opening phrase are plentiful examples of the cross-generic appropriations and mixing with which current and later critics of the New Music charged its practitioners.¹⁸ As noted above, dolphins (and Nereids) in art and text typically group themselves and dance in circles—formations and motions that the Euripidean dancers, in the dramatic/choreographic mimesis frequently sought by the New Musicians, could have visibly emulated. While recent work challenges the claim in older scholarship for the rectangular formation of the tragic chorus, as opposed to the circular arrangement associated with the dithyrambic chorus,¹⁹ an additional feature of the choreuts-dolphin association would bring (circular) dithyrambos to mind. Familiar to the audience would be visual images from the sixth century on showing choruses of dolphin riders typically accompanied by an *aulêtês* who faces the costumed men or stands in their midst;²⁰ in the most recent view, these vases show actual choruses engaged in what may be proto-narrative performances of dithyramb, which would have preceded full-blown Attic drama.²¹ Viewed this way, the dancing dolphins stand first in the stasimon's sequence of backward looks to earlier forms of the activity being practiced in the here and now.

The *aulêtês* who accompanies the dolphin-riding choruses in visual images is relevant to a second facet of *choreia* and to links between animals, dancing choruses, and changing musical practices. Dolphins in Greek sources are notorious for responding to and playing on the flute. Pindar offers a sounding of the idea (frag. 140b.15–17 S-M), and Euripides' *Electra* calls dolphins "flute-loving" (435);²² a Siana cup dated to circa 560 even imagines a dolphin that has grown arms so as to play the flute in company with two other dolphins arranged as though dancing in a line.²³ The animal's affinity with the instrument helps explain the chorus' pleonastic focus on the ship's oar, twice described in the opening phrase (κώπα, εἰρεσία), and again at 1461. For an Athenian audience, rowing and flute music existed in close connection: on Athenian triremes, a boatswain would call out the stroke with the help of the *triêraulês*, whose piping set the rhythm for the rowers (see 1575–76, where the term ῥόθια, an acoustical expression already used at 1452, and evocative of the plashing of the oars,²⁴ also reappears); in popular belief, it was the music of the *triêraulês* that attracted the dolphins and instigated their dance.

If the *aulos* serves as the missing link between the thrice-mentioned oars and the capering dolphins, then the instrument's integral role in the verbal scenario would be self-evident to Euripides' audience as it witnessed the piper accompanying the choral song and dance. Like Timotheos, a leading practitioner of the New Musical style who supposedly had his musician imitate a storm, the hissing of a snake, and the other sonic phenomena in his

18. These critiques are detailed in Csapo 2004.

19. See Csapo 2008, 281–84; Foley 2003, 9–10.

20. For the images, see Green 1985; Csapo 2003, 86–90; Rothwell 2007, 58–60.

21. For detailed discussion, see Csapo and Miller 2007a.

22. See too *PMG* 939.8. For further discussion, see Csapo 2003 and Davies 1978, 74–75.

23. Rome, Villa Giulia 64608; see Brijder 2000, 601–2; Csapo 2003, 82.

24. See Diggle 1970 on Eur. *Phaethon* 80 for sound as a primary component of the term.

compositions,²⁵ Euripides fashions lines that could exploit the mimetic and dramatic properties of the instrument: the piper might play in a manner that recalled that of the *triêraulês* onboard ship and/or the “smack” of the oar on the waves even as he supplied the rhythm to which the *choreutai* danced. By virtue of this musical mimesis, the exchanges and confluences between the chorus' performance and the scene that its words conjure up become closer still: just as the dolphins leap to the beat generated by the rowers of the ship, so the chorus members sing and move to the music supplied by the flute, which also sets the rhythm by which these internal oars are plied.

When flute music is factored in, the chorus' (freshly pleonastic) insistence on the absence of wind (“windless of breezes”) in 1455 makes good sense:²⁶ this calm is the precondition not just for the rowers' flute-driven activity, but, as Pindar spells out, for the dolphin-dancers' gambols too (frag. 140b.13–17 S-M).²⁷ And where earlier the oar stroke generated the dolphins' dance, now the animals might supply the music for the rowers' rhythmic beat: according to Aristotle, dolphins possess αὐλοί, “blowholes” (*Hist. an.* 537a–b). What need for αὔραι (1455, 1459–60) when the animals' αὐλοί accompany the dance? If these repeated references to rowing aim to bring the pipes to mind, then this focus would be consistent with the place of the *aulêtês* as the “unsung hero” of the New Music,²⁸ and with the instrumentalist's singular prominence in the dithyrambic mode, to which I will return.

1b. Lines and Circles

The dolphins are not so much absent from the strophe's second part as reconfigured in an altered guise. In describing the sailors as escorts (πέμποντες, 1463), the singers suggest their affinity with the animals that, in early myth and art, regularly convey men lost at sea and/or the boats on which they sail back to shore.²⁹ The *Homeric Hymn to Dionysos* not only presents the animals in this role (52–53), a scene also depicted on the well-known vase by Exekias,³⁰ but in visual and poetic accounts of the myth, the creatures more literally double for sailors: these maritime escorts are none other than the crew whom the god—sometimes with the aid of music—has transformed into dolphin form.³¹ The Euripidean singers rework the equivalence between sailors and dolphin chorus through the strophe's design: as Padel observes, just as “the ship is surrounded by dancing dolphins . . . Helen is surrounded by the active sailors escorting her home.”³² Already here Helen appears at

25. Ath. 338a, 352a; Dio Chrys. 78.32. See Csapo 2004, 213–14, for further examples.

26. With the reference to Galaneia, this line echoes an earlier chorus' evocation of Helen's arrival at Troy, a “disposition of windless calm” (νηνέμου γαλάνης, Aesch. *Ag.* 739–40).

27. “in the manner of the dolphin of the sea, which the lovely melody of the pipes roused to motion in the expanse of the waveless sea.”

28. The expression belongs to Csapo 2004, 211, with more discussion of the instrument at 212–14 and 216–21.

29. See Rothwell 2007, 64–65, for examples.

30. Munich, Antikensammlung 2044, ABV 146.21, 686.

31. The canonical site is *Hymn Hom. Dion.* 52–53; for discussion of this and other evocations, see Csapo 2003, 90–91; Lonsdale 1993, 94–99; and Zimmermann 1992, 27–28.

32. Padel 1974, 237.

the midpoint of the “chorus,” a position that she will more emphatically claim in the antistrophe.

For all their identity of function, the two groups of escorts execute contrasting motions: where dolphins typically circle around ships, the ship’s crew is embarked on the linear trajectory that the singers trace from Egypt back to Greece (1463–64). Lines and circles, or processional and circular formations, are the two basic arrangements for choral dance: both figured in visual depictions of *choreia* from the Archaic period on,³³ and both were very much present in the Theater of Dionysos, in the “circular choruses” of the dithyramb already described and in the processional marching formation of the tragic chorus as it entered and exited the orchestra, where it assumed its characteristic tetragonal form.³⁴ If Armand D’Angour has correctly reconstructed the history of the dithyrambic chorus’ shape, then this distinction would have been a late-sixth-century innovation, part of the restructuring of events at the City Dionysia, where dithyrambic choruses would now for the first time be included in the sequence of competitions and would have exchanged their chiefly processional and linear formation for the circle with which they came to be associated.³⁵ Although the point cannot be proved, Euripides’ deployment of choruses describing lines and circles both here and in the later verses may signal his acknowledgment of this critical stage in the evolution of *choreia*, and glance toward what was thought to be the “history” of the activity practiced in Athens. Indeed, if the dramatic chorus’ movements were in some way evocative of these (dithyrambic) circles and (tragic) lines, the performance would visibly hark back to an earlier point in the teleology of the choral medium, reuniting two structures subsequently set apart.³⁶

In this light, the stasimon’s reference to dolphins becomes particularly suggestive, proof, perhaps, of Euripides’ intervention in an ongoing debate. Dolphins, it turns out, are central both to the origins of the dithyramb and to the vexed question of who gave the dithyrambic chorus its shape. While some make the sixth-century composer Lasos of Hermione the innovator of the circular formation, other sources assign the discovery to Arion, credited with the invention of the dithyramb more broadly.³⁷ As Csapo and others argue, the story of Arion’s miraculous rescue at sea by the dolphin(s) supplies the etiology for the new mode of composition by imagining, in some accounts at least, the maritime rescuers as the original dithyrambic chorus.³⁸ The tension between linear processional and circular choruses, and between the two scenarios concerning the originator of the second of the designs, is visible in the sources, and most particularly in the report that (in Plutarch’s account)

33. The fullest discussion and documentation remains that of Crowhurst 1963.

34. As noted earlier, this is not to assume that the chorus would then dance in rectangular formation; the rectangular shape does, however, seem particularly associated with choral entrances and the parodos; for this, see Foley 2003, 9; Csapo 2008, 281.

35. D’Angour 1997, 348. I return to the question of the dithyramb’s shape below.

36. As many discussions observe (see, among others, Lonsdale 1993, 92; Csapo and Miller 2007a, 11, 18; Hedreen 2007, 185), the dithyramb could incorporate both the procession by which Dionysos was escorted into the city and the subsequent dance around the altar.

37. See D’Angour 1997, 346–50, for the various sources.

38. Csapo 2003, 90–92; Csapo and Miller 2007a, 10–11; Lonsdale 1993, 94.

Periander's brother gave of Arion's arrival at Tainaron following his ordeal at sea: while dancing with his fellow Corinthians on the beach, this eyewitness to the event saw not just a single dolphin, but a large group "moving in a circle," some leading "and still others behind" (*Mor.* 160e). The latter-day attribution to Arion of an eponymous father Kykleus recorded in the *Suda* seems an emphatic and retrospective attempt to resolve controversy surrounding the "first finder" of the circular formation. Euripides' solution is a more syncretic one, which mingles linear and circular formations in a single frame.

2. THE FIRST ANTISTROPHE

ἧ που κόρας ἄν ποταμοῦ	
παρ' οἶδμα Λευκιπίδας ἧ πρὸ ναοῦ	1466
Παλλάδος ἄν λάβοι	
χρόνῳι ξυνελθοῦσα χοροῖς	
ἧ κόμοις Ὑακίν-	
θου νύχιον ἐς εὐφροσύναν,	1470
δὼν ἐξαμιλλασάμενος	
τροχὸν ἀτέρμονα δίσκου	
ἔκανε Φοῖβος, †τᾶ† Λακαί-	
ναι γὰρ βούθυτον ἀμέραν	
ὁ Διὸς εἶπε σέβειν γόνους	1475
μόσχον θ' ἄν †λίποιτ' οἴκοις†	
<X-X-~>	
ἄς οὐπω πεῦκαι πρὸ γάμων ἔλαμψαν. ³⁹	

2a. Spartan *Choreia*

The opening of the antistrophe succinctly declares the swiftness of the journey that the strophe invited the vessel and sailors to perform: Helen is in Sparta, where the singers envisage her as participant at a series of festivals (1465–70). The attention to *choreia* is unmistakable here as Euripides taps into what was a commonplace since Archaic times: the intimate link between Sparta and choral dancing in cult, viewed as the "most primitive form of dance."⁴⁰ Already Homer and Simonides describe Sparta as εὐρύχορος (*Od.* 13.414, 15.1, Simon. *Ep.* 7 = *Anth. Pal.* 7.301) and Ion of Samos styles it καλλιχορος (frag. 1.4 D);⁴¹ as a well-known saying of Pratinas (*PMG* frag. 709 = *Ath.* 633a) declares in a phrase that links poetry/song and dance, "the Spartan, that cicada, ready for a *choros*."⁴² In evoking Spartan choral activity, Euripides not only presents a fresh and more "historical" set of choruses to join the archetypal dolphins and Nereids, but again raises issues of tradition and innovation. As

39. "She will, I think, find the daughters of Leukippos alongside the swell of the river or before the temple of Pallas, as she at long last joins with the choral dances or the revels for Hyakinthos for nocturnal delight, whom Phoebus, having challenged him with the unending wheel of the discus, killed and the son of Zeus ordered the land of Sparta to revere him with a day of sacrifice. And the calf that she left at home . . . for whom no piney wedding torches have blazed yet."

40. Csapo 2008, 280. For the ancient sources cited here, see Constantinidou 1998, 15.

41. See Page 1975, 508–9.

42. Cf. Ar. *Lys.* 1305–6: "Sparta that delights in *choroi* in honor of the gods."

the ancient descriptions of Spartan *mousikê* and more specifically *choreia* regularly observe, the Spartans were notorious for their adherence to time-honored practices. In the comment preceding Athenaeus' citation of Pratinas' saying, the speaker remarks, "of all the Greeks, the Spartans have most faithfully preserved the art of music. . . . Even to this day they carefully guard the ancient songs, and are very well taught in them and exact in holding to them" (632f). A second observation corroborates this first: "Also it was customary to practice good music and not to violate the ancient rules of the art" (τοὺς ἀρχαίους τῆς μουσικῆς νόμους, 633b).⁴³ This traditionalism encompasses choral dancing too, with particular relevance to the performances at the ritual event that the antistrophe singles out. According to Polycrates (*FrGH* 4.480 = Ath. 139f), dancers at the Hyakinthia—a festival that assigned a prominent role to choruses of boys, youths, and maidens—performed in the traditional style (κίνησιν ἀρχαϊκὴν) to the music of the pipes. A further detail added by the historian is suggestive for the choral projection going on here: the boys' dances occurred in a theater, a venue whose name he does not record.⁴⁴

With his singers' self-equation with the Hyakinthia choruses, the dramatist glances toward another flashpoint of debate in the compositional-choral scene of late-fifth-century Athens: innovations in choral dancing. In a second fragment of Pratinas (*PMG* frag. 708 = Ath. 14.617b–f), the chorus includes in their litany of complaints concerning the current state of *choreia* a protest against the new-style dance movements: "What are these dance steps (χορεύματα)?" Objecting to the *aulos*' new primacy in *choreia*, they declare that it spoils not just the verbal element but also the ῥυθμός, a term that refers principally to the movements of the body.⁴⁵ Rejecting these innovations, Pratinas' satyr chorus ends by declaring its adherence to the choreography traditionally associated with Dionysiac/dithyrambic dancing: "here you will have the proper tossing of hand and foot, ivy-tressed lord of the triumphant dithyramb; hear now the Dorian dance song that is mine."⁴⁶ Scholars puzzle over the use of the adjective "Dorian" in this context, since the Spartan tradition of dancing in choruses for Dionysos (conspicuously absent from Lakonian iconography) seems to have been comparatively weak.⁴⁷ But the term may carry a more "ideological" and musicological than religious charge: by allying themselves with Dorian *mousikê*, the satyrs show themselves not so much promoters of an old-style Dionysiac worship as unreconstructed musical and choreographic traditionalists.

Nor is this the only evidence that, in the view of its critics, dance had been corrupted by innovations common to the dithyramb and to the New Musical style, and that Euripides was numbered among the most egregious offenders.

43. In the closing choral lyrics in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, which seem to preserve an actual Spartan hymn, the dramatist seeks to create something that, in terms of its music, had an "agreeably quaint and old-fashioned sound" and even an authentically Spartan rhythm (Henderson 1987, ad 1296–1321). For the chorus, see too Calame 2004, 169–72.

44. For detailed discussion of this and the other extant sources, see Pettersson 1992, 48–56.

45. Here I follow the interpretation of Constantinidou 1998, 27–28.

46. This endorsement of traditional modes of dancing would form a piece with Pratinas' celebration of specifically Spartan *choreia* in *PMG* frag. 709.

47. Parker 1988 gives the evidence. For discussion, see Csapo 2004, 218, 233–34, 243.

In the parody of Euripidean lyrics in Aristophanes' *Frogs*, Aeschylus' closing gibe at 1328–29, which introduces the name of the notorious prostitute Cyrene for the “star” featured in the equivalent phrase at *Hypsipyle* frag. 765b Kannicht, takes issue both with the polymetrisms that Euripides has introduced into his lyrics and with the motions performed by the dancer(s) on the stage.⁴⁸ In Aeschylus' attack, these dance figures, regularly called *schēmata*, are likened to the multiple sexual positions or *schēmata* that the courtesan would practice (and which, the ribbing implies, have replaced the planetary revolutions to which the *Hypsipyle* phrase probably refers). Even as Aeschylus describes these lascivious movements-cum-techniques, the scantily clad Muse now on stage would perform a parodic dance, suggestive at once of the prostitute's contortions and of the motions that the meters of Euripides' lyrics obliged singers to perform. In a second Aristophanic spoof, this one aimed squarely at the New Musical dithyrambs, dance is again at issue. When the poet Kinesias (a real-world composer of dithyrambs) makes his entrance in the *Birds*, Peisetairos asks, “why have you come here circling in circles with crooked foot?” (1379). The reference is at once to the unsteady and irregular dancing steps with which Kinesias has accompanied his entrance song, to the cyclic dithyrambic choruses performing their circular motions around the altar in the orchestra, and to the limping, irregular metrical foot just produced in Kinesias' lines.⁴⁹ Against these critics, real and fictionalized, of dithyrambic/New Musical style dance, the chorus of the *Helen* mounts a spirited response: projecting its innovatory kinetics onto the tradition-bound Spartan choruses, it annuls the charges of novelty and corruption.

In the antistrophe's opening phrase, Helen, herself the site of Euripides' revisionary account, is made integral to these traditional choruses, here retrojected back into the originary, mythical time of the Leukippides. As Padel notes, lines 1465–70 “may represent a traditional Spartan picture which places Helen at the centre of the dance,” attributing to her the role of *chorêgos* that she plays in sources both contemporary and later.⁵⁰ The closing song at Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* 1305–15 (offering audiences a taste of traditional Spartan choral music and dance, albeit with an Athenocentric and Dionysiac veneer)⁵¹ describes how young girls dance beside the Eurotas with Helen, preeminent in divinity and beauty, as their chorus leader (“and they are led by Leda's daughter, the pure and conspicuous *choragos* of their dance,” 1314–15). Theocritus' *Epithalamium for Helen* revisits much the same scene: here the singing, dancing chorus introduced in the opening lines performs a bridal hymn in which the singers describe how they, also on the banks of the Eurotas, participate in *dromoi*, grouped in bands of “four times sixty maidens . . . of whom, when matched with Helen, not one is faultless” (18.22–25). Already privileged for her preeminent speed in the manner of Hagesichora, the *chorêgos* of the maiden chorus in Alkman's first *Partheneion* likened to a horse that outruns the rest of the herd (45–49), Helen is further singled out in the subsequent

48. Here I follow the suggestive discussion in Borthwick 1994.

49. Dunbar 1995, ad loc.

50. Padel 1974, 237.

51. So Constantinidou 1998, 18–20.

lines: her primacy of place depends on her unmatched ability in spinning and weaving,⁵² and the fact that she can celebrate Artemis and Athena on the lyre better than all the rest (32–37), all attributes fully consonant with the position of a chorus leader vis-à-vis her *choreutai*. Again the chorus in the Theater of Dionysos, following the lead of its *chorêgos*, maps its activity onto that of these other choruses, both mythical and recurrent in the reenactments that the historical ritual involves.

2b. More Lines and Circles

Visible in the antistrophe is the conjunction of circularity and linearity already featured in the strophe. Existing commentaries have little to say of the co-presence of *choroi* and *kômoi* in lines 1468–69, noting only that although *kômoi* normally refer to the less formalized and more uproarious revelry associated with the singing, dancing groups, here the expression must describe ritual choruses, indistinguishable from the *choroi* mentioned in the same breath. But Euripides' use of these seeming synonyms may be more than just fresh New Musical pleonasm. Although there is evidence that by the fourth century at least, *kômos* could describe a "circular chorus,"⁵³ Robert Parker notes that the expression always implies movement,⁵⁴ typically of a processional kind, and such "processional hymns" might well have occurred during the *pompê* at the Hyakinthia, when participants would process to the sanctuary of Apollo at Amyklai, where Hyakinthos was buried.⁵⁵ If the *kômoi* refer to choruses arranged in linear rows for their processional departure, then the *choroi* would describe the performances of circular choruses when the *pompê* reached the cult site.⁵⁶

These two types of motion are realized anew in the scenes next presented by the singers. As commentators note, Euripides is our first source for the accidental death of Hyakinthos, who was struck by the discus that Apollo threw while participating in a competition. While the tragic death of the youth is consonant with the negative effects of the contests cited in the play's first half, here the detail, and more particularly the periphrasis chosen to describe the discus, "endless wheel" (1472),⁵⁷ promotes the collapse between the chorus now dancing at Athens and the events in its song. Over and above the fact that the dramatic chorus is also a participant in an *agôn*, this one underway in the Theater of Dionysos,⁵⁸ the dancers could plausibly have offered a mimetic

52. Strikingly, the notion of "weaving" a chorus appears frequently in the ancient sources (see Calame 1997, 34 n. 63, 41). Also intriguing is the obscure verb chosen by Theocritus at 32 (*πανίσσεται*), which describes "winding thread off a reel for the wool"; for the image of the chorus leader as the one who "winds off" the dancers around him see Pind. *Ol.* 6.92, which designates the chorus leader the *skutalê* of the Muses. Mullen (1982, 36) views this as a metaphor "for the *exarchôn* standing in the midst of a band of dancers that 'winds about' him."

53. See Csapo and Miller 2007a, 12, for the relevant sources.

54. Parker 2005, 318 n. 101.

55. Calame (1997, 176) discusses two decrees from the second century C.E. from Amyklai describing the selection of a woman, preeminent in various regards, as procession leader.

56. See Calame 1997, 177, for the archaeological evidence that supports this.

57. Here I follow the text as printed in Allan 2008 with the conjecture proposed by Willink recorded in the apparatus; Diggle (1994) dagers line 1472.

58. Downing 1990 treats the metatheatrical implications of the drama's many allusions to competitions.

representation of the discus spinning in flight. The term τροχός already serves as analogue for choral movements in the simile that Homer uses of the dancers whom Hephaestus fashions on the (circular) shield of Achilles, where the chorus of youths and maidens execute movements like that of the potter's τροχός as he "makes trial of it, to see if it might run" (*Il.* 18.559–601). Where Homer's simile links the gyrating wheel with the human circle made by the dancers, both of which turn in place, Euripides' rounded discus describes a linear course through the air. Like the strophe, the antistrophe effects the conflation of forward motion with the atemporal circle, a shape without beginning or end (ἀτέρμωνα).

As the chorus members' movements recreated these figures, the *aulos*-player could contribute to this (New Musical) mimesis between words, actions, and sense impressions. Conjuring up the sound and motion of the discus turning through the air, he might anticipate Aristotle's complaint against "vulgar" pipers who whirl about in imitation of this very object (*Poet.* 1461b30). As Csapo carefully documents, pipe players were among the chief beneficiaries of the "general trend towards dramatic mimesis in choral and musical performance" that was promoted by the New Music; in Pausanias' report (9.12.5–6), Pronomos "delighted his audience somewhat excessively both with his facial expressions and the movements of his entire body."⁵⁹

While the final portion of the antistrophe is lacunose, the singers clearly end by turning their attention to the unwed Hermione. It is tempting to conjecture a reference to fresh processional activity to counterbalance the circular wheel; the bride's mother—Helen here—would carry torches in the wedding *pompê*, which could include choruses that followed the chariot of the newlyweds.⁶⁰ In one source, at least, these processional choruses exhibit a further combination of lines and circles: on the second ring forged by Hephaestus on Achilles' shield, an object that seems to constitute a touchstone for Euripides throughout the third stasimon, brides are led through the city in a torch-lit wedding procession, accompanied by musicians who play upon lyres and *auloi*, supplying music for youths described as "spinning about" (*Il.* 18.492–95).

3. THE SECOND STROPHE

δι' αἰθέρος εἴθε ποτανοὶ	
γενοίμεθ' ὅπαι Λιβύας	
οἰωνοὶ στολάδες	1480
δμβρον χεიმέριον λιποῦ-	
σαι νίσονται πρεσβυτάτου	
σύριγγι πειθόμεναι	
ποιμένος, ἄβροχά θ' ὅς	
πεδία καρποφόρα τε γᾶς	1485
ἐπιπετόμενος ἰαχεῖ.	
ὦ πταναὶ δολιχαύχενες,	
σύννομοι νεφέων δρόμωι,	

59. Cited by Csapo (2004, 213), with other examples.

60. See Oakley and Sinos 1993, 23–28.

βᾶτε Πλειάδας ὑπὸ μέσας
 Ὠρίωνα τ' ἐννύχιον, 1490
 καρύξαιτ' ἀγγελίαν
 Εὐρώταν ἐφεζόμεναι,
 Μενέλεως ὅτι Δαρδάνου
 πόλιν ἐλὼν δόμον ἤξει.⁶¹

3b. Aerial Phenomena and the Piper's Primacy in the New Music

After their account of the ritual life of Sparta, the singers turn their attention back to the natural world and its inhabitants. Where the opening verses featured the sea, the chorus now looks up to the sky. The appeal to birds in flight, and the association between birds and chorus members, is vintage Euripides, also deployed in *Hippolytus*, *Andromache*, and *Ion*. Indeed, so much was the trope associated with the dramatist that "Aeschylus" sees fit to parody it in the *Frogs*, where the opening of his mock Euripidean lyrics addresses the halcyons (1309).⁶² The motif supplied such fertile ground for parody not only because it was so recognizable, but because it served as evidence for what Aristophanes' older dramatist regards as Euripides' regrettable debt to dithyrambic innovations. In the view of the Aeschylus of the *Frogs*, and of others out of sympathy with the musical avant-garde, contemporary composers of dithyramps were obsessed with avian and aerial phenomena. This (hostile) contemporary characterization explains Aristophanes' choice of Kinesias for one of the visitors to Cloudcuckooland in his *Birds*; this author of New Musical dithyramps (the self-styled "trainer of cyclic choruses," κυκλιοδιδάσκαλον, 1403) is an obvious applicant for the wings so native to his mode of composition, and he frames his appeal in lines that, replete with bird and sky references, are riffs on the topoi and style of his works. So too at *Clouds* 333–38, Aristophanes dubs dithyrambic poets "quacks with their heads in the clouds," and, mocking their fondness for alluding to the sun, moon, stars, and other celestial phenomena, includes birds in the lines Strepsiades cites in his derisive account of these individuals' poetry (337, 339). In both the *Clouds* and *Birds*, the composers' predilection for the sky and its residents goes together with the whirling motions that were featured in their lines and mimetically enacted on stage; as earlier noted, Kinesias enters in circular fashion, while the aerial elements Strepsiades describes in citing those whom he styles "turners of songs [ἁισματοκόμπτας] of the circular choruses" (333) also wheel about (στρεπταίγλαν, 335).⁶³

61. "If only we could fly through the air to where the birds in array from Libya go, leaving the wintery rain behind, obedient to the panpipes of the eldest, their shepherd, who calls out as he flies over the rainless and fruit-bearing plains of the earth. O long-necked birds, partners of the clouds in their racing, go beneath the Pleiades in midcourse and Orion in the night. Announce the tidings as you come to land by the Eurotas that Menelaus will come home having taken the city of Troy." See Padel 1974 for Euripides' odes of flight.

62. Borthwick (1994, 29) assigns the line to an escapist monody sung by the protagonist of *Hypsipyle*, a play whose lyrics seem particularly representative of Euripides' engagement with the New Music and dithyrambic mode.

63. The translations from Aristophanes' *Birds* and *Clouds* are those of Sommerstein 1987 and 1982. See the complaint of the author of the anonymous *On Tragedy* who, drawing on a source that objects to New Musical elements in Euripides and Agathon, critiques the dances accompanying the dramatists' lyrics: the

If flying birds reflect current fashions among musical innovators, the choice of cranes, answering to the dancing dolphins of the first strophe, indicates the stasimon's sustained focus on more archetypal forms of "dance-song." From Archaic times on, the sources highlight two properties of cranes: the sounds they make and the mode in which they fly. At line 1483, the chorus imagines the birds flying "obedient to the *syrinx* of the elder." It requires no effort to map this onto the dancers currently performing in obedience to the musical direction of the *aulêtês*, who could sound notes evocative of the *syrinx*.⁶⁴ This imitation of one instrument by another belongs among the features of the New Music singled out for critique in Plato's *Laws* (700d), while the prominent role accorded the piper in lines 1482–84 coheres with the "star status" that, as I noted, the musician claims in dithyrambs and the New Music. The detail that the *syrinx*-equipped crane, or more properly shepherd (a term with regal as well as pastoral connotations), is superior in age to the rest also grants the bird the preeminence more usually reserved for chorus leaders.

More than just shining the spotlight on the accompanist, the lines' conflation of musician and crane-leader integrates the piper into the chorus' narrative, making him an actor and focal point in the scene visualized here. It is not inconceivable that, in a scenario resembling that which Andrew Barker imagines for the nightingale in Aristophanes' *Birds*,⁶⁵ the *aulêtês* took the part of the lead bird, using body and pipes visibly to enact what the words describe, and so effecting a "metatheatrical" inclusion of the piper in the performance."⁶⁶ Responding to the shrill notes of the pipe-playing chorus leader—avian and human—the birds/chorus' own clarion call sounds out at line 1486 (ἰαχεῖ). The compound adjective δολιχαύχενες one line later maintains the focus on acoustics (cf. Kinesias' οἰωνῶν ταναοδείρων at Ar. Av. 1393): these long necks accommodate the cranes' distinctive elongated wind-pipes, "with which they produce piercing, sonorous, trombone-like sounds."⁶⁷ *Syrinx* and bird cry blend in the singers' words, mirroring the mixing of the flute and choral voice on the stage.

The central role accorded to the flute player here was, as the discussion of the first strophe suggested, nothing if not controversial. In the fragment of Pratinas cited earlier (*PMG* frag. 708), assigned by some to a dithyrambic composition, and by others to a satyr play, and whose date is also a topic of debate,⁶⁸ the singers complain of the instrumentalist's new primacy and the consequent occlusion of the verbal element in *choreia*: "Song was made queen by the Pierian: so let the pipe dance in second place: he is servant." In a recent discussion, Guy Hedreen persuasively argues that the fragment

"excessive eddying (ἐνδινεύεσθαι) is unsuited to tragedy and unworthy of its dignity" (Apollonophanes *PCG* frag. 1–2; *On Tragedy* 6).

64. See the comment of Allan 2008, ad loc. "if the *aulos* player in the theatre ever attempted to imitate other instruments mentioned in a play, the *syrinx* will have been . . . among the easiest."

65. Barker 2004, esp. 202.

66. Csapo 2004, 214. Note too his remark at 213: "Dramatization [in the dithyramb] offered musicians an opportunity to display their virtuosity conspicuously, standing, virtually as actors, at the focal point of the narrative as well as the performance."

67. Muellner 1990, 74.

68. For a good summary of that debate, see Hedreen 2007, 183–84. For earlier treatments, see, among others, Seaford 1977–78; Zimmermann 1992, 124–26; Napolitano 2000.

belongs to the early fifth century, and that Pratinas is responding to changes introduced by Lasos, “said to have altered the rhythms of the dithyrambic tempo, elaborated the range of notes on the *aulos*, and attempted to imitate the polyphony of the *aulos* on the kithara.”⁶⁹ Since Lasos was regarded as the predecessor to such practitioners of the New Music as Melanippides, Phrynis, and Timotheos, Euripides’ promotion of the pipes again declares his adherence to the practices of Lasos and more recent innovators of his kind.

But here the dramatist has his cake and eats it too. Implicit in the choice of *syrinx* is its association with the primitive, agrarian sphere, a rusticity reinforced by the equation of the crane-musician with a “shepherd,” typically the denizen of a precultural domain.⁷⁰ The *syrinx*’s properties are already on display in one of the term’s two appearances in Homer, this, once again, on Achilles’ shield, where herdsmen play the pipes (*Il.* 18.525–26). While the instrument has a place in what seems a cluster of interrelated motifs characterizing Euripides’ choral songs featuring both choral projection and dithyramb-inspired New Musical elements,⁷¹ the glance back to the canonical Homeric source would reinforce the archaizing, traditionalist patina that the dramatist gives his musician, “naturalizing” and retrojecting the novelty into the epic realm.

3b. Dancing Cranes

Integral to this revision of the piper’s recent primacy and the reassignment of contemporary developments to the ur-history of *choreia* is the avian identity of the piper’s “flock”—the cranes that constitute a chorus no less “originary” than the dolphins of the start. In this fresh instance of choral projection, the affinity between the *choreutai* and the flock of birds would be a notion familiar to the audience: just as some sixth- and fifth-century vases portrayed (perhaps dithyrambic) choruses of dolphin-men, so others present choral dancers dressed as birds, also accompanied by an *aulos* player.⁷² Although none of these images features cranes, verbal sources amply support the crane-choreuts kinship, an association that culminates in Oppian, who styles a flock of cranes in flight a χορός (*Hal.* 1.620–22). Like members of a chorus who form a collectivity, united by family bonds or other shared associations, and forming what a fragment of Pindar, in a possible reference to theriomorphic Spartan maiden choruses,⁷³ calls Λάκαινα παρθένων ἀγέλα (frag. 112 S-M), so cranes from Homer on are social birds that flock together; in Aristotle’s characterization, they are “gregarious,” ἀγελαῖοι (*Pol.* 1253a3). While such “aggregation” is merely implicit in the Euripidean flock flying and declaring its message in unison to the Spartans (viz. the audience in the theater), more evident is the song’s attention to the formation in which the birds fly, στολάδες, or per-

69. Hedreen 2007, 184.

70. The parodos of Euripides’ *Phaethon*, where an instance of choral projection is similarly surrounded by references to natural and archetypal forms of musical activity, includes the panpipes (71–72). See Csapo 2008, 275–76, for the passage.

71. See, again, the parodos of *Phaethon* (frag. 773, lines 63–86 Kannicht).

72. For these, see Green 1985; Rothwell 2007, 52–54, with the further bibliography cited there.

73. As suggested in Henderson 1987, ad *Lys.* 1307–8.

haps, better, *στιχάδες*, “in close array, in a row/ranks.”⁷⁴ This detail not only corresponds to other descriptions of cranes in their migratory flight—as the ancient sources observed, their line might take triangular form, like a lambda or delta,⁷⁵ with the leader of the group at the apex of the triangle—but also resembles one among the several choral formations depicted in the Archaic and Classical visual repertoire. In addition to representations of processional and circular choruses, a series of painted images show a V-formation, in which chorus members in approximately equal halves face toward each other in a line.⁷⁶ Whether this is an artistic convention designed to convey circularity rather than an actual choral formation, the mere existence of the representations would have familiarized viewers with the structure.

These visual accounts also direct us back to the controversies surrounding choral innovations in late-sixth- and fifth-century Athens, and to the figure of Lasos within those polemics. In Euripides' evocation of the birds obedient to the *syrix*, it is impossible precisely to pinpoint the piper's location vis-à-vis his “flock”; we can imagine the instrumentalist, as artistic representations of choruses frequently do, leading the other birds/chorus members, or, in the arrangement that other images describe, facing the first dancer.⁷⁷ Choruses arrayed in V-formation in visual accounts describe another structure: here the musician, whether a lyre player or piper appears, as on a Protoattic hydria in the Louvre showing a mixed chorus in V-formation,⁷⁸ in the middle of the two converging lines. A chorus grouped about a central flute player was, I suggested, the deployment imagined in the opening strophe: by inviting his audience to understand the oar-plied ship as the source of the flute music to which the dolphins/*choreutai* danced, Euripides situated—whether merely in the song's words, or in the actual formation on stage—the musician at the midpoint of the circle of the maritime and real-world dramatic choruses.

That this choice of location was contested is apparent from sources from the early fifth century on. In the opening lines of his second *Dithyramb* (frag. 70b S-M),⁷⁹ Pindar describes how the dithyrambic chorus, earlier “stretched out like a line,” subsequently assumed its circular form, a novelty introduced by Lasos and an innovation critiqued by Pratinas in the same fragment that objects to innovations in dancing and the primacy of the pipes; when the satyr chorus urges that “the *aulos* dance behind,” it is calling not just for a devaluation of the instrument, but for a return to an older choral structure, with the musician bringing up the rear. In D'Angour's account, the piper's new prominence is integral to the change from line to circle; so as to improve group coordination and vocal clarity, the *aulêtês* would have been moved to the center of the dancers arranged in a circle around him; this novel structure would enhance the musician's visibility and audibility to dancers and

74. Diggle 1994 prints the conjecture *στιχάδες* in place of the MS reading that I, with Allan 2008, use here. The choice makes little difference to my interpretation, although *στιχάδες* suggests a more military-style, rank-and-file formation that corresponds to a rectangular structure and also further recalls *Il.* 18.602.

75. This prompts Philostratus *Her.* 11.4 to ascribe to cranes the invention of the alphabet.

76. Crowhurst 1963, 293–98.

77. Crowhurst 1963, 229–30.

78. Paris, Musée du Louvre, CA 2985, CVA 18, 20–21.

79. For detailed discussion of the lines, see D'Angour 1997, whose argument I summarize.

audience alike and “focus attention on his musical leadership and instrumental prowess,”⁸⁰ precisely as Euripides’ strophes do.

If the dramatist calls our attention to the instrumental component of *choreia* here, his concern with dance also motivates the choice of cranes. Whether or not the Greeks had witnessed something like the remarkable group dance that Demoiselle cranes pausing in their migratory flights perform,⁸¹ in the suggestive argument of Leonard Muellner the crane/dancer kinship underlies a sequence of similes in *Iliad* 3;⁸² the book begins by likening the mustered Trojan army to migrating cranes (2–6), and later compares Paris to an individual who has just left not the *χῶρος* of battle (315, 344) but the *χορός* that is the dancing space or chorus of dancers (393). Latent in this, Muellner suggests, is Homer’s familiarity with the so-called *geranos* or crane dance, identified by the scholia as the dance performed by the chorus of youths and maidens on the penultimate ring on the shield of Achilles (*Il.* 18.590–606). According to ancient commentators, this *geranos* was the dance that Theseus first devised (or, in the scholiast’s terms, “wove”) with a chorus made up of the seven maidens and seven youths whom he rescued from the Labyrinth.⁸³ Where the scholia imagine the performance occurring immediately at the exit of the maze, with Daedalus as chorus-instructor, Callimachus, our earliest sure source for the *geranos* dance, locates it, with Plutarch and Pollux after him, on Delos instead;⁸⁴ there Theseus’ *geranos* becomes the mythological model for the choral dance still performed in imperial times as part of the ritual celebration of the Aphrodisia, where dancers circled around the goddess’ horned altar.

While debate surrounds the scholia’s identification of the Iliadic dancers with the Cretan/Delian performers, most scholars grant some kind of parallel between the motions of choruses performing the dance and those of the birds in flight. Marcel Detienne associates the dance with the migration routes of the crane, which encircle the globe,⁸⁵ while Louis Séchan offers two reasons why the *geranos* might have been so designated: “either because the dancers advanced with head high and necks extended, waving their linked arms as if they were wings; or rather, more probably, because the most characteristic arrangement of the line suggested the idea of the triangular flight of a flock of cranes.”⁸⁶ Some Greek authors, and others after them, view the dance figures as evocations of the maze from which the rescued band emerged. In Plutarch’s account, the *geranos* presents a *mimēma* of the twists and turns of the Labyrinth, with the dancers moving in a syncopated rhythm that features alternating, spiral-like motions (*παράλλᾳξαις καὶ ἀνελίξαις*, *Thes.* 21).

80. D’Angour 1997, 342–43.

81. Pliny (*HN* 10.30.59) records the phenomenon. See too Muellner 1990, 92, and this description from the website of the International Crane Foundation: “In Demoiselle Cranes, the female initiates the display and utters one call for each male call. All cranes engage in dancing, which includes various behaviors such as bowing, jumping, running, stick or grass tossing, and wing flapping.”

82. Muellner 1990.

83. Schol. AB Hom. *Il.* 18.590.

84. *Hymn* 4.310–13; Plut. *Thes.* 21; Poll. 4.101.

85. Detienne 1989, 22–23.

86. Séchan 1930, 120.

For my purposes, what matters is not so much how the *geranos* got its name as what ancient sources observe about its choreography. Both textual and visual accounts offer two rather different descriptions (sometimes in a single passage), one featuring a circle, the other a processional type of dance. The Delian *geranos*, where the dancers circle about the altar, clearly takes the former shape: terms for “center” and “circle” occur frequently in the reconstructions of Callimachus, Plutarch, and Pollux.⁸⁷ But linear formations are prominent in the sources too: Pollux says that the chorus members formed a line “each behind the other” (ἐκαστος ὕφ’ ἐκάστωι κατὰ στοῖχον) with a *chorêgos* at the end of each (4.101); according to Hesychius’ *Lexicon*, the title γερανούλκος, literally “the one who pulls the crane,” was given to the two chorus leaders, which suggests the division of the *choreutai* into two lines, perhaps in the shape of a lambda with a leader at the head of each.⁸⁸ Visual images present a similarly bifurcated view: while many artists portray a circular chorus,⁸⁹ the much-studied François Vase shows a line of seven youths and seven girls in alternation, holding each other by the hand as they advance from the boat, with a lyre-playing Theseus at their head.⁹⁰ A cup in Munich also suggests a processional or linear type formation: here the chorus is arranged in an exact V.⁹¹

Explaining this heterogeneity, Claude Calame points us back to the Homeric account of the dance on the shield of Achilles where the dancers run toward each other ἐπὶ στίχας (*Il.* 18.602), “in lines” or “ranks,” a description that suggests “two ‘procession-type’ semi-choruses heading towards each other.”⁹² Alternating with this formation are the circles that the youths and maidens, spinning like the potter’s wheel, execute. If the crane dance, like the dance on Achilles’ shield with which ancient readers paired it, features this interchange between circular and square patterns, then the motions of the Euripidean dancers now on stage could do the same as the performers reenacted the movements of yet another originary chorus, a Delian and/or Cretan one, its canonical or foundational status further enhanced by its Homeric and even Hephaestean ancestry.⁹³

3b. Astral Imagery

Line 1488 adds a fresh group of figures to the dance, partnering the cranes in flight with the “racing of the clouds.” With this short phrase, Euripides looks not just to the several facets of *choreia*, its music, song, and dance, but also to the dithyramb and to the Spartan ritual practices featured in the first antistrophe. While William Allan would assign a generalizing sense to σύννομοι,

87. As noted by Calame 1997, 54.

88. Hesychius, s.v. γερανούλκος. See too Diels 1890, 91; Latte 1913, 68.

89. Calame (1997, 54) discusses some of these, with bibliography.

90. Florence, Museo Archeologico Etrusco 4209, *ABV* 76.1, 682.

91. Munich, Antikensammlungen J333, *ABV* 163.2, 160.2. See the discussion by Crowhurst (1963, 297–98), who interprets this as a representation of circular movement.

92. Crowhurst 1963, 294.

93. See the remarks in Calame 2009, esp. 131–33, on references to the *geranos* and, more broadly, linear and circular elements in Bacchyl. 17, classified by Calame as a dithyramb.

“partners with,”⁹⁴ the expression can also mean “sharer of νόμοι,” where νόμοι signify nomes, “musical pieces”; σύννομος has just this meaning when applied to another winged singer, the nightingale at Aristophanes *Birds* 209.⁹⁵ If, as the mockery of Strepsiades quoted earlier suggests, aerial phenomena, and clouds especially, were hallmarks of the “nephelous” compositional style and verbiage of the dithyrambs now in vogue (cf. Ar. Av. 1384–85, where the clouds are the very source of Kinesias’ songs), then the choral expression pairs the cranes with the elements that, for the jokes in the *Clouds* and *Birds* to work, must have been a well-known feature of these musical extravagances.

The term δρόμος at the line’s end is no less rich in associations, linking this avian flock with the Spartan choruses who, in the previous verses, stood in mimetic relationship to the dancers on the stage. Ritualized races figure in the passage from Theocritus’ *Epithalamium* cited above, where the maiden singers describe the races (δρόμος, 22) they performed in their bands of sixty by the banks of the Eurotas, the very spot where Euripides’ cranes are about to land (1492); Calame locates these races at the site that the sources name Dromos, a famous exercise ground adjacent to the sanctuary of Helen where the choruses described in the song at the end of Aristophanes’ *Lysistrata* celebrate their rites. In conflating racing and choral activity, Euripides, like Theocritus after him, follows a well-established (Spartan) tradition; the leaders of the chorus in Alkman’s *Partheneion* (a text further discussed below) are already likened to racehorses whose running the poet signals (δραμήται, 59).

The term δρόμος is suggestive on one further count, looking forward to the chorus’ account of the cranes’ passage through the sky that is so precisely detailed in the next two lines. In Euripides’ *Phaethon*, Helios gives directions for the path that the hero should observe as he drives the solar chariot through the sky: “go, keeping to the course (δρόμος) that leads to the seven Pleiades” (frag. 779 Kannicht). The crane-choreuts of *Helen* follow what is more properly a choreographic “track” (and we know of lines marked out on the orchestra floor to guide the dancers’ movements)⁹⁶ that, in analogous fashion, takes them beneath “the Pleiades in midcourse and Orion in the night” (1489–90).

With this mention of the Pleiades, one final and supremely archetypal chorus joins the group that already includes dolphins (and sailors metamorphosed into dolphins), Nereids, Spartan dancers, the several performers on Achilles’ shield, and the cranes still present in this most recent picture. According to the ancient sources, the constellations in the night sky are dancing choruses of maidens, and among these stars, as Gloria Ferrari so clearly documents, the Pleiades claim pride of place.⁹⁷ A scholion to Theocritus 13.25 (Wendel), citing Callimachus, styles them the inventors of *choreia* and of the παννυχίς, the all-night dance performed under the star-filled sky (note the adjective ἐννύχιον used of Orion by Euripides’ chorus, also a look back to the Hyakin-

94. Allan 2008, ad loc.

95. See Barker 2004, 192, for the use of the expression in the *Birds*.

96. Hsch., s.v. *grammai*.

97. Ferrari 2008, 3, and passim. For “star choruses,” and their connection with mystery cults in the ancient sources, see Csapo 2008.

this described as *νόχτιον* in 1470), when they were still maidens and prior to their being catasterized.

The equation of these dancing constellations—Pleiades and others—with the choral bodies moving on stage is a commonplace in fifth-century drama, and one most frequently sounded in Euripides.⁹⁸ In an earlier instance of choral projection, Sophocles' chorus invokes Dionysos as "*choragos* of the fire-breathing stars" (*Ant.* 1146–47), and in their description of the shield of Achilles, the chorus of Euripides' *Electra* designates the Pleiades, together with their sisters the Hyades, choral dancers.⁹⁹ In the *Ion*, this cosmic dance encompasses the entire sky.¹⁰⁰ The same notion of stellar *choreia* figures in a fragment of Critias (*TrGF* frag. 4), and, at greater length, in Plato and Aristotle,¹⁰¹ and where the sources detail the motions of these dancing stars, they are inevitably circular. A well-known astragalos of circa 470–50 from the workshop of the Athenian painter Sotades (British Museum E804, *ARV*² 265.20) succinctly visualizes the paradigmatic function of these circular dancing choruses in the sky; here a line of maidens or nymphs holding one another by the hand performs a ring dance, while a second chorus occupies the upper register, this one made up of ten maidens who dance in midair. The man included in the scene below emphasizes the relationship between the two groups: while his right arm indicates the dancers on the ground, his left points upward, directing spectators to observe the steps and twirling motions of the aerial chorus. In a recent discussion, Ferrari identifies these ethereal dancers as the Pleiades and Hyades, the archetypes on whom the earthly chorus is invited to model itself.¹⁰² Set within this context, the description of the cranes in their (linear) flight beneath the (circling) constellations presents the audience with two choruses hierarchically arranged: the birds beneath, the stars on top.¹⁰³

Nor does this exhaust the significance of the Pleiades-crane association. In uniting birds and stars in a single image, the singers assign the cranes their familiar role as harbingers of seasonal change. For Hesiod, the sight of the birds as they migrate south to the river valleys of Sudan and Ethiopia marks the advent of the late-autumn or early-winter plowing season (*Op.* 448–51). Should the farmer miss this first indicator, he can observe a second one; as two other Hesiodic passages affirm, this is also the moment when the Pleiades and Orion enact their autumnal setting (*Op.* 383–84, 615–17). Martin West's note on lines 383–84 dates this occurrence to October 31, when the stars, now situated on the darker side of the sky, are visible "just before sunrise."¹⁰⁴ Hesiod's by

98. For a complete list, see Csapo 2008, 264 n. 8.

99. "In the middle of the shield the bright circle of the sun was shining on winged horses, and the heavenly choruses of stars, the Pleiades, Hyades" (464–68). For choral Pleiades, see too Hyg. *Poet. astr.* 2.21; Hor. *Carm.* 4.14.21; Prop. 3.5.36; and Csapo 2008, 266.

100. *Ion* 1078–80: "when Zeus' star-eyed sky has begun its choral dance, and the moon dances."

101. For these and other passages, see the material collected in Miller 1986, 1–55, with further discussion in Ferrari 2008, 5–7, and Csapo 2008, 264–67.

102. Ferrari 2008, 2–3.

103. Perhaps relevant to the star/crane pairing is the fact that the Cretan/Delian *geranos* was performed at night, and, according to some interpretations, offered a mimesis of the movements of the heavenly bodies along the zodiac; for this, see Lawler 1946, 117–18.

104. West 1978, ad loc.

now perhaps canonical calendar allows Euripides' audience to pinpoint the exact moment when the cranes are passing through the sky, which, the chorus observes, occurs when the Pleiades and Orion are in midcourse.¹⁰⁵ If, following West's reconstruction, the settings of these stars take place respectively in late October and the start of November, and their risings in late June and early July, these cranes perform their journey sometime in late summer and early autumn, arriving by the Eurotas' banks just at the setting of the Pleiades and Orion.¹⁰⁶ Hesiod confirms this "timetable": Perses should harvest his grapes "when Orion and Sirius are come to the middle of the sky" (ἐξ μέσον . . . οὐρανόν, *Op.* 609–10), a task that immediately precedes the next item in the almanac, plowing the fields at the setting of the Pleiades and Orion.¹⁰⁷

But why does Euripides insert these precise seasonal indicators? Choral-ity, and more particularly traditional Spartan *choreia*, may again be at issue here. In her recent reading of Alkman's first *Partheneion*, Ferrari argues that the song performed by the Spartan maidens maps the political order that the mythical portion of the composition describes onto the cosmic order as it manifests itself in "a momentous event in the night sky," the cosmical setting of the Pleiades and Hyades at the turn of the year.¹⁰⁸ Alkman's composition, she further proposes, would be sung and danced as part of the *pannukhis* that occurred during a major state festival, the nine-day Karneia held in honor of Apollo (also celebrated in the vicinity of the Dromos and the temple of the Dioskouroi), designed to mark this moment of seasonal, agricultural, and cosmic change. As Ferrari details, the words and movements of Alkman's chorus recapitulate the astral dance that the singers invite their audience to witness.¹⁰⁹ A passage from *Alkestis* confirms that Euripides and his public knew of the event: there the chorus projects itself into the role of singers who celebrate the heroine "in songs unaccompanied by the lyre when at Sparta the cycle of the season of the month of Karneia comes circling round" (447–52). If this can be taken as sufficient evidence that the Karneia included choral performances, then a glance to the festival would be in keeping with the privileging of forms of traditional, archetypal, and cultic *choreia* in the stasimon so far.

4. THE SECOND ANTISTROPHE

μόλοιτέ ποθ' ἵππιον οἶμον
δι' αἰθέρος ἰέμενοι, 1496
παῖδες Τυνδαρίδαι,

105. Cf. Eur. *Ion* 1152–53: "the Pleiades were passing through midheaven and so was Orion with his sword."

106. These are, of course, two of the constellations featured at *Il.* 18.486.

107. Assuming that the cranes' announcement of Helen's return occurs just before her advent, she would be sailing at the moment when sea journeys are still possible; no right-minded individual would embark once the Pleiades are set (see Hes. *Op.* 619–23).

108. Ferrari 2008, 17, with a summary of the book's larger argument.

109. "With their mention of Sirius and the Pleiades at daybreak in lines 60–63, the dancers inscribe themselves into the configuration of the night sky that heralds winter. They are the Hyades, the sisters of the Pleiades and their rivals in the dance, who share with them the task of marking the change of seasons" (Ferrari 2008, 87). For the evidence concerning the Karneia, see Ferrari's discussion at 128–35 together with Pettersson 1992, chap. 3.

λαμπρῶν ἀστέρων ὑπ' ἀέλ-
 λαις οἱ ναίετ' οὐράνιοι,
 σωτῆρε τᾶς Ἑλένας, 1500
 γλαυκὸν ἐπ' οἷδμ' ἄλιον
 κυανόχροά τε κυμάτων
 ῥόθια πολὺ θάλάσσης,
 ναύταις εὐαεῖς ἀνέμων
 πέμποντες Διόθεν πνοάς, 1505
 δύσκειαν δ' ἀπὸ συγγόνου
 βάλετε βαρβάρων λεχέων,
 ἂν Ἰδαῖαν ἐρίδων
 ποιναιθεῖς ἐκτήσατο, γᾶν
 οὐκ ἐλθοῦσά ποτ' Ἰλίου 1510
 Φοιβείους ἐπὶ πύργους.¹¹⁰

The final antistrophe begins with the choral summons to the Dioskouroi that generates the brothers' epiphanic appearance at the drama's end. The Dioskouroi are, of course, thoroughly at home in the Spartan cult scene that the song has conjured up; as noted earlier, south of Sparta was the Dromos where Spartan youths would train for their races under the tutelage of the divine twins who were worshipped, in conjunction with Helen, at her cult site on the opposite bank of the Eurotas.¹¹¹ The equine element, so prevalent in textual and visual representations of these "horsey" twins,¹¹² may create a further link with the first antistrophe and with the choruses featured there; according to a gloss in Hesychius, the Leukippid priestesses were known as πῶλοι, an identification that would explain both the prominent equine imagery in Alkman's first *Partheneion*, where the Dioskouroi also appear,¹¹³ and the comparison of the choral performers of the cult song to fillies or πῶλοι in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* (1307). Both myth and ritual connected the two daughters of Leukippos for whom the priestesses are named with the Dioskouroi; in myth, the two brothers abduct and marry the Leukippides, an episode visually depicted at the two sites featured in the first antistrophe, the temple of Athena Chalkioikos and the throne of Apollo at Amyklai in the sanctuary where the Hyakinthia was celebrated.¹¹⁴ At an Argive cult site, the Leukippides were also worshipped alongside the Dioskouroi.¹¹⁵

But the continuity with the earlier portions of the strophe also depends on the continued emphasis on the several elements of *choreia* and on the primal choruses featured in the song so far. The description of the horse-mounted youths as dwellers "in the heavens under the whirling of the bright stars" not only includes a reminder of the twins' stellar identity, a metamorphosis

110. "Come rushing through the air along the equine course, o children of Tyndareos, you who dwell in the heavens beneath the whirlings of the brilliant stars, saviors of Helen, over the gray-green sea swell and the dusky plashing of the waves of the sea, as you send sailors fair-blowing breaths of winds from Zeus, cast off the ill-repute of a foreign bed from your sister, which she incurred as a punishment for the strife on Mount Ida, not ever going to the Phoebus-built towers of the Trojan land."

111. See Calame 1997, 199–200, for details.

112. See Allan 2008, ad 1495–96, for a sampling of the evidence.

113. For this, see Garvie 1965. Garvie would also connect these priestesses with the two chorus leaders in the poem.

114. Paus. 3.17.3, 18.11.

115. For this, see Calame 1997, 187.

already signaled in line 140, and, more broadly, a motif associated with dithyrambic poetry, which regularly imagines how the souls of the dead are catasterized,¹¹⁶ but also offers a matching panel to the picture in the preceding strophe. Where the cranes traced a linear path through the sky populated by the dancing circles of the Pleiades and Orion, now the divine riders also follow their trajectory in the nighttime sky populated by whirling stars, these depicted in a manner that maintains the choral identity that the Pleiades claimed before. While the gyrations of the stars cap the references to circular motion in previous stanzas and again invite kinetic mimesis in the figures of the dance, the relationship between the “brilliant stars” and the divine twins suggests a choral as well as cosmic formation. The term ὑπό chosen by the singers for the location of the riders vis-à-vis the stars can mean “under,” as in line 1489, or, used with the dative here, “in the company of.” Read this way, the phrase imagines the twins standing to the constellations much as the preeminent chorus leader(s) or musician stands to the collective group. The affinity between the horse-mounted Dioskouroi and stars is closer still; both poets and artists regularly imagine the principal stellar bodies—Night, Moon, Dawn, and the Sun—riding horses, or carried across the sky in horse-drawn chariots;¹¹⁷ here Euripides extends that conceit to the divinized and starry brothers.

Consistent too with the second strophe, and with the formation just proposed, is the musical element in the antistrophe’s first line. At the literal level, the “equine course” at 1495 must refer to the track on which the mounted brothers ride.¹¹⁸ But already in Archaic poetry, οἶμος signifies the “path of song” that a composer/singer travels in creating and performing his composition;¹¹⁹ that such a work can be “equine,” the parallel Pindaric expression ἱππῖοι νόμῳι (*Ol.* 1.101), used for a song composed to celebrate a victory on a horse, affirms. A second Pindaric coinage, Καστόρειον (*Pyth.* 2.69), this in an ode for a chariot victory, is also apposite to the chorus’ phrase:¹²⁰ what could be more fitting than for the Dioskouroi to travel by means of a “horsey song” or “equestrian tune” that they, in the role of *chorêgoi*, lead off to the accompaniment of the dancing of the stars/*choreutai* on the stage? This musical interpretation suits a second term, which, taken together with οἶμος, gives lines 1495–96 a different but no less fitting sense. Since ἦμυ regularly describes the projection of sound, speech, or song, the phrase can be construed as an invitation to the Dioskouroi to “come through the sky, emitting an equine song.” This renewed focus on music, dance, and song at the stasimon’s end has, I suspect, a specific (choral) purpose. William Mullen calls the process whereby Pindaric choruses summon divinities into their midst through the powers of their song and dance

116. Csapo (2008, 274–75, 277) documents the theme, particularly in Euripides.

117. Ferrari 2008, 95–96. Note too Eur. *Andromeda* frags. 114 and 124 Kannicht; the play was produced alongside *Helen*.

118. οἶμον is itself a conjecture for the divergent MS readings, οἶμα (the spring or swoop of an animal) and ὕμα.

119. See *Hymn Hom. Merc.* 451, Pind. *Ol.* 9.47; cf. the Homeric usage of οἶμη (e.g., *Od.* 8.481, 22.347), the “way of song,” and Ar. Av. 1374, where Kinesias flies on the “path of song.”

120. Cf. *Isthm.* 1.16.

"hypostatization";¹²¹ this device aims to bring the god to the site where the ode is performed, just the result that Euripides' chorus achieves when the Dioskouroi appear on the *skenê* roof.

In the final meandering phrase that draws the stasimon to its end (such extended periods, with few strong sense pauses and strings of paratactically arranged clauses, are typical of the New Music),¹²² the singers return from sky to sea, where their song first began. Where the initial strophe invited Galaneia to direct the sailors to embark over the becalmed waters, now the chorus calls on the divine escorts to send the sailors "fair-blowing winds." The poet may have designed this closing phrase, which combines so many of the properties that Csapo includes in his checklist of the hallmarks of the New Musical style (intensity, range, colors, ornament, polyphony, synaesthesia, and dizzying volubility among them),¹²³ so as to produce one last virtuosic display of the choreographic and acoustic mimesis favored by contemporary composers and instrumentalists. Returning to the language and imagery of the opening strophe, the singers evoke both the motion (οἶδμα, cf. 1466) and the sound-cum-movement (πόθια) of the sea.¹²⁴ As Csapo remarks, Euripides likes to include references to whirling, eddying water in his lyrics, a predilection he explains on the grounds that "clapping and circulating waves thus have a mimetic resonance in dance."¹²⁵ The *aulêtês* would also demonstrate his mimetic skills: just as in the first strophe, he could use his pipes to imitate the splashing of the waves, a feat then followed by the more complete conflation of sound and sense that lines 1504–5 realize: here, in quite literal fashion, the musician's playing, effected by his skilled regulation of his breathing, becomes one and the same as the "fair-blowing breaths of winds" that the words describe.¹²⁶ These windy emissions may answer to the stillness of the first antistrophe on a further score: while, our sources tell us, smooth seas are the precondition for the dolphins' choral dance, air currents, according to Ionian cosmology, furnish the *chorêgia* whereby the astral bodies revolve (frag. 64 A17 DK).¹²⁷

Closing this final period with a second injunction, the singers then request the brothers to complete what their performance has all but brought about: through their repeated descriptions—verbal, musical, and choreographic—of linear and circular motions, and the inscription of the current performance within traditional and archetypal forms of *choreia*, they have undone the immediate past involving Helen's punishment and the Trojan War and projected themselves back into a mythical-cum-cultic sphere where the heroine

121. Mullen 1982.

122. See the description of New Musical syntax in Csapo 2004, 225–26.

123. Csapo 2000, 417.

124. Insofar as the Dioskouroi are invited to fulfill their role as saviors (σωτήρες, 1500) of those foundering at sea (see Allan 2008, ad loc.), their role also recapitulates that of the dolphins at the start.

125. Csapo 2000, 419–22. For this mirror play between dance and the waves, note the comment attributed to the early dramatist Phrynichus, who claimed to use as many dance figures as there were "waves in a stormy sea" (Plut. *Mor.* 732f).

126. Pindar likewise uses πνοά in his description of his ode as "a song-drink accompanied by the Aeolian breaths (πνοαῖσιν) of flutes" (*Nem.* 3.79).

127. I owe this reference to Csapo 2008, 264 n. 10.

has a role entirely different from that in which the dominant poetical canon locates her.

Columbia University

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