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‘Lyric Reception and Sophistic Literarity in Timotheus’ *Persae*’\*

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Timotheus’ *Persae* presents an extraordinarily rich and diverse array of poetic and cultural thinking which invites a range of questions about meaning, interpretation, and audience response. This text’s diverse indebtedness to fifth-century literary culture (not only lyric, tragedy, and comedy, but also sophistic rhetoric) invites serious scrutiny, and, in recent scholarship is finally receiving some deserved attention. I here set out some of my own interpretations of and responses to Timotheus’ dazzling and at times perplexing literary talent.

Impetus for this study comes from three main directions: my own interest in Bacchylidean and Pindaric lyric and its reception; a greater willingness among scholars of recent years to think more deeply and with greater sophistication about the nature of dithyramb (in all its variety);<sup>1</sup> and new-found critical interest in the New Music: work by Eric Csapo,<sup>2</sup> Tim Power,<sup>3</sup> and most recently the excellent and path-finding new treatments by Pauline LeVen and Felix Budelmann of the poetics of the New Music.<sup>4</sup>

A good deal of work has been done recently, particularly by Pauline LeVen in her superb new book, to explore intertexts in *Persae*, and to add fresh insight to our understanding of the particular stylistic characteristics of the New Music. I will restrict my own commentary to new observations and thoughts about stylistic, structural, and intertextual factors not covered by LeVen, especially with reference to affinities between Timothean and Bacchylidean lyric style; and to cases where her analyses have inspired my own further thoughts.

After some preliminary discussion of historical reasons for a lack of interest in the lyric pedigree of the New Music, my discussion will be in three main sections. In the first part I outline some structural thoughts about *Persae*, both as a celebratory narrative lyric poem with a specific fifth-century dithyrambic pedigree, and as a piece

of self-consciously stylized poetic rhetoric. In the second, I pay specific attention to the similarities and differences between Timothean diction and more traditional, and particularly Bacchylidean, lyric, building on some of the structural observations I made earlier. I also examine some further intertexts, an element now recognized as an important feature of Timothean poetics.<sup>5</sup> In the final section, I discuss the challenges of literary interpretation posed by Timothean lyric, especially as a cultural form informed by and indeed part of the sophistic movement, with specific reference to Gorgias.

#### Preliminaries: 'new' and 'old' fifth-century lyric in modern scholarship

Any investigation of the possible relations between Timotheus and earlier lyric poetry will soon discover that there has been virtually no scholarship on this topic since the Timotheus papyrus came to light. Perhaps this should not surprise, given the general antipathy of modern scholars towards the New Musical output, and an implicit contrast between the New Music, and the canonical masterpieces of fifth century lyric before the New Music arrived on the scene.

Scholarship on earlier fifth-century lyric has also not helped matters because of its general unwillingness to think too far beyond its own immediate circumstances of performance: work on the fifth-century reception of lyric poetry is still in its relative infancy. Until very recently, the general lack of interest in the New Music, or even its literary background, by scholars of Greek lyric poetry has been exacerbated by the dominance of Pindar within studies of fifth-century lyric, as well as a complicity – sometimes tacit, sometimes open – with Platonic reactionism. Doubts can also be felt about the place of Bacchylides within the fifth-century literary history of Greek lyric. In the face of these complicating factors, it is perhaps no surprise that no work has been done to investigate the potential similarities between Bacchylides and the poetic style of the New Music.

If we turn to the possible literary affinities between Timotheus and Bacchylides, since both these poets – both notable papyrological discoveries within a few years of each other – received relatively short shrift from scholarship in the century after their discoveries.<sup>6</sup> General antipathy towards Timotheus as a New Musical lyric poet worked on the back of implicit contrast with Pindar’s elevated genius, and in a direct line back to Platonic reactionism. While Timotheus shocked, Bacchylides met with either indifference or elicited doubts about where precisely to position him in an account of fifth-century lyric poetry

The scholarly reaction to these poets in the early years after their discoveries is coloured to an interesting degree by broader issues of ideology and taste, with an implied contrast and competitiveness between Britain (the owner of the Bacchylides papyrus) and Germany (owner of the Timotheus papyrus). The original reception of Bacchylides was somewhat encouraging, though at one particularly charged point – the last year of World War I – markedly in opposition to that of Timotheus:

Timotheus ... is as complete a contrast to Bacchylides as can be imagined. Burne Jones once said, à propos of the Pergamum sculptures now at Berlin: ‘Truth is, and it is a scientific induction, that whenever Germans go forth to dig and discover, their special providence provides for them and brings to the surface the most depressing, heavy, conceited, dull products of dead and done-with Greece; and they ought to be thankful, for that it is what they like.’

I do not make myself responsible for the permanent truth of this *obiter dictum*, and it is not to be denied that, if the Germans have not hitherto had the fortune to acquire any of the great new literary treasures, they have at least known how to make good use of those which have fallen into the hands of others; but Timotheus might have been made expressly to illustrate Burne Jones’ law.<sup>7</sup>

But, as is well known, beyond the flourishing critical industry on the text in the years immediately following the discovery of the Bacchylides papyrus, very little attention

was paid to his work; for Bacchylides the limited approval and overt contrast with Pindar offered by Longinus continued to wield considerable authority.<sup>8</sup>

Jebb in his magisterial commentary positions Bacchylides alongside Pindar in the opening excursus on the fifth-century literary history of lyric poetry, stating at one point indeed that ‘[t]he seventeenth poem of Bacchylides, a dithyramb in the form of a dialogue, shows no trace of those faults which disfigure the diction and style of a later school. Bacchylides also maintains the tradition that a dithyramb should be composed in strophes.’<sup>9</sup> For Jebb, Bacchylides is the very last of the great lyric poets before (and Jebb follows Plato very closely here) the outrageous decadence of Timotheus and the other New Musicians:

But, in the latter part of the fifth century, one form of choral song, the dithyramb, received a new development, fraught with far-reaching consequences to the whole lyric art. That development was beginning just as the life of Bacchylides must have been drawing to an end’.<sup>10</sup>

For Jebb, Timotheus simply won’t do: commenting on two notable excerpts of *Persae*, he finds himself bewildered:

The absurdity, alike, of style and of matter, could scarcely be exceeded: but the poet is serious. In a latter passage, however, he seems to be designedly comic. A Phrygian prisoner, bewailing himself, speaks fourteen verses of broken Greek.’<sup>11</sup>

Jebb concludes his overview as follows:

Lastly, we have sought to elucidate the principal causes which, immediately after the time of Bacchylides, led to the rapid and final decay of Greek lyric art; thus enabling us to understand why his name is the last in the series of those Greek lyric poetry who attained to classical rank.<sup>12</sup>

Clearly, Timotheus was shocking, and scholarship endeavoured to protect earlier lyric from his dangerously vapid charms. As such, we need to be a little

suspicious about the neatness of Jebb's cut-off between Bacchylides and the New Music. Literary history does not generally conform to such clean breaks. Jebb's own private concerns about the literary merits of Bacchylides are also evident: at times it seems that Jebb wished that Bacchylides had been better, perhaps just a bit more like Pindar and Jebb's noisy antipathy to Timotheus' recent publication may hide his private concerns about his own poet.<sup>13</sup>

There is, however, rather more to say about the literary relationship between Bacchylides and Timotheus; their obvious differences notwithstanding, their similarities and affinities may also be enlightening.<sup>14</sup>

Much more recently, Eric Csapo found that a lack of scholarly understanding of the literary and cultural history of fifth-century dithyramb, and as a consequence his own doubts about where to situate Bacchylides within this, precluded a fully blown literary-historical examination of the lyric heritage of Euripides' so-called 'dithyrambic' stasima:

One problem with this characterization of Euripides' 'dithyrambic style' is that there is nothing particularly dithyrambic about 'self-contained ballad-like narratives,' barring the oddity of Bacchylides, whose 'dithyrambos' are not certainly dithyrambos, and who in any case represents a style normally opposed to New Dithyramb'.<sup>15</sup>

Csapo's important paper opts instead for detailed discussion of the distribution of music sung by professional actors in a survey of Euripides' place within the New Music. In the light of more recent scholarship on the development of dithyramb in fifth-century Greece, and Athens in particular, and its relation to the circular choral performance form, we may in fact now find reason to agree with Kranz against Csapo and say that there may, in fact, be something characteristically – even if not exclusively – dithyrambic about self-contained lyric narrative in Euripidean New Music.<sup>16</sup> Narrative self-containment in earlier fifth-century dithyramb might have gone hand-in-hand with circular choral performance as distinctive means of widely

promulgating a cultural form irrespective of the specific cultic requirements of specific festive localities.<sup>17</sup>

Although Timotheus' *Persae* is technically a kitharodic nome, it will be argued here that there are pointed stylistic, intertextual, and structural connections between Bacchylides and Timotheus that reveal the extent to which earlier fifth-century narrative dithyramb was an important source of inspiration for the later poet.<sup>18</sup>

### 1. Structural Dithyrambic Intertextuality

The parodies of the modishness of the New Music to be found in ancient sources such as Aristophanes and Plato mean that modern scholars have tended to overlook the extent to which these later fifth-century authors were themselves indebted to the earlier lyric tradition in order to mark out their innovations. In the case of Timotheus' *Persae*, dependence upon texts such as Aeschylus' *Persians* are now well known, but the New Musical inheritance from earlier lyric poetry still warrants further discussion. In what follows I will pick up two specific examples which may have had an important structural bearing on Timotheus' sense of his poem within the lyric tradition: first, the opening intertext with the beginning of a well-known Pindaric dithyramb composed for performance in Athens, fragments 76–7; second, a deeper structural indebtedness to Bacchylides 17.

In the opening line of the hexameter *prooimion* of *Persae* Timotheus praises Athens (or, perhaps less likely, Themistocles) as follows<sup>19</sup>:

κλεινὸν ἐλευθερίας τεύχων μέγαν Ἑλλάδι κόσμον.

(‘Fashioning a famous and great adornment of freedom for Greece’, fr. 788)

I will have more to say about this line in the final section of this discussion, but here it is worth emphasizing not only the extent of Timothean allusion to a variety of significant earlier fifth-century lyric texts, but also the effects of these points of contact in combination, and the particular significance of the Pindaric reference.<sup>20</sup> As has been emphasized recently by both LeVen and Power, Timotheus is pointing here towards at least three noteworthy fifth-century lyric texts, all of which relate directly to the Persian Wars: in the marked use of the language of *kosmos* in the context of military celebration, Simonides' Plataea Elegy ( ~ τόνδ[ε μελ]ιφρονα κ[όσμον ἀο]ιδῆς, fr. 11.23 W<sup>2</sup>), and Simonides *PMG* 531 for the Spartan war-dead at Thermopylae ( ~ ἀρετᾶς μέγαν λελοιπῶς | κόσμον ἀέναόν τε κλέος, lines 7–8); and with the combination of an architectural metaphor and the reference to freedom, Pindar's dithyramb for Athens which opened with praise of the city as a Hellenic bulwark against Persian enslavement in the aftermath of Artemision, fragments 76–7:

ᾠ ταῖ λιπαράι καὶ ἰοστέφανοι καὶ ἀοίδιμοι, Ἑλλάδος ἔρει-  
σμα, κλειναὶ Ἀθῆναι, δαιμόνιον πτολίεθρον.

;

ὅθι παῖδες Ἀθηναίων ἐβάλλοντο φαεννά  
κρηπίδ' ἐλευθερίας.

(O gleaming and violet-crowned and celebrated in song,  
bulwark of Greece, glorious Athens, divine city.

;

[Artemision,] where the sons of the Athenians laid down  
a shining foundation of freedom. [trans. Race, Loeb])

; a sense that Pindaric dithyramb was a classic – though perhaps now rather hackneyed – mode for civic praise of Athens, particularly with reference to her military prowess is captured in the parodic allusion to this poem by Dikaiopolis in Aristophanes' *Acharnians*.<sup>21</sup>

Timotheus picks up the Pindaric phrase and extends and modifies it in line with his practice elsewhere in *Persae* when dealing with other intertextual material,



building on, developing, and extending previous usage often very self-consciously. Timotheus here takes Pindar's material-cultural metaphor, with the vehicle κρηπίδα in the general sense of architectural foundation or statue-base, and reworks and enlarges it in a specifically sculptural direction, filling out Pindar's image of the base or foundations of freedom which the Athenians provided with a statement figuring the fashioning of freedom as, not simply a base, but the aesthetic object of admiration supported on such a base.<sup>22</sup> Read metapoetically, Timotheus' intertextual self-fashioning is itself here figured as an act of standing proudly on solid Pindaric foundations, as well as the lavishing of even more praise onto the Greek victory in the Persian Wars.<sup>23</sup>

The non-extant grammatical subject of this opening sentence of Timotheus' poem has been the matter of a great deal of discussion, but, as Power has suggested, we should probably assume the subject to have taken the form of a general reference to Greek military prowess, rather than some over-specific reference to a particular historical individual.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, with the carefully chosen language of craft, Timotheus points programmatically to the aesthetically arresting effects of his own lyric composition at the same time as showering praise on Greek military achievement.<sup>25</sup>

In an important recent study Elena Firinu has suggested that Timothean intertextuality with the first ('dithyrambic') stasimon of Euripides' *Iphigenia at Tauris* in *Persae* is marked by a reworking and combining of separate Euripidean images into original new forms with greater complexity and obscurity.<sup>26</sup> Elsewhere, as Budelmann and LeVen also show, Timotheus' dexterity with figurative complexity often has the potential to disorientate audiences; or, as LeVen herself puts it separately (commenting on New Musical compound neologisms), to defamiliarize audiences, allowing them the opportunity – if, at least, they can take it, given the dazzling speed with which Timothean imagery often operates – to reflect self-consciously on the language itself.<sup>27</sup> This pronounced literary self-consciousness, which is felt down to the level of the intertextual resonances and metaphorical

potential of individual words, seems highly distinctive and original, especially given the programmatic quality of it here at the outset of Timotheus' poem; moreover, Timotheus is drawing us in to the materiality of his own linguistic exposition and inviting reflection upon the dazzling surface of his text.<sup>28</sup>

Timotheus' use of Pindaric dithyramb is one of a number of significant intertextual pointers directing us to a specifically Athenian contextualization for *Persae*, despite the text's own notorious failure to explicitly specify a performance context for itself.<sup>29</sup> The lack of contextual specificity together with the intertextual openness of *Persae*, both to Athenian dramatic and lyric texts and to Spartan lyric, also presents an ideological and hermeneutic challenge, especially taken together with the attention devoted to Sparta explicitly by name in the *sphragis* (line 207). We can agree with Power that the coyness with which Timotheus raises issues of context and ideological pointedness with this piece is a part with his own kitharoidic itinerant professionalism.<sup>30</sup> But we might go further to say that this is also a marker of the new distinctive challenges of the micro-mechanisms of Timotheus' intertextual literacy. Whom precisely this poem is for, and why, is a question that Timotheus' *Persae* is posing right from its opening line: an opening statement about working within and developing the lyric tradition, both Spartan and Athenian, of praise for military prowess in general Panhellenic terms but which does not seem to specify outright any more specific contextual or ideological pointedness than that may be seen as a self-conscious puzzle about encomiastic referentiality.

The lack of contextual specification in the performative *deixis* of lines 237–8, ἄγνῶν ... τάνδε πόλιν ('this holy city'), should also be considered in this light. It is more than simply a nod to established encomiastic convention within the lyric tradition, for which a wide variety of scholarly reactions are themselves still available;<sup>31</sup> I would prefer to see this lack of explicit grounding as a final sticking point, a final question to his audience about the appropriateness or ideological pointedness of this text, in whatever context it is being performed. This could be in Athens – as the traditionally ['old-']dithyrambic and almost clichéd use of 'holy city'

might suggest – or elsewhere, especially in conjunction with the closing words about *eunomia*, which might suggest Sparta.<sup>32</sup> This is especially important since the fundamental question of what it might mean at the end of the fifth century to compose a lyric poem in honour of the battle of Salamis would surely have admitted of a wide variety of contextually and ideologically dependent responses at the time. Again, this is a point to which I return in the final section.

I now turn to Bacchylides 17. A way in may be provided by the first stasimon of Euripides' *Iphigenia in Tauris*, which Firinu has argued is alluded to throughout *Persae*.<sup>33</sup> As Eric Csapo has pointed out, later Euripidean lyric is extremely fond of images and phrases that cue us in to dithyramb – the number of instances of mythical choral projection, with groups (of sometimes 50) dancing in circles, is noteworthy.<sup>34</sup> Of particular interest here are those that involve dancing Nereids and dolphins: *Electra* 434 (Nereids and Dolphins dancing in a circle); *Iphigenia at Tauris* 427–9 (fifty Nereids dancing in a circle); *Iphigenia at Aulis* 1055–7 (Nereids dancing in a circle); and especially the passage from *Iphigenia at Tauris*. The language which Euripides uses to advertise his dithyrambic choral projection is noteworthy: first, the reference to Amphitrite, whose reappearance in *Persae* Firinu picks up, and which I will elaborate on later; second, the beginning of the ode.

In lines 392–406, the chorus ask who these strangers are who have arrived from overseas, in a peculiar and rather pointed way:

κυάνεαι κυανέας σύνοδοι θαλάσσας,  
ἴν' οἴστρος ἦ πετόμενος Ἀργόθεν ἦ  
ἄξενον ἐπ' οἶδμα διεπέρασε <πόντου>  
Ἀσιήτιδα γαῖαν Εὐρώπας διαμείψας·  
τίνες ποτ' ἄρα τὸν εὐύδρον δονακόχλοον  
λιπόντες Εὐρώταν ἢ ῥεύματα σεμνά Δίρκας  
ἔβασαν ἔβασαν ἄμεικτον αἶαν, ἔνθα κούρα  
Δία τέγγει  
βωμοὺς καὶ περικίονας

ναοὺς ἄιμα βρότειον;  
 ('Dark confluences of the dark sea,  
 where the gadfly that flew from Argos  
 passed over the wave of the Hostile Sea  
 to Asia's land, leaving Europe behind:  
 who can they be then who left the reeds and plentiful water  
 of the Eurotas or the august streams of Dirce  
 and came, came, to the savage land where for the maiden  
 daughter of Zeus  
 the altars and colonnaded temples are drenched  
 in human blood?') [trans. Kovacs, Loeb])

If we ask why Euripides presents the geographic tableau in the opening of this ode in the way he does, an answer may arrive from a rather unexpected quarter. Euripides is in fact pointing towards the literary history of the dithyramb, setting out a kind of metatextual literary landscape involving seafaring and Greek myth which points us to Bacchylides, and two of his Athenian dithyrambs in particular: Bacchylides 17 (*Youths or Theseus*) and perhaps also Bacchylides 19 (*Io, for the Athenians*). The opening polyptoton *κυάνεαι κυανέας* in line 392 serves as a metatextual marker.<sup>35</sup> It invites us to pause, if we can, to consider the poetic quality and resonance of the diction, and ultimately points to the opening word of Bacchylides 17, with its focus on the dark-blue prow of Minos' ship, cleaving the waves of the Aegean on his way back from Athens to Knossos:

κυανόπρωιρα μὲν ναῦς μενέκτυ[πον  
 Θησεά δις ἐπτ[ά] τ' ἀγλαοὺς ἄγουσα  
 κούρους Ἰαόνω[ν  
 Κρητικὸν τάμνε[[ν]] πέλαγος·

('The ship with the blue-black prow, as it carried Theseus, steadfast in the battle din, and the twice seven splendid youths and maidens of the Ionians, was cleaving the Cretan sea' [trans. Race, Loeb])

The later reference in lines 427–9 to a chorus of fifty Nereids dancing in circles may reinforce the allusion: the dancing Nereids whom Theseus watches in Bacchylides 17 (lines 101–8) may have been among the more well-known literary depictions in earlier Athenian poetry, especially given the Athenian ideological flavour this choral vision may have had.<sup>36</sup> In addition, the reference to Io in the next lines may itself pick up the depiction of Io’s plight in Bacchylides 19, and in particular the paradigm this text provides for a Greek mythological heroine travelling overseas to the ultimate benefit of Athens (in Bacchylides’ text, Io gives birth in Egypt to Epaphos, ultimate ancestor of Dionysus). The myths of both these texts involve unfortunate individuals heading off on voyages they would rather not be making, but that will turn out unexpectedly successfully for them; these might, then, have provided Euripides with a neat, dithyrambically inspired, rationale for his own self-consciously innovative late fifth-century take on the Orestes myth in this play. Now that we are beginning to familiarize ourselves with readings of late fifth-century lyric which make room for this kind of intertextual sophistication, it should not perhaps surprise if we find material taken from earlier ‘classic’ dithyramb in these later fifth century New Musically ‘dithyrambic’ compositions.<sup>37</sup> And when we do, we can emphasize the continuities as well as discontinuities within the history of fifth-century lyric poetry as a whole.

If we return now to Timotheus’ *Persae*, one of the most obvious parallels between Timotheus’ text and Bacchylides’ dithyrambic style most notable in Bacchylides 17 is the use of a series of extended but in themselves relatively simple paratactic narrative tableaux, with a simple syntax and where the use of numerous epithets relating to colour, beauty, and form, add to a heightened pictorial quality.<sup>38</sup> What is so different about Timotheus is, as we shall see in the next section, the different effects of the use of compound adjectives; but on the level of narrative style, there are clear points of similarity – in *Persae* Timothean narrative style is, at base, Bacchylidean, and self-consciously so.

While the use of a nautical narrative does not of course by itself suggest any direct relation, there are three details within Timotheus' treatment of it that suggest that Bacchylides 17 provided enough interest of detail and structure to provide Timotheus with an empowering narrative model.

First, the interesting use of Amphitrite as, in part, a grandiloquent periphrasis for the sea (*Persae* lines 37–9) responds to the important role of the sea-goddess Amphitrite within the narrative structure of Bacchylides' poem of Theseus' heroic exploits (Bacch. 17.109–16); I will offer more detailed comment on these passages in the next section, with further thoughts on the effect of Timotheus' intervention.

Second is an amusing (or perhaps grotesque, depending on your sensibility) intertextual parallelism between the two most famous swimmers in Greek literature after Odysseus.<sup>39</sup> For the description, and speech, of Timotheus' hapless Persian drowning in the waves as the Persian fleet rushes on in flight (lines 60-87) involves in part an ironic reversal and narrative antitype to the successful Theseus, whose dive into the sea in Bacchylides 17 is anything but hapless, and whose unexpected return from the waves comes despite Minos' unwillingness to stop for him: Timotheus transforms the narrative tableau invented by Bacchylides. Note in particular the use of the same verb to describe the passing of the ships in both versions, leaving our hero and antihero behind in the water: in Bacchylides, line 90 has ἔτετο δ' ὠκύπομπον δόρυ, 'the swiftly moving vessel sped on'; in Timotheus' version this becomes φυγῆ δὲ πάλιν ἔτετο Πέρ- | σης στρατὸς βάρβαρος ἐπισπέρχων, 'in flight and backwards the barbarian Persian army sped on, rushing along', lines 86–7, where the backwards direction of Timotheus' Persians in retreat itself serves as a metatextual marker of the reversal of the Bacchylidean triumphal trope.<sup>40</sup>

Third, the performative or mimetic slippage in the segue between historical narrative and the opening of the *sphragis* in *Persae* not only pays homage to a distinctive Bacchylidean narrative technique, but also directs us nicely to the close of Bacchylides 17.<sup>41</sup> In *Persae* the slip between the historical Greeks singing their paean when erecting their trophies and the voice of Timotheus the poet calling on Apollo as

his *epikouros* (with its concomitant allusion to Simonides fr. 11.21 W<sup>2</sup>) takes as its principal model the close of Bacchylides 17, where the triumphal performance of Theseus and the *hitheoi* segues into the performance of Bacchylides' poem by its chorus of Keians. Compare *Persae* lines 196–205 and Bacchylides 17.124–32:

οἱ δὲ τροπαῖα στηράμενοι Διός  
 ἀγνότατον τέμενος, Παιᾶν'  
 ἐκελάδησαν ἰήϊον  
 ἄνακτα, σύμμετροι δ' ἔπε-  
 κτύπεον ποδῶν  
 ὑψικρότοις χορείαις.  
 ἀλλ' ὦ χρυσεοκίθαριν ἀέ-  
 ξων Μοῦσαν νεοτευχῆ,  
 ἔμοις ἔλθ' ἐπίκουρος ὑ-  
 μνοῖς ἰήϊε Παιᾶν'

(‘But the Greeks, setting up trophies to Zeus to be the holiest of sanctuaries, called upon Paean the healer lord, and keeping in time stamped out their high-pounding dances with their feet. Come, you who foster the golden-lyred, new-fashioned Muse, come as ally to my songs, healer Paean.’);

ἀγλαό-  
 θρονοί τε κοῦραι σὺν εὐ-  
 θυμῖαι νεοκτίτῳ  
 ὠλόλυξαν, ἔ-  
 κλαγεν δὲ πόντος· ἠΐθεοι δ' ἐγγύθεν  
 νέοι παιάνιζαν ἐρατᾶι ὀπί.  
 Δάλιε, χοροῖσι Κηΐων  
 φρένα ἰανθείς  
 ὄπαζε θεόπομπον ἐσθλῶν τύχαν.

(‘and the splendid-throned girls cried out in new-found joy, and the sea rang out; nearby the youths sang a paean with lovely voice. Delian, with your mind warmed by choruses of Keians, grant a fortune of blessings conveyed by god.’)

This use of Bacchylidean technique and allusion is one of the final intertextual notes in *Persae*. Timotheus fuses the panhellenic prestige of the Greek victors at Salamis with his own poetic claims to lyric stardom,<sup>42</sup> and by using Bacchylides' famous poem to achieve this, Timotheus weighs down his own text with some final Athenian ideological baggage, using the poetic pedigree of earlier fifth-century culturally imperialist Athenian dithyramb to generate his own fresh claims to authority and significance.<sup>43</sup>

The acknowledged range of lyric texts that Timotheus points towards in *Persae* are generally associated with the Persian Wars – Simonides' *Plataea Elegy* and eulogy of the Spartan war-dead from Thermopylae; Pindar's dithyrambic celebration of Athenian success at Artemision. The addition of Bacchylides 17 sheds new ideologically-charged light onto later fifth-century reception of Bacchylides' text, revealing Timotheus' interest in Bacchylides 17 as itself another ideologically charged text from the general Persian Wars period (or at least reasonably soon after, as is the most likely dating of Bacchylides 17). As has been pointed out elsewhere, the depiction of Minos in Bacchylides' poem has distinctively Persian overtones, and Theseus' triumph represents the ideological triumph of Athens as Ionian protectors of the Aegean.<sup>44</sup> Timotheus picks up the political symbolism and ideological suggestiveness of Bacchylides' limpid narrative snapshot of an extraordinary mythical event, and redirects its energies into his own non-mythological lyric narrative.

## 2. Stylistics

In this section I discuss the similarities and differences between Timothean and Bacchylidean lyric style. I use the intertextual relation between Bacchylides' and Timotheus' *Amphitrite* as my starting point.

The description of the sea in *Persae* has been the recipient of attention in some important recent work.<sup>45</sup> I build on this work, in particular the discussion by Firinu,



by factoring in Bacchylides' own Amphitrite in *Dithyramb* 17, and using the comparison and contrast between the two poets' visions to add more detail on the stylistic characteristics of both poets. I argue that Timotheus once again uses Bacchylides 17 as an intertextual prop to support his new poetic effects; but will also suggest that Timotheus is implicitly inviting us to consider the difference in narrative style between his own work and his dithyrambic predecessor; the full consequences of these findings will be explored in section 3.

In the opening extant verses of *Persae* the first reference to the sea, ἄλμας, line 19, is devoid of any further poetic colour. This quickly changes, however, with the highly elaborate description of the following section, lines 31–9:

σμαραγδοχαίτας δὲ πόν-  
 τος ἄλοκα ναίῳις ἐφοι-  
 νίσσετο σταλά[γμασι,  
 κρ]αυγᾶ βοὰ δὲ [συ]μμι[γ]ῆς κατεῖχεν·  
 ὁμοῦ δ[ὲ] νάϊος στρατός  
 βάρβαρος ἄμμι[γ] αὔτις  
 ἀντεφέρειτ' ἐ[π' ἰχ]θυ[ο]-  
 στεφέσι μαρμαροπ[τύχ]οις  
 κόλποισιν [Ἀμφιτρί]τας.

(‘And the emerald-haired sea was reddened in its furrows by the drops from the ships, and shouts mingled with shrieking prevailed. And together the barbarian naval army was borne back upon the fish-wreathed bosom of Amphitrite with its shining folds.’ )

In her discussion of this passage, LeVen notes in particular the jarring juxtapositions:

part of the passage's effect resides in the violent juxtaposition of colors and in the poignant antithesis of personification of the sea, bejewelled with emerald and wreath, and the crudeness of the battle with its blood and shrieks.<sup>46</sup>

She also draws attention to the Homeric intertextuality inherent in the language Timotheus chooses to figure the sea here.<sup>47</sup> Here I will add the issue of Timothean engagement with lyric precedent for a fuller sense of the passage's distinctiveness.

Firinu suggests that Timotheus draws on the reference to Amphitrite in the first stasimon of Euripides' *Iphigenia at Tauris* (ἐπ' Ἀμφιτρί-ι τας ῥοθίῳ, 'by the billows of Amphitrite', 425–6).<sup>48</sup> Firinu has excellent and insightful things to say then about what the effects of Timotheus' new vision of Amphitrite are. Not only are we here faced with the clash between the serenity of Amphitrite's abode and the blood and destruction of an ensuing sea-battle: we are actually being presented with a cognitive challenge of interpretation, since Timotheus' language of the sea can be interpreted as, alternatively, both enargically hyper-vivid and concrete, and also highly anthropomorphic. Ultimately, Timotheus is posing questions about the nature of the sea, and the extent to which lyric diction can help to articulate its essence, whether an elemental substance, a divinity, or perhaps both at once. The semantic density of Timotheus' Amphitrite/sea involves the audience or reader in a game about the nature of lyric referentiality, since the language is drawing us here to pay attention to both the glittering surface of water and the potential anthropomorphism of the sea-deity (whether in epiphanic terms or statue-form): both these interpretations may be supported by the expression μαρμαροπ[τύχ]οις κόλποισιν, 'with the glittering folds of its troughs / her bosom'; σμαραγδοχαίτας, 'emerald-haired' and ἰχ]θυ[ο]στεφέσει 'fish-wreathed' might also both point in both enargeic and anthropomorphic directions at once.<sup>49</sup>

We may agree with LeVen that the effects here are jarring, and that ultimately Timotheus' language is defamiliarizing, taking us away from our more straightforward everyday encounters with the world through language in a challenging way, but let us now explore what happens when we factor in Bacchylides' Amphitrite into Timotheus' description. I suggest that Timotheus uses a Bacchylidean intertextual frame to add further dithyrambic narrative structure to his text, and also draws attention to his extraordinarily ornate style, and in so doing inviting us to

reflect on the nature of lyric expression and particularly the limits of description through comparison with Bacchylides.

Theseus' encounter with Amphitrite comes in lines 109–16 of Bacchylides 17:

εἶδέν τε πατρός ἄλοχον φίλαν  
σεμνὰν βοῶπιν ἐρατοῖ-  
σιν Ἀμφιτρίταν δόμοις·  
ἅ νιν ἀμφέβαλλεν αἴϊονα πορφυρέαν,  
κόμαισί τ' ἐπέθηκεν οὔλαις  
ἀμεμφέα πλόκον,  
τόν ποτέ οἱ ἐν γάμῳ  
δῶκε δόλιος Ἀφροδίτα ῥόδοις ἐρεμνόν.

(‘And he saw his father’s dear wife, august ox-eyed Amphitrite, in the lovely house; she put a purple cloak about him and set on his thick hair the faultless garland which once at her marriage guileful Aphrodite had given her, dark with roses.’)

This is the most sustained and vivid encounter with Amphitrite in all Greek lyric poetry, and it presents interesting points of comparison with Timotheus’ passage. This encounter with Amphitrite is focalized through the eyes of Theseus, and although the majority of the language here is visually evocative, with reference to colours, textures, and objects in particular, the peculiar thing to note is that, though in this instance Amphitrite is the recipient of a string of adjectives, none of these is very much use for us to get a sense of what Amphitrite actually looks like. The only term here which is in any sense visual is βοῶπιν, ‘ox-eyed’, which, rather than being straightforwardly if at all visual, is surely used to evoke Homeric divinities and to add some epic weight to Amphitrite’s divine majesty.<sup>50</sup> Timotheus and Bacchylides both use a build-up of adjectives to characterize their lyric style, but whereas Bacchylides often adds emotional depth, colour, or charm to his characters and narratives in this way, Timotheus compresses so many different effects into his piling up of noun-epithet combinations that his style seems deliberately provocative and challenging, inviting us all the time to pause, think, and consider what the words mean and their

relation to Greek literary history.<sup>51</sup> In the case of Amphitrite, if Timotheus has led us to one of the most well-known and extensive passages about this deity in the tradition, the point ultimately may be the recognition of a lyric irony, that even Bacchylidean *enargeia* cannot fully reveal the nature of divinity: Timotheus explores the limits of lyric description through not only the aesthetic challenges posed by his own piling up of vivid pictorial diction, but also by virtue of allusion to one of the acknowledged masters of lyric vividness.<sup>52</sup> We might draw a similar conclusion from Theseus' underwater vision of the dancing Nereids moments before in this same passage: the Nereids' 'liquid feet', ὑγροῖσι ποσ(σ)ῖν (line 108) is a charming expression precisely because of its slippage between potentially concrete and metaphorical signification.<sup>53</sup>

It is also worth pausing here with Timotheus' Amphitrite to note the quasi-Bacchylidean quality of the effects of the language of colour: in lines 31–3 the colour-clash between the emerald green of Amphitrite's locks and the red of the sailors' blood is emotionally charged and evocative, and it picks up and continues a Bacchylidean interest in colour contrasts and combinations, especially with the language of blood. In the Iliadically inspired narrative of the myth of Bacchylides 13, Hector's slaughter of the Achaeans is described through the clash of the colours of blood and earth, which itself picks up and develops Homeric usage:

ἐναριζ[ο]μ[έν]ων  
 [δ' ἔρ]ευθε φώτων  
 [αἶμα]τι γαῖα μέλα[ινα]  
 [Ἐκτορ]έας ὑπὸ χει[ρός]

(‘and the black earth was red with the blood of men slain by the hand of Hektor’, Bacchylides 13.151–4).

Bacchylides flaunts his enargeic lyric artistry by being able to use the redness of blood and the blackness of earth in the same phrase, whereas Homeric formulaic

expression only has black earth and black blood; blood in the *Iliad* is only red when it mixes with water.<sup>54</sup> In these terms Timotheus' clash of green hair and red blood is highly Bacchylidean, but in the broader context of Timotheus' visual and signficatory challenges, it may be more extreme and pointed.

The affinities between Bacchylidean and Timothean lyric style are still, though, worth further investigation. With Bacchylides, we are again in a literary environment heavily reliant upon the potentially multiplicitous referentiality of lyric epithets to engage audiences. In the passage I cited earlier, LeVen speaks of the 'violent juxtaposition' and 'poignant antithesis' between elements of Timothean diction; yet such a description might be a neat way of figuring Bacchylides' own style of lyric narrative, and indeed Segal comes very close to this in his brilliant observations on the language of Bacchylides 13.121–3:

ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ πολέμοιο  
λῆξεν ἰοστεφάνου  
Νηρηίδος ἀτρόμητος υἱός ...

But when the untrembling son of the Nereid violet-crowned ceased from war ...

“Untrembling warrior” stands in strong contrast with “Nereid violet-crowned”. “Violet-crowned” is so placed that it looks as if it might go with “war” and “Nereid”. The colometry, in fact, encourages us initially to translate “war violet-crowned...” We correct this “mistake” at once when we read (or hear) the next line, but we may wonder whether this invitation to misconstrue may not be deliberate. In any event it creates not merely a pathetic collocation of opposites, but a violent fusion and interpenetration of antithetical realms of experience.

To conclude this section, looking at Bacchylides both as an intertextual source for Timotheus and as a means of stylistic comparison is insightful in a number of respects. It allows us to see with more clarity the affinities as well as differences between Timotheus and more traditional lyric narrative: we should be prepared to emphasize continuities as much as discontinuities; one further advantage is that

comparisons of this kind allow us also to reassess our views of Bacchylides and the significance of his own style of composition.

### 3. Timotheus the Sophist

I turn now to a consideration of the wider cultural and intellectual context of the late fifth century, and the sophists in particular. LeVen has highlighted a number of affinities between the poets of the New Music and the sophists, and I would like to follow her lead by making one specific observation about Timotheus' *Persae*, but also to offer a slightly different assessment of the sophistic nature of New Musical poetic rhetoric. For LeVen, the defamiliarizing nature of New Musical diction is an aspect that Timotheus and his colleagues shared with the sophists.<sup>55</sup> The sophistic rhetoricians and sophistic poets together appeal to the mind and senses in new and challenging ways by inviting close scrutiny of the surface of their extraordinary texts, and provoking a range of responses.<sup>56</sup>

As we have seen thought the previous discussion, Timothean diction seems to pose deliberate challenges at the individual lexical level, and, as I have suggested, involving specific intertextual games; one of LeVen's most important insights is to see this as sophistic, because of the defamiliarizational properties inherent in the linguistic and stylistic flair of the New Musical 'dithyrambic' style in common with contemporary sophistic rhetoric. According to LeVen, this is part of a broader quest for truth: 'Any poet or prose writer, of course, exploits the aural and musical potential of language, but what connects neo-dithyrambists and sophists is their apparent interest in finding *truth* in language, which leads them to pursue the logic of language and its expressive possibilities, and playing with (and discussing) the "material" elements of language.'<sup>57</sup>

I want to build upon, though modify, LeVen's insights by focusing on two key elements of sophistic thought; taken together these are important ways in to the fuller

appreciation being outlined here not only of the self-conscious literarity of Timothean lyric style, but also its significance and point. These are: ‘the turn to *nomos* and *phusis*, convention/law and nature, as explanatory categories’ and what I would term ‘the shock of *logos*’.<sup>58</sup>

Goldhill sets out clearly the significance of the turn to *nomos* and *phusis*:

One the one hand, the opposition of ‘nature’ and ‘culture’ is itself a sign and symptom of the rapid cultural change of the classical city. ... The contest over what is natural (proper, right) and conventional (arbitrary, open to change, debateable) marks the conflict and worry of social change... [T]he turn to *nomos* and *phusis* as explanations repeatedly seeks to understand specific events, attitudes, projects as signs of abstract and general principles – which is one of the foundational strategies of science, philosophy, and the other self-reflexive disciplines.<sup>59</sup>

‘The shock of *logos*’ figures the ways in which sophistic language unsettles and challenges, inviting you both to pay attention to the surface glitter of the literally self-consciousness of the writing, and also by tempting you to delve further within and to attempt to find further insight, or indeed truths, beyond the surface. It also involves the self-conscious attention drawn to language itself, and thus to rhetoric itself, as a suitable and effective form of communication.

What I would like to focus on is, first, a sense that through this degree of self-consciousness in the building-up of poetic form out of intertextually resonant, and aesthetically and cognitively jarring diction, Timotheus shares with the sophists, and Gorgias in particular, a deep-seated fascination with *logos* itself. *Logos*, first, in terms of poetic language, partly through the literary inheritance of the Greek literary tradition of lyric and epic. And *logos*, second, in terms of *reason*, particularly in relation to how language, and its most preeminent practitioners, affect the ways we interpret the world.

Second, it is important to investigate the ways in which this sophistic interest in language relates to a broader intellectual interest in the relation between *nomos* and *phusis*. Rather than being interested straightforwardly in any quest for ‘truth’, I would suggest that the sophists, and Gorgias in particular, are posing questions about the relation between language and reality, in the form of the assumptions we naturally make on the back of the way our values and our sense of our own identity are in part shaped by our grounding in traditions of a variety of kinds, including perhaps most importantly literary traditions. Gorgias does this by challenging readers to confront what they think they know about Helen, and also to confront the persuasive complicity of the language of the literary tradition in shaping their opinions, attitudes, and values.

We can already sense how the literary multiplicities of Timotheus’ *Persae* provoke a range of reactions on a number of diverse grounds. The text can draw audiences to feel shocked (whether positively or negatively) by the surface effects of its linguistic plays; captivated by the potentially engrossing narrative; intrigued by Timotheus’ intertextual games; or outraged or astonished by the tonal uncertainties of what results. We should recognize the possibility that many of the different elements that make up Timotheus’ extraordinarily rich literarity will clash with one another – the ornate compound adjectives and the intertextuality may draw audiences and readers away from the narrative account of the sea-battle, to focus on the specifics of the language itself, and/or to the intertexts; and, as I have already suggested, it may be that some of those lyric intertexts have the potential to raise questions about the very limits of narrativity.

In addition, the very diversity of the intertextual plays that Timotheus offers raises interpretative paradoxes and difficulties of its own; intertexts may provide jarring shifts in diction or produce clashes of tonal register with the surrounding narrative. I refer back here to Jebb’s initial shock at being unable to work out a consistency of tone in Timotheus’ handling of the Persian characters in this text.<sup>60</sup>



Yet we too might justifiably wonder what to make of a text which alludes not only to Simonidean, Pindaric, and Bacchylidean lyric, but also to Aeschylus' *Persians* and *Oresteia* (in so doing making, for instance, his own Xerxes speak in line 178 like the chorus of Aeschylus' *Choephoroe* line 50), to a range of Euripidean and even Aristophanic passages;<sup>61</sup> and when we finally – and perhaps exhaustedly – reach the *sphragis* after listening to Xerxes' lament, we are, I suppose, left to wonder about the nature of our emotional reaction: are we to laugh, or cry?

The nature of interpretative response to a glittering text is perhaps nowhere more markedly at stake than in the most famous extant piece of sophistic rhetoric, Gorgias' *Encomium of Helen*. This is the most obvious contemporary piece of writing to challenge conventional wisdom, inviting audiences to assess and reassess their own world-views and their underpinnings, via a thoroughgoing reevaluation of the relation between language, persuasion, and the poetic tradition.<sup>62</sup> With Gorgias, the glaring implausibility of the arguments put across about Helen's blamelessness is far more than a simple and ultimately pointless or insignificant ruse, because of the way Gorgias, through his strangely new encomiastic vehicle, makes audiences and readers think about the potential connections between power, persuasion, and language, and the ways that (literary) tradition, and thus convention, may condition us to behave and think.

What is also very important for Gorgias is a basic and indeed metaphysical question about the nature of reality, in terms of the relation between the surface effects of language and convention, and the existence of any ulterior structure that might convey truth: this basic issue is posed by the opening sentence of *Helen*:

Κόσμος πόλει μὲν εὐανδρία, σώματι δὲ κάλλος, ψυχῇ δὲ σοφία,  
πράγματι δὲ ἀρετή, λόγῳ δὲ ἀλήθεια.

'The adornment of a city is manpower,  
of a body beauty,  
of a soul, wisdom,  
of an action, virtue,

of a speech, truth.’

(trans. Dillon, preserving the quasi-poetic quality of Gorgias’ parallelisms with an ornate layout cleverly reminiscent of Nisetich’s well-known translation of Pindar)

*Kosmos* here is the key term, delicately poised as it is between superficiality and deep structure. Robert Wardy teases out some of the intricacies of this opening:

Since he immediately assures us that ‘one should honour with praise what is worthy of praise, but attach blame to the unworthy’, the purpose of the opening sentence is evidently to enumerate across a wide range of cases what might properly be the subject of an encomium. If so, then Gorgias’ abstract designation of what deserves admiration is *kosmos*. But ‘*kosmos*’ was, we will remember, a key-word in Parmenides: although the core-meaning of the word is ‘order’ or ‘harmony’, it extends to cover *speciously* attractive, imposed arrangements ... And does *alêtheia* here, the *kosmos* of *logos*, signify unvarnished ‘truth’, with the implication that Gorgias’ *Encomium* in particular can achieve the excellence of *logos* only if it tells is a *true* story? If *kosmos* can regularly connote ornamentation and artifice, the danger is that a cosmetic *logos* may disguise rather than represent reality.<sup>63</sup>

Our anticipation that Gorgias may be building towards some deeper theory of truth is, of course, notoriously dashed, with the joke on us provided by the sting in the tail of Gorgias’ avowedly self-indulgent *paignion* (§21).<sup>64</sup> Gorgias only leaves us with doubts about the possibility that there is in fact anything more to reality than a dependency on the dangerous instabilities of language and *nomos*, and the major challenges of getting beyond the superficialities of *kosmos* to an understanding of something beyond.<sup>65</sup>

As Wardy observes, the language of *kosmos* here is both traditionally encomiastic and philosophically suggestive.<sup>66</sup> We now need to recall that, within Timotheus’ renegotiation of Pindaric material cultural metaphor in what is likely to have been the opening of the *prooimion* of *Persae*, Timotheus himself uses the word *kosmos*, both to heap praise on the historical subject-matter of his composition, and, implicitly, figuring his own work:

κλεινὸν ἔλευθερίας τεύχων μέγαν Ἑλλάδι κόσμον.

(‘Fashioning a famous and great adornment of freedom for Greece’, fr. 788)

Earlier in section 1 I pointed towards two obvious lyric intertexts for this use of *kosmos*, both from Simonides. But if we are happy enough to acknowledge Timotheus’ affiliations with sophistic thought more generally, we might like to at least countenance the possibility that Timotheus is also picking up Gorgias’ usage (and if so this would be one more instance of a structural reference to the way another text opens, in addition to the presence of Pindar fr. 76–7 here). If so, Timotheus is perhaps discovering a fresh appropriateness in the conventional figurative language of traditional encomiastic praise when now seen through a contemporary Gorgianic filter.

If we take this possibility seriously, we may be able to make more of the peculiar appropriateness of picking up Gorgias’ *kosmos* – delicately poised, as that clever usage is, between a sense of ordered structure and a potentially deceptive superficiality<sup>67</sup> – within the broader literary strategies of Timotheus’ text. I suggested earlier that Timothean claims to *kosmos* for both his subject and his own poem are a programmatic statement of intent. If we now factor in Gorgias, it may be possible to sense in the usage an additional programmatic self-consciousness concerning a systematic tension, for the recipients of this poetry, between surface and structure, and between appearance and truth.

We might think, first, of an opposition between the dazzling and often perplexing charms of the linguistic surface of the text, and the possibilities of narrative absorption: here there are methodological similarities with the tension between ‘absorption’ and ‘erudition’ which is now seen as an important way in to thinking about Classical visual art.<sup>68</sup>

We might also think in associated ways about Timotheus' attitude towards divinity, which, as we have seen in the case of Amphitrite may raise both representational and theological questions; we know independently that Euripides also took an interest in such issues, especially since he promotes a naturalistic and euhemeristic theological outlook of the sophist Prodicus at *Bacchae* 274–85, and perhaps Timotheus is again making a virtue of contemporary sophistic theorizing here.<sup>69</sup>

And finally, we might ask broader questions about the kind of response appropriate to a complex poetics of this nature. If Timotheus' *Persae* is itself a kind of encomium, what is its point, and to what extent is it, in any sense, true? How meaningful for a late fifth-century audience (of whatever kind) is Timotheus' extraordinarily stylized and at times bizarrely narrated praise of an historical event and its participants which, though highly significant, have now staidly rather remote and objectified, and even mythologized or fictionalized – especially after, for instance, Aeschylus' *Persians*, Herodotus' *Histories*, and the representations of barbarians in late fifth-century tragedy and comedy?<sup>70</sup>

These are very difficult questions to answer, but I suggest that Timotheus' highly stylized lyric is raising them, in part to highlight the distinctiveness and creativeness of his own talent, inspired both by the lyric tradition and by a broader sense of fifth-century literary history down to the sophists.

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## Notes

### \* Thanks.

<sup>1</sup> In particular, Kowalzig and Wilson (2013); my own discussions of Bacchylidean dithyramb in context in Fearn (2007).

<sup>2</sup> Csapo (2004) and (2011); see also: Csapo (1999–2000); D’Angour (2006); Csapo and Wilson (2009).

<sup>3</sup> Power (2010), particularly fine on New Musical *kitharôidia*.

<sup>4</sup> LeVen (2014); Budelmann and LeVen (2014). For recent critical interest in the text of Timotheus’ *Persae*, see in particular Hordern (2002) and Sevieri (2011).

<sup>5</sup> E.g. Firinu (2009); Budelmann and LeVen (2014) esp. 201 for the way intertexts in Timotheus provide structural support for his often outlandish images and metaphors.

<sup>6</sup> For an overview regarding the New Music, see LeVen (2014) 1–8, and Csapo and Wilson (2009) 278–9 on Timotheus.

<sup>7</sup> Kenyon (1918) 7; Fearn (2010) 171.

<sup>8</sup> Stern (1970); Pfeijffer and Slings (1999a); [Long.] *De subl.* 33.5.

<sup>9</sup> Jebb (1905) 46: general excursus, 27–55, and on dithyramb in particular, 45–55.

<sup>10</sup> Jebb (1905) 45.

<sup>11</sup> Jebb (1905) 49.

<sup>12</sup> Jebb (1905) 55.

<sup>13</sup> See here A. W. Verrall’s comments in Lady Caroline’s biography of her husband (Jebb, C. (1907) 474): ‘The disinterred pieces of Bacchylides are a precious addition to a miserably defective chapter in the history of literature; one or two of them are notable works of art; but, if they were modern and familiar, five pages, instead of five hundred, would be enough to bestow upon them. “One does wish,” as I heard Jebb say, with a sigh, in the midst of his labour, “that the man were just a little better.”’

<sup>14</sup> For further more detailed discussion about Bacchylides’ place in the history of fifth-century lyric and the new music, see Fearn (2007) 163–337. For more recent work on the whole history of dithyramb, including Bacchylides as well the New Music, see Power (2010),

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Kowalzig and Wilson (2013), including in particular D'Alessio (2013), Fearn (2013), Franklin (2013), Power (2013).

<sup>15</sup> Csapo (1999–2000) 408, critiquing Kranz (1933); Kranz 254 for ‘völlig absolut stehende balladeske Erzählung’ in Euripidean neo-dithyrambic lyric.

<sup>16</sup> See also Battezzato (2013).

<sup>17</sup> See Fearn (2013), esp. 146–8 for the possibility of both a Dionysiac and an Apolline presence in Bacchylides 17 on the basis of both linguistic and narrative detail, and of contextual flexibility of performance. This is one way of explaining the significance of Bacchylidean narrative dithyramb; it must also be said that scholarly worries about the oddity of the Bacchylidean form founder on the lack of evidence for what exactly other earlier fifth-century dithyrambs, even those by Pindar, actually looked like, and Bacchylidean dithyramb may not in fact have been atypical. See e.g. Pind. *Dith.* 2 (*Herakles or Kerberos*) for a dithyramb with a mythological title along the model of titles in the Hellenistic edition of Bacchylides’ *Dithyrambs*; also discussion of Pindar’s treatment of the myth of Orion in dithyrambic form (Lavecchia (2000) 273–8): in these cases at least, mythological narrative would surely have had a prominent role. The relation between dithyramb and narrative set out by Plato at *Rep.* 3.394b–c should not, I think, be taken to relate exclusively to New Musical dithyramb, even if there remain doubts about the applicability of Plato’s statement to all earlier fifth-century dithyramb (Peponi (2013) 355–6).

<sup>18</sup> For the close links between Timothean kitharoidic nome and dithyramb, see esp. Power (2010) 503–5; Power (2013).

<sup>19</sup> First line of proem: Hordern (2002) 127–8; see Power (2010) 530–1 for the alternative, though perhaps more doubtful, suggestion that this is the first line of the poem proper.

<sup>20</sup> Here I build on some of the observations made by Power (2010) 530–2. See also LeVen (2014) 90–2, 193–5, with 219–20 for the narrative model provided by Simonides’ *Plataea Elegy*, from the poem’s opening right through to the *sphragis*; Bassett (1931) 155 picks out the Pindaric allusion.

<sup>21</sup> Ar. *Ach.* 637 with Σ; cf. also Ar. *Equ.* 1329; Kugelmeier (1996) 102–7; cf. also Ἑλλάδος ἔρεισμα at Soph. *OC* 54–8; Fearn (2013) 136–9.

<sup>22</sup> LSJ *s.v.* κρήπις II; Hordern (2002) 121.

<sup>23</sup> As LeVen (2014) takes great pains to set out throughout, we should not be worried about New Musical lyric exhibiting this degree of intertextual self-consciousness, both formally and ideologically; see also e.g. Firinu (2009). Timotheus is also cueing himself in to

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a fifth-century lyric tradition obsessed with material cultural metaphor; I will have more to say about this in section 3.

<sup>24</sup> Power (2010) 531–3.

<sup>25</sup> With τεύχων here picked up again with νεοτευχῆ in the *sphragis* at line 203: LeVen (2014) 90.

<sup>26</sup> Firinu (2009)

<sup>27</sup> Budelmann and LeVen (2014); LeVen (2014) 162, with Arist. *Rhet.* 1406a35–6 and [Dem.] *Eloc.* 91.

<sup>28</sup> In section 3 I will return to this point with specific reference to affinities between Timotheus and Gorgias.

<sup>29</sup> Discussed in detail at Power (2010) 522–33.

<sup>30</sup> Power (2010) 525–6.

<sup>31</sup> See e.g. the papers in Felson (2004); also Agocs (2012) esp. 219.

<sup>32</sup> ‘Holy city’ an earlier Athenian dithyrambic motif: Pind. fr. 75.4, Bacch. 23.1, Fearn (2013) 136–7; cf. e.g. Soph. *Aj.* 1221–2, Ar. *Equ.* 1319: here Timotheus perhaps surprises with the unexpected simplicity of this traditional noun-epithet combination, but interpretative issues may be more difficult to unravel – (atypical) simplicity of noun-epithet phraseology may in this instance itself be a barrier to fully understanding the significance of the reference. For Spartan overtones in the reference here in the context of potentially Spartan *eunomia*, see LeVen (2014) 101. Cf. Power (2010) 537–9 with esp. 539 n. 355.

<sup>33</sup> Firinu (2009).

<sup>34</sup> Csapo (1999–2000) 418–24 with fig. 3a.

<sup>35</sup> For the place of polyptoton within the range of devices that New Musical poetry uses as part of a self-conscious attitude towards its own literarity, see LeVen (2014) 165–7 discussing Melanippides and Licymnius, and Gorgianic style.

<sup>36</sup> For which see Fearn (2013) 139–46.

<sup>37</sup> What is again, noteworthy, however, is the possibility of a structural kind of intertextuality pointedly relating to opening words or lines of well-known texts, something which we have been trained to expect only in Hellenistic poetry and later. I raise the possibility that the later fifth-century Athenian book-trade (whose effects appear visible elsewhere in Aristophanic and Euripidean drama, for instance) may have allowed for more sustained engagement with the materiality of literary texts than had been generally possible in earlier decades, though I would not push this point too far here. In the next section on poetic

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style I will go on to compare and contrast the kinds of intertextuality that we can see in Bacchylides and Timotheus.

<sup>38</sup> Hordern (2002) 50–5; in particular, Budelmann and LeVen (2014) 203: ‘Timotheus avoids intricately embedded chronological sequences that characterize, for example, the style (and challenge) of Pindar’s odes; rather, the narrative shifts laterally between a series of tableaux, with no prolepsis or analepsis. The surviving section of *Persians* moves from sea, to shore, to land, before finally focusing on the king’s tent.’ For Budelmann and LeVen the point of this simplicity is to draw attention to linguistic and figurative complexity, though I suggest in addition that such simplicity of syntax and narrative style may also be intertextually resonant and pointed.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Hall (1994), updated in Hall (2006b).

<sup>40</sup> It is interesting to note that the form ἔτεο is relatively frequent in the *Iliad* as a verb of emotion and of physical assault, it is not used in the *Odyssey* of seafaring, and is in fact only so used in extant archaic and classical texts in the two passages under consideration here.

<sup>41</sup> See also Bacch. 3.9–22 with discussion by Carey (1999) 19–20, noting the characteristically Bacchylidean and unPindaric quality of the technique. Power (2010) 533 notes the referential ambiguity here but misses the Bacchylidean overtone.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Power (2010) 533.

<sup>43</sup> Bacchylides 17 and Athenian cultural (and choral) imperialism: Fearn (2013) esp. 139–52.

<sup>44</sup> Castriota (1992) 60–1; Calame (1996); Fearn (2007); Calame (2009) 175.

<sup>45</sup> LeVen (2014) 150–2 and 180; Firinu (2009) 123–4.

<sup>46</sup> LeVen (2014) 151.

<sup>47</sup> LeVen (2014) 180.

<sup>48</sup> Firinu (2009) section 2.2.

<sup>49</sup> Firinu (2009) 123–4. Compare also the insightful comments of LeVen (2014) 172–4 on the description of Health in Licymnius *PMG* 769. I will take some of these points further in the final section.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. also Bacch. 5.98–9 and 11.37–9 for comparable build-ups of epithets referring to Artemis; in the first instance (inside a myth) the epithets do there help to create the visual impression of an anthropomorphic deity, but the beauty of the colours there jars markedly and deliberately with the rage of the goddess against the neglectful mortal Oeneus.

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<sup>51</sup> On Bacchylides' use of epithets, see classically Segal (1976), e.g. 101: 'Bacchylides' lyric style atomizes this coherent, well-integrated universality and comprehensiveness [sc. of the Homeric epithet]. It renders the content of the epic world, but broken down into discrete scenes and moments. These are, on the one hand, part of the epic tradition; but on the other hand they are totally separate from it because the poet's special perceptions and art have endowed them with a new individuality, vibrancy, and intensity of emotion'. See also further below.

<sup>52</sup> Compare here Torrance (2013) ch. 2 on Euripidean intertextual ekphrasis.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. e.g. Kirkwood (1980) 160: '[I]n Bacchyl. 17.108 the feet of the Nereids are undoubtedly wet, yet the basic element in ὑδροῖσι ποσσίν is the liquid suppleness of these dancing feet.' Also Maehler (2004) 185 ad loc., going further than Maehler (1997) 203 ad loc. with Burnett (1985) 22; note, by contrast, the disapproval of Jebb (1905) 387 ad loc.: 'The use of the word [ὑγρός] in reference to Nymphs of the *sea* is not very felicitous'.

<sup>54</sup> Most closely paralleled by Hom. *Il.* 15.713–15; red blood in water: Hom. *Il.* 21.21; Fearn (2007) 137.

<sup>55</sup> LeVen (2014) 161–7, and 164 in particular with Dion. Hal. *Lys.* 3 (= Gorg. 82 A 4 D-K) for the similarities between Gorgianic rhetoric and dithyramb.

<sup>56</sup> For the view of the sophists as a fascinatingly egregious and diverse group of thinkers associated particularly with late fifth-century Athens, see Goldhill (2002) 47–8; for a sophistic Euripides see Conacher (1999) (though justifiably critiqued by Goldhill (1999)); Allan (1999–2000). There is still more work to be done on relation between fifth-century literary and sophistic rhetoric, even with Euripides.

<sup>57</sup> LeVen (2014) 166.

<sup>58</sup> Borrowing the first and developing the third of Goldhill's four signposts: Goldhill (2002) 48–53: for *nomos* and *phusis*, Goldhill (2002) 48–9; classically, Guthrie (1969) ch. 4. My 'shock of *logos*' is an extension of Goldhill's choice of 'reversal and paradox' (2002) 50–1 (Goldhill's other two signposts are 'the argument from probability', 49, and 'teaching virtue', 51–3). 'Shock' here is a way of figuring *ekplêxis*, 'snatching people out of their senses', which is intended to capture the double-edged nature of audience response with sophistic rhetoric in particular: classically, Diodorus' account of the Athenians' first reactions to Gorgias (Diod. Sic. 12.53.2–4), with *ekplêxis* double-edged in terms of not only wonderment and captivation, but also bewilderment and the risk even of madness. Cf. Lada (1993) esp. 97–8, with e.g. Ar. *Ran.* 961–2 (Euripides critiquing Aeschylus), Pl. *Ion* 535b–e (the rhapsode on audience captivation), Polyb. 2.56.11 on tragedy and the captivation of the soul. In Gorgias himself (*Hel.* 16) *ekplêxis* is presented as psychological trauma, interpreted

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as ‘the deep turmoil of the soul inextricably interwoven with confused judgement (wrong evaluation of circumstances) and resulting in non-rational behaviour’ (Lada (1993) 127 n. 28); also Thuc. 7.42.3 with Hunter (1986) 418 for ‘shock’.

<sup>59</sup> Goldhill (2002) 48.

<sup>60</sup> Above, 0000.

<sup>61</sup> On Aeschylus in Timotheus’ *Persae*, see e.g. LeVen (2014) 182–3, 206–10; Rosenbloom (2006) 151. For Euripides, see most notably Firinu (2009) on *IT*; LeVen (2014) 210–11 for links to the opening of *Medea* and also to lines 386–8; for the question of the relation between Timotheus’ Phrygian and the Phrygian slave in Euripides’ *Orestes*, LeVen (2014) 215; on Aristophanes, LeVen (2014) 214 and Hall (2006b) 279. In addition to the intertextual links with Euripides suggested by others, I would also point to possible links with other major tragic themes and passages, particularly in the Persian lamentations of lines 121ff.: I suggest that Ἴλιοπόρος κακῶν λυαί- | α μόνα γένοιτ’ ἄν, ‘A crossing to Ilion would be the only release from ills’ provides, firstly, a metatextual pointer to a Trojan, and specifically tragic and Homeric, literary domain, and also an ironic reversal of wishes evoked about that space: ideas about what it might be like in future with Troy left behind, as evoked in, for instance, Aeschylus’ *Oresteia* from its opening line, and more specifically in the sense of choral isolation, remoteness, and wish-fulfillment inherent in passages like Soph. *Aj.* 1185–1222 and esp. Eur. *Tro.* 190–229. The concluding phrase of the speech, ἔνθα κείσομαι οἰκτρός, ὀρ- | νίθων ἔθνεσιν ὠμοβρῶσι θοίνα, ‘and here I shall lie, pitiable, a feast for the flesh-eating tribes of birds’, lines 137–8, leaves us with a deictic that doesn’t refer to Troy, but that provides a final intertextual cue to the Trojan (tragic and Homeric) literary landscape. Such Timothean intertextual games reverse the chain of tragic causation and wish-fulfillment, but also pay homage to contemporary tragedy, and in particular Euripides. What the effects of these intertextual plays and concomitant tonal shifts and disjunctions are, is, as often with Euripides, difficult to definitively evaluate (do we, for instance, want to pity this Persian?) – and I would suggest that this is a function of the sophisticated density of Timotheus’ interventions in *logos*. Intellectual challenges of this sort with Trojan and Persian subject-matter have been with us since at least as far back as Aeschylus’ *Persae*, but with Timotheus the literary density of reference makes question of tone and interpretative response even more challenging and insistent.

<sup>62</sup> Among key modern work on Gorgias’ *Helen* I would highlight especially Wardy (1996) and Porter (2010) 276–98.

<sup>63</sup> Wardy (1996) 29–30, with 153 n. 8 critiquing MacDowell’s relatively flat interpretation of *kosmos* here (MacDowell (1982) 28 ad loc.); cf. Goldhill (2002) 54–9.

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<sup>64</sup> Wardy (1996) 50.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Porter (2010) 297–8.

<sup>66</sup> See also Worman (2002) 157 on the Pindaric background to Gorgianic *kosmos*: ‘the notion of appropriate adornment is also a Pindaric *topos* and most particular to praise speech. This epinician technique serves to establish the authority of the poet by demonstrating in visualizing terms his grasp of the proper order of things’. Also Worman (2002) 24, though her references are garbled; Slater (1969) *s.v.* for Pind. *Pyth.* 2.10, *Ol.* 3.13, 8.83, and 11.13, *Nem.* 2.8 and 3.31, *Isthm.* 6.69 and fr. 194.1; also *Pyth.* 3.82 for the adverbial sense ‘fittingly’.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. also Goldhill (2002) 55.

<sup>68</sup> For which see Newby (2009), further elaborated by Platt (2011); ultimately Fried (1980).

<sup>69</sup> On Prodicus see Guthrie (1971) 279 and 238–41, citing the Euripides passage; also Lloyd (1987) 48.

<sup>70</sup> For the latter, Hall (1989) and (2006a); Croally (1994) 103–15. For important recent work on fictionality in Old Comedy, see Ruffell (2011), esp. 35–43. For questions about the identification and significance of a first performance context for *Persae*, see e.g. Power (2010) 526, with 410 BCE as a suggested date: ‘[A]fter the victory of the Athenian fleet at Cyzicus in the spring of 410 over combined Pelopponesian and Persian forces, which was followed shortly by the collapse of the oligarchic government in Athens, it would have been heard too as an epinician celebration of Athenian naval success: Salamis would stand as a kind of heroic exemplar for current victories, echoing them on a grand mythic historic stage;’ alternatively see the very different position of Rosenbloom (2006) 149, for whom a first performance in Ephesus in 394 is preferred. My own feeling, outlined here, is that the highly sophisticated literary and tonal complexity of *Persae* makes references across to performance context as a bridge to explanation of the text’s point or function rather moot.