



**HAL**  
open science

# Music and Education of the Soul in Plato and Aristotle: Homoeopathy and the Formation of Character”

Frédérique Woerther

► **To cite this version:**

Frédérique Woerther. Music and Education of the Soul in Plato and Aristotle: Homoeopathy and the Formation of Character”. *The Classical Quarterly*, 2007, 58 (1), pp.89-103. halshs-00239672

**HAL Id: halshs-00239672**

**<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-00239672>**

Submitted on 22 Mar 2023

**HAL** is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

Frédérique Woerther

CNRS, UPR 76, Centre Jean Pépin (Villejuif, France)

MUSIC AND THE EDUCATION OF THE SOUL IN PLATO AND ARISTOTLE:  
HOMOEOPATHY AND THE FORMATION OF CHARACTER<sup>i</sup>

Studies of how the Greeks understood the role of music in the education of the soul have tended to focus on two points above all.<sup>ii</sup> First, scholars treat the idea that music influences the soul as a self-evident notion that started with the Pythagoreans, and they attribute the same view of the subject to both Plato and Aristotle. As an example of the latter tendency consider the following statement: 'Aristotle's conviction that character must be formed by habituation before the intellect is instructed – *a conception he shares with Plato* – will be important to bear in mind when considering ethical training through music.'<sup>iii</sup> In fact, Plato's position on music and the education of the soul evolves from the *Republic* to the *Laws*; in particular he considers the role of pleasure in the musical education of young children in the *Laws* but not in the *Republic*. The second general tendency in the scholarship on this subject makes ἦθος a central idea in musical education, as indicated by the titles of the books by Abert and Anderson and by the widespread use of the term *ēthos* in discussing this subject. In fact, it is only Aristotle, in the *Politics*, who speaks of ἦθος in his treatment of musical education. It is worth setting out the differences, occasionally subtle ones, between the treatments of this question in Plato, in both the *Republic* and the

*Laws*, and Aristotle in the *Politics*. It is also worth specifying how the concept of ἦθος arises in connection with musical education, which will entail avoiding its use in regard to Plato.

Music is a fundamental part of Greek *paideia* in the classical period.<sup>iv</sup> As the sophists rose to prominence in the fifth century, the role of music in education became a topic of great interest. Plato provides a crucial set of sources for understanding this development: the organization of the ideal cities described in the *Republic* and the *Laws* requires an account of the education which the citizens of those cities will have to receive, whether or not those citizens will form part of the governing class. In this paper I shall say little about how Plato may have borrowed from the sophists in regard to musical education, but will focus first on the characteristic features of his theory of music's role in education in the *Republic* and *Laws*. Then I shall consider Aristotle's approach in the final three chapters of Book VIII of the *Politics*, where he considers the role of music in educating the soul.

If one excludes the brief remarks of Protagoras in the dialogue named after him,<sup>v</sup> and those of Socrates in the *Crito* and *Alcibiades*,<sup>vi</sup> it is in the *Republic* and the *Laws* that Plato describes, through the dialogues' characters, the task that falls to music in the education of the soul. Before setting out the differences in the treatment of music in the two dialogues and accounting for the ways in which Plato's view evolved from the *Republic* to the *Laws*, it is necessary to consider three basic questions that concern Plato's overall view of music and

education: why is it that music should have any role at all in the education of the soul? What type of music does one use and why? Whom does one educate and by what means?

Once the necessity of conferring power on the guardians has been established, the interlocutors of the *Republic* attempt to define and describe the training which the guardians will receive.<sup>vii</sup> In classical fashion Socrates assigns the art of gymnastic to the formation of the body and the art of music to that of the soul.<sup>viii</sup> Beyond this basic training, the future guardians will receive higher instruction for the formation of their minds, as described in books VI and VII. Yet even before the introduction of gymnastic, the very first educational influence which the guardians will receive concerns the formation of their character through music. The word ‘music’ translates the term μουσική, which covers a large field – ‘the art of the Muses’ in its entirety – including not only the art of rhythms and harmonies, but also that of λόγοι (‘discourses’). Here we will only be considering music in the narrow sense, that is, the art of rhythms and harmonies. Questions regarding poetry, in particular the type of objects that poets are obliged to represent in their compositions and the way in which they are obliged to represent them, will be left aside.<sup>ix</sup> Aristotle takes up these questions in a distinct treatise – the *Poetics* – and not in the chapters of the *Politics* that will concern us here.

The first point to be considered in regard to the musical education of the soul is the mimetic quality of music. Like all other arts, such as drawing, weaving,

embroidery, and architecture, but also like nature itself, music is capable of imitating moral qualities and human attitudes; music does so by means of rhythms and harmonies.<sup>x</sup> Because music has this property, Socrates and his interlocutors seek to purify music by following the same rules as those which were adopted when they defined the principles of imitation for narrative discourse and poetry. This process takes place in two steps: purification of harmonies, then purification of rhythms. One group of harmonies is rejected straightaway: mixolydian and syntonolydian.<sup>xi</sup> These are the harmonies used in threnodies, and the type of poetic composition that expresses funereal grief and lamentation was previously excluded because it inspires neither courage nor restraint in those who listen to it.<sup>xii</sup> The ionian and lydian harmonies suffer the same fate: these harmonies which are μαλακαί τε καὶ συμποτικάί ('soft and tending to promote drinking')<sup>xiii</sup> and also χαλαραί ('loose'),<sup>xiv</sup> are not suited for the warriors who are the guardians of the city. Only the phrygian and dorian are maintained because they imitate the sounds and accents of a man who is both courageous and temperate, courage and temperance being the two virtues of the man who is philosophical by nature (*Rep.* III, 399a5-c4):

Οὐκ οἶδα, ἔφην ἐγώ, τὰς ἁρμονίας, ἀλλὰ κατάλειπε ἐκείνην τὴν ἁρμονίαν, ἣ ἔν τε πολεμικῇ πράξει ὄντος ἀνδρείου καὶ ἐν πάσῃ βιαίῳ ἐργασίᾳ πρεπόντως ἂν μιμήσαιτο φθόγγους τε καὶ προσωδίας, καὶ ἀποτυχόντος ἢ εἰς τραύματα ἢ εἰς θανάτους ἰόντος ἢ εἰς τινα ἄλλην συμφορὰν πεσόντος, ἐν πᾶσι τοῦτοις

παρατεταγμένως καὶ καρτερούντως ἀμυνομένου τὴν τύχην· καὶ ἄλλην αὖ ἐν εἰρηνικῇ τε καὶ μὴ βιαίῳ ἀλλ' ἐν ἐκούσῳ πράξει ὄντος, ἢ τινὰ τι πείθοντός τε καὶ δεομένου, ἢ εὐχῇ θεὸν ἢ διδαχῇ καὶ νοουθετήσει ἄνθρωπον, ἢ τούναντίον ἄλλῳ δεομένῳ ἢ διδάσκοντι ἢ μεταπείθοντι ἑαυτὸν ἐπέχοντα, καὶ ἐκ τούτων πράξαντα κατὰ νοῦν, καὶ μὴ ὑπερηφάνως ἔχοντα, ἀλλὰ σωφρόνως τε καὶ μετρίως ἐν πᾶσι τούτοις πράττοντά τε καὶ τὰ ἀποθαίνοντα ἀγαπῶντα. Ταύτας δύο ἁρμονίας, βίαιον, ἐκούσιον, δυστυχούντων, εὐτυχούντων, σωφρόνων, ἀνδρείων αἵτινες φθόγγους μιμήσονται κάλλιστα, ταύτας λείπε.

I don't know the harmonies, I said, but leave us that harmony that would fittingly imitate the utterances and accents of a brave man who is engaged in warfare or in any enforced business, and who, when he has failed, either meeting wounds or death or having fallen into some other mishap, in all these conditions confronts fortune with steadfast endurance and repels her strokes. And another for such a man engaged in works of peace, not enforced but voluntary, either trying to persuade somebody of something and imploring him – whether it be a god, through prayer, or a man, by teaching and admonition – or contrariwise yielding himself to another who is petitioning or teaching him or trying to change his opinions, and in consequence faring according to his wish, and not bearing himself arrogantly, but in all this acting modestly and moderately and acquiescing in the outcome. Leave us these two harmonies – the enforced and the

voluntary – that will best imitate the utterances of men failing or succeeding, the temperate, the brave – leave us these. (trans. adapted from Shorey)

The musical rhythms (ῥυθμοί) that along with harmonies (ἄρμονία) and words (λόγοι) form melody (μέλος)<sup>xv</sup> are in turn subject to the same distinction (*Rep.* III, 399e8-11):

Ἐπόμενον γὰρ δὴ ταῖς ἄρμονίαις ἂν ἡμῖν εἴη τὸ περὶ ῥυθμούς, μὴ ποικίλους αὐτοῦς διώκειν μηδὲ παντοδαπὰς βάσεις, ἀλλὰ βίου ῥυθμοὺς ἰδεῖν κοσμοῦ τε καὶ ἀνδρείου τίνες εἰσίν.

For upon harmonies would follow the consideration of rhythms; we must not pursue complexity nor great variety in the basic movements, but must observe what are the rhythms of a life that is orderly and brave. (trans. Shorey)

As in the case of the harmonies, there exists here too a similarity between the human attitudes of courage and moderation and certain types of rhythms, though Glaucon admits to Socrates that he does not understand this correspondence in detail and Socrates recommends consulting Damon,<sup>xvi</sup> whose *Areopagiticus* may have contained ‘a study of rhythms, complete with a metrical analysis of which

only a few scraps survive.<sup>xvii</sup> In any case Plato does not concern himself in the *Republic* with the objects of imitation of these rhythms and his account remains imprecise on this subject.<sup>xviii</sup>

There is another way to understand the mechanism that allows music to play a role in the education of the soul, viz. the principle of ‘homoeopathy’. Compared to the deficiencies of natural beings and the deficiencies of objects made by craftsmen, which also have the ability to imitate human attitudes, music possesses a supreme usefulness which justifies its place in the education of the soul. Music is capable of exercising a particular kind of beneficial influence, namely, grace (εὐσημοσύνη) (*Rep.* III, 401d5-e1):

Ἄρ' οὖν, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, ὦ Γλαύκων, τούτων ἔνεκα κυριωτάτη ἐν μουσικῇ τροφή, ὅτι μάλιστα καταδύεται εἰς τὸ ἐντὸς τῆς ψυχῆς ὃ τε ῥυθμὸς καὶ ἁρμονία, καὶ ἐρρωμενέστατα ἄπτεται αὐτῆς φέροντα τὴν εὐσημοσύνην, καὶ ποιεῖ εὐσχήμονα, ἐάν τις ὀρθῶς τραφῆ, εἰ δὲ μή, τούναντίον;

And is it not for this reason, Glaucon, said I, that education in music is most sovereign, because more than anything else rhythm and harmony find their way to the inmost soul and take strongest hold upon it, bringing with them and imparting grace, if one is rightly trained, and otherwise the contrary? (trans. Shorey)



The mechanism through which music influences the soul is not made explicit by Plato. To clarify and complete the philosopher's account and to examine this process more closely, it is worth considering a fragment of Damon that is preserved in the *De Musica* of Aristides Quintilianus. After having defined music and put forward the principles of his musical theory, Damon considers in his second book the effects on the soul that are produced by different types of music, and he views music as the fundamental discipline for the education of the irrational part of the soul (Damon, DK B7 = Aristides Quintilianus, *De Musica*, 2.14):

ἽΟτι γὰρ δι' ὁμοιότητος οἱ φθόγγοι συνεχοῦς μελωδίας πλάττουσί τε οὐκ ὄν ἦθος ἐν τε παισὶ καὶ τοῖς ἤδη προξεθηκόσι καὶ ἐνδομυχοῦν ἐξάγουσιν, ἐδήλουν καὶ οἱ περὶ Δάμωνα· ἐν γοῦν ταῖς ὑπ' αὐτοῦ παραδεδομέναις ἀρμονίαις, τῶν φερομένων φθόγγων ὅτε μὲν τοὺς θήλειος ὅτε δὲ τοὺς ἄρρενας ἔστιν εὐρεῖν ἦτοι πλεονάζοντας ἢ ἐπ' ἔλαττον ἢ οὐδ' ὄλως παρειλημμένους, δῆλον ὡς κατὰ τὸ ἦθος ψυχῆς ἐκάστης καὶ ἀρμονίας χρησιμευούσης.

Damon's school showed that among children and those who are advanced in age the sounds of a continuous melody fashion through resemblance a character which they don't have, or bring out a character which is latent. With regard to the harmonies that he transmitted, it is possible to discover among the sounds that are carried both masculine

and feminine ones that dominate, that are in the minority, and that are lacking altogether. So it is clear that for the character of each soul there is also a useful harmony.<sup>xix</sup>

By virtue of resemblance (ὁμοιότης) music imitates certain qualities, and thus succeeds in imparting those same qualities to the soul, or rather, to judge from this fragment, it imparts them to the person's character (ἦθος). This principle, which we call 'homoeopathy' in reference to C. W. Müller's study of the ὁμοιον-ὁμοίω principle in pre-platonic philosophy,<sup>xx</sup> derives in all probability from the idea of pythagorean origin<sup>xxi</sup> that there exists a mysterious connection between the world of sounds and that of the human soul.<sup>xxii</sup> The homoeopathic mechanism can be summed up as follows: a person's sounds (φθόγγου) and vocal modulations (προσωδίαι) in respect to a certain practical activity become the object of a musical μίμησις (representation), which consists of harmony, rhythm, and speech. The musically mimetic elements of harmony, rhythm, and speech are absorbed by the ψυχή (soul), and more particularly the ἦθος (character), and when they are heard, they stimulate the virtues that are conveyed by the imitative harmony, rhythm, and speech in question.

The *Laws* extends and at the same time revises the position sketched in the *Republic*; the *Laws* also seeks to be, if not the practical realisation of a model polis, at least the first step in the direction of such a realisation.<sup>xxiii</sup> With regard to

the question of the education of the soul through music, the *Laws* nevertheless diverges from the *Republic* in certain respects.

First of all, the *Laws* presents the rhythms and harmonies of musical education with much less precision than the *Republic*. In book II of the *Laws* the Athenian Stranger limits himself to the following comments (*Laws* II, 669c3-d2):

Οὐ γὰρ ἂν ἐκεῖναί γε ἑξαμάρτοιέν ποτε τοσοῦτον ὥστε ῥήματα ἀνδρῶν ποιήσασαι τὸ χρῶμα γυναικῶν καὶ μέλος ἀποδοῦναι, καὶ μέλος ἐλευθέρων αὖ καὶ σχήματα συνθεῖσαι ῥυθμοὺς δούλων καὶ ἀνελευθέρων προσαρμόττειν, οὐδ' αὖ ῥυθμοὺς καὶ σχῆμα ἐλευθέριον ὑποθεῖσαι μέλος ἢ λόγον ἐναντίον ἀποδοῦναι τοῖς ῥυθμοῖς, ἔτι δὲ θηρίων φωνὰς καὶ ἀνθρώπων καὶ ὀργάνων καὶ πάντας ψόφους εἰς ταύτῳ οὐκ ἂν ποτε συνθεῖεν, ὡς ἔν τι μιμούμεναι.

For the Muses would never blunder so far as to assign a feminine gesture and melody to verses composed for men, or to fit the rhythms of captives and slaves to gestures framed for free men, or conversely, after constructing the rhythms and gestures of free men, to assign to the rhythms a melody or speech of an opposite style. Nor would the Muses ever combine in a single piece the cries of beasts and men, the clash of instruments, and noises of all kinds, by way of representing a single object. (trans. adapted from Bury)

In sum, melodies, rhythms, and speech must correspond to and be correctly adapted to each other. This discussion will be resumed in book VII, where the Athenian assigns to the elders the task of selecting the type of songs and dances that will be used in educating the children, whether that means eliminating them or correcting defective compositions as necessary. At this point, the Athenian distinguishes between songs that suit women and those that suit men according to their particular harmonies and rhythms.<sup>xxiv</sup>

But the way in which the *Laws* conceives of musical education presents a more fundamental difference in relation to the *Republic*. This difference can only be understood if one also considers the manner in which Plato introduces the notion of ἡδονή (pleasure) as part of the anthropological aspect of the *Laws*. Elaborating the institutions of this second-best city, which is defined by its closer alignment to the realities of the human condition than is the *Republic*, the *Laws* deals more practically than does the *Republic* with the ramifications of conceiving of human beings as complex unities in which reason coexists with the irrational part of the soul. The irrational part of the soul is itself a composite entity, the manifestations of which, however diverse they may be, are nevertheless reducible in the last instance to the pursuit of pleasure and the flight from pain, while reason manifests itself not in regard to pleasure, but in regard to the good. Thus in book I of the *Laws* (644c1-645c8) a human being is compared to a θαῦμα (puppet) which is subject to both the pull of the golden thread of reason, precious but without strength, and the iron sinews of irrational impulses. Just

because a human being is the locus of these contradictory forces of reason and non-reason, human beings can be prodigious and astonishing (the primary sense of θαῦμα) insofar as they attain harmony: gold and iron can in effect, in certain circumstances, pull in the same direction. This convergence between the two tendencies occurs, for example, in the pleasure which young children experience in dance and which the mature citizen feels in his joy, if his education has been successful, when he participates in the cycle of choruses in the calendar of religious festivals.<sup>xxv</sup> The conflict of being pulled in opposite directions is surmounted when the pleasure that one experiences is a rational pleasure.<sup>xxvi</sup>

If the *Republic* assigns a primary role to the rational component insofar as the true philosophers, as the guardians of the ideal city, possess all power, the *Laws* largely reestablishes an equilibrium insofar as it accords a degree of legitimacy to pleasure and pain, since they necessarily comprise part of the humanity of human beings (*Laws* V, 732e4-7):

Ἔστιν δὴ φύσει ἀνθρώπειον μάλιστα ἡδοναὶ καὶ λῦπαι καὶ ἐπιθυμίαι, ἐξ ὧν ἀνάγκη τὸ θνητὸν πᾶν ζῶον ἀτεχνῶς οἷον ἐξηρτησθαί τε καὶ ἐκκρεμάμενον εἶναι σπουδαῖς ταῖς μεγίσταις·

Pleasures, pains, and desires are by nature especially human; and from these, of necessity, every mortal creature is, so to say, suspended and dependent by the strongest cords of influence. (trans. Bury)

The constitutive bipolarity of human beings, where pleasure henceforth plays an essential role, entails important consequences for the manner in which the *Laws* conducts education through music. First of all, this education is no longer addressed only to children. The *Republic*, in effect, viewed music, along with gymnastic, as propaedeutic, since the essential parts of education take place after childhood and adolescence as scientific education progresses towards dialectic. In the *Laws* music plays an educational role throughout the citizen's life. Through dance, music continually reestablishes and reorients the balance of pleasure and pain which the citizen received during his childhood and which tends to grow lax.<sup>xxvii</sup> On the other hand, musical education pays considerable attention to the notion of pleasure. Insofar as childhood, during which there is neither reflective thought nor true opinion, knows only the sensations of pleasure and pain, and because it is in the domain of pleasure and pain that souls primarily come to have their sense of virtue and vice, education will consist of a regulated discipline of the irrational tendencies, that is, of pleasures and pains. By using praise and blame to habituate young souls to love what they should love and to hate what they should hate, education will make possible the emergence of an irrational kind of virtue, one that is independent of reflective thought.<sup>xxviii</sup>

The manner in which education is envisaged in the *Laws* enables us to understand better how music is to be used in shaping the souls of children.

Musical rhythms and harmonies have the same mimetic status in the *Laws* which they had in the *Republic*:<sup>xxix</sup> they are representations (μιμήματα) that follow the moral norm which the elders of the third chorus see fit to assign to them.<sup>xxx</sup> A proper regulation of praise and blame allows them to habituate young souls to experience pleasure when they encounter the pleasing representations conveyed by the music, as the Athenian Stranger explains to Clinias in book VII (798d6-e7):

- Τί οὔν; Τοῖς ἔμπροσθεν λόγοις πιστεύομεν, οἷς ἐλέγομεν ὡς τὰ περὶ τοῦς ῥυθμοὺς καὶ πᾶσαν μουσικὴν ἐστὶν τρόπων μιμήματα βελτιόνων καὶ χειρόνων ἀνθρώπων; Ἦ πῶς;

- Οὐδαμῶς ἄλλως πως τό γε παρ' ἡμῖν δόγμα ἔχον ἂν εἴη.

- Οὐκοῦν, φαμέν, ἅπασαν μηχανητέον μηχανὴν ὅπως ἂν ἡμῖν οἱ παῖδες μήτε ἐπιθυμῶσιν ἄλλων μιμημάτων ἄπτεσθαι κατὰ ὀρχήσεις ἢ κατὰ μελωδίας, μήτε τις αὐτοὺς πείσῃ προσάγων παντοίας ἡδονάς;

– Well, then, do we still put our trust in those former statements of ours, in which we said that matters of rhythm and music generally are imitations of the manners of good or bad men? Or how do we stand?

– Our view at least remains unaltered.

– We assert, then, that every means must be employed, not only to prevent our children from desiring to copy different models in dancing or

singing, but also to prevent anyone from tempting them by the inducement of pleasures of all sorts. (trans. Bury)

The conception of musical education has undergone a major change from the *Republic* to the *Laws* insofar as the later dialogue employs pleasure as part of a view of human nature that departs from the *Republic*. But the imitative role of music as well as the homoeopathic mechanism described above remains in force in the *Laws*. In order to assess the manner in which Aristotle follows Plato and conceives of musical education in *Politics* VIII, 5-7, it is necessary to consider the vocabulary used in the *Republic* and the *Laws* to designate the different aspects of the entire scheme that has been under discussion. A consideration of all the passages in both dialogues that treat musical education leads to the following summary:<sup>xxx</sup>

- The objects represented by music are designated by terms that, in spite of their diversity, nevertheless always make reference, directly or indirectly, to an aspect of human morality. All of these terms – φθόγγοι καὶ προσωδίαι (sounds and vocal modulations),<sup>xxxii</sup> βίος (type of life),<sup>xxxiii</sup> ἦθος (character),<sup>xxxiv</sup> τρόποι (dispositions),<sup>xxxv</sup> ψυχή (soul),<sup>xxxvi</sup> – suppose the presence of a morally competent human being.<sup>xxxvii</sup> Further, most of these terms are accompanied by adjectives that refer to ethical qualities: ἀνδρείος (courageous),<sup>xxxviii</sup> σώφρων (temperate),<sup>xxxix</sup> κόσμιος (orderly),<sup>xl</sup> ἀγαθός (virtuous).<sup>xli</sup>



- In both the *Republic* and the *Laws* music imitates these moral qualities by means of μέλος (melody),<sup>xlii</sup> which is composed of ἄρμονία (harmony)<sup>xliii</sup> and ῥυθμός (rhythm).<sup>xliv</sup> The *Republic* also introduces the notions of βάσεις (steps)<sup>xlv</sup> and πούς (foot)<sup>xlvi</sup> which are connected to rhythm, while to designate the words in a piece of music the *Laws* seems to prefer the word ῥῆμα to the word λόγος.<sup>xlvii</sup>

- Finally, the third term of this mechanism is the subject that undergoes the influence of music. This subject is the ψυχή (soul) in both the *Republic* and the *Laws*,<sup>xlviii</sup> though in one passage in the *Republic* the word ἦθος (character)<sup>xlix</sup> is used to designate the recipient of music's influence.

How, in chapters 5-7 of book VIII of the *Politics*, does Aristotle react to Plato's ideas about music and its role in education? The answer to this question raises three further questions: what reasons justify the use of music in the education of the soul? who receives this education, and by what means? what kind of music does one use and why?

In his first move to justify the role of music in education, Aristotle demonstrates that music affects the soul, and more precisely that it affects the ἦθος (character) of the soul because, he says, through music we acquire certain qualities of character (*Pol.* VIII.5, 1340a8-12).

Ἄλλα μὴν ὅτι γιγνόμεθα ποιοί τινες, φανερόν διὰ πολλῶν μὲν καὶ ἐτέρων, οὐχ ἥκιστα δὲ καὶ διὰ τῶν Ὀλύμπου μελῶν· ταῦτα γὰρ ὁμολογουμένως ποιεῖ τὰς

ψυχὰς ἐνθουσιαστικάς, ὁ δ' ἐνθουσιασμὸς τοῦ περὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἥθους πάθος ἐστίν.

That we are so affected [i.e. that our characters, τὰ ἥθη, are affected, cf. 1340a7] is proved in many ways, and not least by the power which the melodies of Olympus exercise; for beyond question they inspire enthusiasm, and enthusiasm is an emotion of the character of the soul.<sup>1</sup>  
(trans. adapted from Jowett)

This passage suggests the first difference between Aristotle and Plato: that which music influences is no longer the ψυχή as a whole, but just one part of it. In the *Ethics* ἥθος designates that part of the desiring soul which, being irrational by nature, nevertheless has a share in reason to the extent that it takes reason into account.<sup>li</sup>

Secondly, Aristotle establishes that music allows the ἥθος to acquire the virtue that is proper to it (ἀρετὴ ἠθική, ethical virtue), and that the music which is employed in education consists, as Plato already claimed in the *Laws*, in a discipline that is intended to habituate young people to experience pleasure and pain in the correct manner (*Pol.* VIII.5, 1340a14-18):

Ἐπεὶ δὲ συμβέβηκεν εἶναι τὴν μουσικὴν τῶν ἡδέων, τὴν δ' ἀρετὴν περὶ τὸ χαίρειν ὀρθῶς καὶ φιλεῖν καὶ μισεῖν, δεῖ δηλονότι μανθάνειν καὶ συνεθίζεσθαι

μηθὲν οὕτως ὡς τὸ κρίνειν ὀρθῶς καὶ τὸ χαίρειν τοῖς ἐπαικέσιν ἤθεσιν καὶ ταῖς καλαῖς πράξεσιν.

Since then music is a pleasure, and excellence consists in rejoicing and loving and hating rightly, there is clearly nothing which we are so much concerned to acquire and to cultivate as the power of forming right judgments, and of taking delight in good dispositions and noble actions.

(trans. Jowett)

The similarity on this point with the *Laws* should not obscure a deeper coherence between the *Politics* and the *Ethics*. First of all, the notion of ἔθος (habit) was identified in the *Nicomachean Ethics* as the condition through which one acquires ethical virtue. As opposed to dianoetic virtue, which is acquired as the result of instruction, ἀρετὴ ἠθικὴ (ethical virtue) is considered in effect the result of practice and habituation (*EN* II.1, 1103a17-18):

Ἡ δ' ἠθικὴ ἐξ ἔθους περιγίνεται, ὅθεν καὶ τοῦνομα ἔσχηκε μικρὸν παρεκκλῖνον ἀπὸ τοῦ ἤθους.

Moral excellence comes about as a result of habit, whence also its name is one that is formed by a slight variation from the word for 'habit'.<sup>lii</sup> (trans.

Ross—Urmson)

The *Ethics* also attests to the presence of pleasures and pains in the definition of ethical virtue. If the latter is in effect a disposition acquired through the repetition of specific actions, it really becomes virtue only from the moment when it is practiced in the same manner as an inborn disposition, that is, without any pain and with the pleasure that is proper to it. The best sign of a person's virtuous or vicious dispositions, says Aristotle, is the pleasure and pain which he experiences when he undertakes virtuous or vicious actions (*EN* II.2, 1104b3-8):

Σημείον δὲ δεῖ ποιεῖσθαι τῶν ἕξεων τὴν ἐπιγινομένην ἡδονὴν ἢ λύπην τοῖς ἔργοις· ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἀπεχόμενος τῶν σωματικῶν ἡδονῶν καὶ αὐτῷ τούτῳ χαίρων σώφρων, ὁ δ' ἀχθόμενος ἀκόλαστος, καὶ ὁ μὲν ὑπομένων τὰ δεινὰ καὶ χαίρων ἢ μὴ λυπούμενός γε ἀνδρεῖος, ὁ δὲ λυπούμενος δειλός.

We must take as a sign of states the pleasure or pain that supervenes on acts; for the man who abstains from bodily pleasures and delights in this very fact is temperate, while the man who is annoyed at it is self-indulgent, and he who stands his ground against things that are terrible and delights in this or at least is not pained is brave, while the man who is pained is a coward. (trans. Ross—Urmson)

This detour into the *Ethics* allows us to understand the mechanism that is the basis for Aristotle's view of musical education: it consists of habituating young persons to experience pleasure for the things that they are not yet capable of judging rationally and whose value, for good or ill, they cannot yet understand on their own.<sup>liii</sup> This habituation comes about as a result of the mimetic feature of music. Aristotle affirms that music possesses rhythms and melodies that constitute in fact ὁμοιώματα τῶν ἠθῶν (resemblances to characters) (*Pol.* VIII.5, 1340a18-21):

Ἔστι δὲ ὁμοιώματα μάλιστα παρὰ τὰς ἀληθινὰς φύσεις ἐν τοῖς ῥυθμοῖς καὶ τοῖς μέλεσιν ὀργῆς καὶ πραότητος, ἔτι δ' ἀνδρείας καὶ σωφροσύνης καὶ πάντων τῶν ἐναντίων τούτοις καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἠθῶν.

Rhythms and melodies supply resemblances, which are very close to the actual affections, of anger and gentleness, and also of courage and temperance, and of all the qualities contrary to these and of the other qualities of character. (trans. adapted from Jowett)

Thus, rhythms and melodies possess the property of imitating ἦθη (characters), that is, to infer from Aristotle's own examples, the character traits that are in fact the ethical dispositions, whether virtuous or vicious.<sup>liv</sup> Aristotle seems to revert to the mimetic value of music that was broached in the *Republic* and the *Laws*. But

Aristotle goes farther insofar as he affirms that music is a μίμησις (representation) that is radically distinct from the μίμησις of the other arts because musical mimesis alone can imitate characters *directly*.<sup>lv</sup> Painting and sculpture represent the signs of character by the intermediary device of figures and colors. The specific quality of musical mimesis is expressed in the Greek text by the use of the term ὁμοίωμα (resemblance). Aristotle explains that the visible objects which painting or sculpture produce by way of imitation are not ὁμοιώματα (*Pol.* VIII.5, 1340a32-34):

Ἔτι δὲ οὐκ ἔστι ταῦτα ὁμοιώματα τῶν ἡθῶν, ἀλλὰ σημεῖα μᾶλλον τὰ γινόμενα σχήματα καὶ χρώματα τῶν ἡθῶν.

Figures and colors are not resemblances, but signs, of characters. (trans. adapted from Jowett)

To the extent that music produces not mediated representations, but ὁμοιώματα, the pleasure or pain that one will experience in listening to the music's imitative rhythms and melodies will be the same as the pleasure and pain felt in a real situation. Musical education of the ἦθος consists in habituating the soul to experiencing the pleasure that is produced when certain types of rhythms and melodies are heard, and these rhythms and melodies are those which correspond to the virtuous types of characters. In other words, musical education

makes virtue attractive. By means of imitation it produces in the souls of auditors dispositions that are identical to those which are imitated by the music's rhythms and melodies.<sup>lvi</sup> For this reason it is necessary to choose carefully the types of melodies and rhythms that will be made available to young people.<sup>lvii</sup>

Since music makes use of character likenesses, auditors will be affected according to the type of music which they are made to listen to. To educate young people, it is necessary to accept some kinds of music and reject others. For this purpose Aristotle implements a primary distinction among harmonies, one that relies on the type of affection that they create in the souls of auditors (*Pol.* VIII, 5, 1340a40-1340b5):

Εὐθύς γὰρ ἡ τῶν ἀρμονιῶν διέστηκε φύσις, ὥστε ἀκούοντας ἄλλως διατίθεσθαι καὶ μὴ τὸν αὐτὸν ἔχειν τρόπον πρὸς ἐκάστην αὐτῶν, ἀλλὰ πρὸς μὲν ἐνίας ὀδυρτικωτέρως καὶ συνεστηκότως μᾶλλον, οἷον πρὸς τὴν μιξολυδιστὶ καλουμένην, πρὸς δὲ τὰς μαλακωτέρως τὴν διάνοιαν, οἷον πρὸς τὰς ἀνειμένους, μέσως δὲ καὶ καθεστηκότως μάλιστα πρὸς ἑτέραν, οἷον δοκεῖ ποιεῖν ἡ δωριστὶ μόνῃ τῶν ἀρμονιῶν, ἐνθουσιαστικούς δ' ἡ φρυγιστί.

The nature of harmonies differ, and those who hear them are differently affected by each. Some of them make [men] sad and grave, like the so-called mixolydian, others enfeeble the mind, like the relaxed ones, another, again, produces a moderate and settled temper, which appears

to be the peculiar effect of the dorian; the phrygian inspires enthusiasm.

(trans. adapted from Jowett)

In chapter 7 of book VIII of the *Politics*, Aristotle divides melodies into three kinds,<sup>lviii</sup> ἠθικά (ethical), πρακτικά (practical) and ἐνθουσιαστικά (enthusiastic), each of which corresponds to a particular harmony. With regard to education, only the ethical harmonies play a role, and among the ethical harmonies the dorian is foremost (*Pol.* VIII.7, 1342b12-17):

Περὶ δὲ τῆς δωριστὶ πάντες ὁμολογοῦσιν ὡς στασιμωτάτης οὔσης καὶ μάλιστα ἦθος ἐχούσης ἀνδρεῖον. Ἔτι δὲ ἐπεὶ τὸ μέσον μὲν τῶν ὑπερβολῶν ἐπαινοῦμεν καὶ χρῆναι διώκειν φαμέν, ἡ δὲ δωριστὶ ταύτην ἔχει τὴν φύσιν πρὸς τὰς ἄλλας ἀρμονίας, φανερόν ὅτι τὰ Δώρια μέλη πρέπει παιδεύεσθαι μᾶλλον τοῖς νεωτέροις.

All agree that the dorian is the gravest and manliest. And whereas we say that the extremes should be avoided and the mean followed, and whereas the dorian is a mean between the other harmonies, it is evident that our youth should be taught the dorian melodies. (trans. adapted from Jowett)

For his ideal city in the *Republic* Plato rejected all harmonies apart from the dorian and the phrygian, but Aristotle here seems to be even more severe than



his teacher: he allows only the dorian harmony, because it imitates courage, while the phrygian harmony is rejected because it is connected with frenzy and enthusiasm.<sup>lix</sup> Aristotle uses the same distinction in regard to rhythms (*Pol.* VIII.5, 1340b8-10):

Οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἦθος ἔχουσι στασιμώτερον οἱ δὲ κινητικόν, καὶ τούτων οἱ μὲν φορτικωτέρας ἔχουσι τὰς κινήσεις οἱ δὲ ἐλευθεριωτέρας.

Certain rhythms have a character of regularity, others of motion, and of these latter again, some have a more vulgar, others a nobler movement.

(trans. adapted from Jowett)

Although Aristotle does not say so explicitly, in view of his preceding statement on harmonies and melodies it seems that the rhythm which is most useful for the education of young people is the one whose character is regular.

The passages of the *Politics* that have been cited allow us to affirm that at every key point in Aristotle's account of the educational influence of music the word ἦθος plays a major role. It refers to:

- the quality of the desiring part of the soul as it was defined in the *Ethics* and which is influenced by music;
- the different character traits which music can represent by means of the rhythms and harmonies which constitute the music;

- the different characters which harmonies and rhythms have;
- the character which education is supposed to bring about in young listeners by means of music.

To sum up Aristotle's account of the mechanism of musical education: a person's ἦθη (characters) have ὁμοιώματα (resemblances) in music by means of the rhythms and harmonies. Each of these rhythms and harmonies has its particular ἦθος which imbues the soul with that ἦθος when the rhythms and harmonies are heard.

Three points in conclusion. First, in Plato's *Republic* and *Laws* as in book VIII of Aristotle's *Politics* the education of the soul by music comes about by virtue of a 'homoeopathic' mechanism which presupposes a kind of music whose rhythms and harmonies possess a mimetic property. Second, beyond the continuity of this model in two authors whose purposes and aims are very different, the manner in which musical education is envisaged by both depends on an anthropological point: Plato's view of the role of pleasure in the human soul had important consequences for the manner in which the citizens of the *Laws* will be educated during the entire course of their lives. Third, the last chapters of the *Politics* make clear the great care with which Aristotle appropriated Plato's scheme for musical education in the *Republic* and *Laws*. In reorganizing that scheme around the central concept of ἦθος, which he defined in the *Ethics*, Aristotle succeeded in giving a coherent interpretation of traditional elements which he integrated into his own systematic set of views. This same process of

reappropriation and resystemization of the Platonic inheritance by means of the concept of ἦθος is also at work if one considers the political value of the term.

## NOTES

<sup>i</sup> I thank Harvey Yunis who translated this article into English.

<sup>ii</sup> Cf. H. Abert, *Die Lehre vom Ethos in der griechischen Musik. Ein Beitrag zur Musikästhetik des klassischen Altertums*, Leipzig, 1899; W. D. Anderson, *Ethos and Education in Greek Music: The Evidence of Poetry and Philosophy*, Cambridge, Mass., 1966; A. Barker, *Greek Musical Writings*, vol. 1, *The Musician and His Art*, Cambridge, 1984; R. W. Wallace, 'Damon of Oa: A Music Theorist Ostracized?', in P. Murray and P. Wilson, eds., *Music and the Muses: The Culture of Mousikê in the Classical Athenian City*, Oxford, 2004, 249-67; and A. Ford, 'Katharsis: the Power of Music in Aristotle's *Politics*', in Murray and Wilson, *Music and the Muses*, 309-36.

<sup>iii</sup> A. Ford, *art. cit.*, p. 314 (emphasis added).

<sup>iv</sup> Cf. H.-I. Marrou, *Histoire de l'Éducation dans l'Antiquité*, vol. 1: *Le Monde Grec*, Paris, 1948.

<sup>v</sup> *Protagoras*, 326a4-b6 : οἱ τ' αὖ καθαρισταί, ἕτερα τοιαῦτα, σωφροσύνης τε ἐπιμελοῦνται καὶ ὅπως ἂν οἱ νέοι μηδὲν κακουργῶσιν· πρὸς δὲ τούτοις, ἐπειδὴν καθαρίζειν μάθωσιν, ἄλλων αὖ ποιητῶν ἀγαθῶν ποιήματα διδάσκουσιν μελοποιῶν, εἰς τὰ καθαρίσματα ἐντείνοντες, καὶ τοὺς ῥυθμούς τε καὶ τὰς ἁρμονίας ἀναγκάζουσιν οἰκειοῦσθαι ταῖς ψυχαῖς τῶν παιδῶν, ἵνα ἡμερώτεροί τε ᾦσιν, καὶ εὐρυθμότεροι καὶ εὐαρμοσσότεροι γινόμενοι χρήσιμοι ᾦσιν εἰς τὸ λέγειν τε καὶ πράττειν· πᾶς γὰρ ὁ βίος τοῦ ἀνθρώπου εὐρυθμίας τε καὶ εὐαρμοσσίας δεῖται. 'The music masters by

analogous methods instill self-control and deter the young men from evil-doing. And when they have learned to play the lyre, they teach them the works of good poets of another sort, namely the lyrical, which they accompany on the lyre, familiarizing the minds of the children with the rhythms and melodies. By this means they become more civilized, more balanced, and better adjusted in themselves and so more capable in whatever they say or do, for rhythm and harmonious adjustment are essential to the whole of human life'. (trans. Guthrie)

<sup>vi</sup> *Crito* 50d5-e1: (The laws of Athens are speaking) Ἀλλὰ τοῖς περὶ τὴν τοῦ γενομένου τροφήν τε καὶ παιδείαν ἐν ἧ καὶ σὺ ἐπαιδεύθης; ἢ οὐ καλῶς προσέταττον ἡμῶν οἱ ἐπὶ τούτῳ τεταγμένοι νόμοι, παραγγέλλοντες τῷ πατρὶ τῷ σὺ σε ἐν μουσικῇ καὶ γυμναστικῇ παιδεύειν; 'Have you any [complaint] against the laws which deal with children's upbringing and education, such as you had yourself? Are you not grateful to those of us laws which were instituted for this end, for requiring your father to give you a musical and physical education?' (trans. adapted from Tredennick). *Alcibiades* 106e4-6: (Socrates addressing Alcibiades) Ἀλλὰ μὴν ἄ γε μεμάθηκας σχεδόν τι καὶ ἐγὼ οἶδα· εἰ δέ τι ἐμὲ λέληθεν, εἰπέ. Ἔμαθες γὰρ δὴ σὺ γε κατὰ μνήμην τὴν ἐμὴν γράμματα καὶ κιθαρίζειν καὶ παλαίειν· οὐ γὰρ δὴ αὐλεῖν γε ἤθελες μαθεῖν. 'I know more or less the subjects that you learned. If I missed anything, let me know. As far as I recall, you learned to read and write, to play the cithara, and to wrestle; you refused to learn to play the flute'.

<sup>vii</sup> *Rep.* II, 376c7-8.

viii *Rep.* II, 376e2-4.

ix *Rep.* II, 376e9 - III, 398b8.

x *Rep.* III, 401a1-8.

xi The usual translation ‘mode’ – φρυγιστί, for example, being rendered as the ‘phrygian mode’ – does not correspond to any Greek word in the text. This translation, which in fact is a gloss, is incoherent in the eyes of the musicologists if one accepts the comment of O. Gombrosi, ‘The Greeks knew no modes’, (uttered at the Congress of Musicologists, Basle, 1949 and cited by J. Chailley, *La Musique Grecque Antique*, Paris, 1979, p. 105), and the paper on the ‘mythe des modes grecs’ presented by J. Chailley to the French Society of Musicology in 1955. The method of translating the Greek terms adopted in this paper follows Chailley, who writes ‘la terminologie doit être auscultée avec soin. Le mot “mode” n’a aucun équivalent en grec, ce qui est déjà révélateur. Le plus souvent, on trouve des adverbes ou adjectifs substantivés, tels que ἡ δωριστί ou ὁ μειζολύδιος; c’est en voulant préciser indûment que des traducteurs trop zélés interpolent “le *mode* dorien ou mixolydien”, ou encore traduisent par “mode” des termes dont le sens est tout autre ... On supplie les traducteurs à venir d’être particulièrement méticuleux quant à la précision des termes; bien des mécomptes eussent été évités si τόνος était toujours traduit par *ton*, ἁρμονία par *harmonie*, ὁ δῶριος par “le *dorien*” (sans interpolation), etc, et ceci ne vaut pas seulement pour le français’ (*La Musique Grecque Antique*, p. 106).

<sup>xii</sup> *Rep.* III, 387d1-388e4.

<sup>xiii</sup> *Rep.* III, 398e9.

<sup>xiv</sup> *Rep.* III, 398e10.

<sup>xv</sup> *Rep.* III, 398d1-2.

<sup>xvi</sup> Cf. Glaucon and Socrates on the question of which rhythms produce an orderly life (*Rep.* III, 400a4-b4): Ἀλλὰ μὰ Δί', ἔφη, οὐκ ἔχω λέγειν. Ὅτι μὲν γὰρ τρί' ἄττα ἐστὶν εἶδη ἐξ ὧν αἱ βάσεις πλέκονται, ὥσπερ ἐν τοῖς φθόγγοις τέτταρα, ὅθεν αἱ πᾶσαι ἀρμονίαι, τεθεαμένος ἂν εἴποιμι' ποῖα δὲ ὁποῖου βίου μιμήματα, λέγειν οὐκ ἔχω. Ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, καὶ μετὰ Δάμωνος βουλευσόμεθα, τίνες τε ἀνελευθερίας καὶ ὕβρεως ἢ μανίας καὶ ἄλλης κακίας πρέπουσαι βάσεις, καὶ τίνας τοῖς ἐναντίοις λειπτέον ῥυθμούς. 'Nay, in faith, I cannot tell. For that there are some three forms from which the steps are combined, just as there are four in the notes of the voice whence come all harmonies, is a thing that I have observed and could tell. But which are imitations of which sort of life, I am unable to say. Well, said I, on this point we will take counsel with Damon, too, as to which are the steps appropriate to illiberality, and insolence or madness or other evils, and what rhythms we must leave for their opposites'. (trans. adapted from Shorey)

<sup>xvii</sup> D. Delattre, article on Damon, in *Dictionnaire des Philosophes Antiques*, R. Goulet, ed., 1989, p. 606. According to F. Lasserre, *Plutarque, De la Musique: Texte, Traduction et Commentaire précédés d'une Étude sur l'Éducation Musicale dans la Grèce Antique*, Lausanne, 1954, pp. 67-68, Damon posited

three basic rhythms that form the 'steps' (βάσεις), among which some are complex, such as the enoplion, and others are simple, such as the epic, the iambic, and the trochaic. Scholars have tried to reconstruct Damon's doctrine of rhythms: D. Holwerda, 'De Artis Metricae Vocabulis quae sunt ΔΑΚΤΥΛΟΣ et ΕΝΟΠΛΙΟΣ', in *ΚΩΜΩΙΔΟΤΡΑΓΗΜΑΤΑ, Studia Aristophanea W.J.W. Koster in Honorem*, R.E.H. Westendorp, ed., Amsterdam, 1967, pp. 51-58; C. Del Grande, 'L'Insegnamento di Damone', in *Enciclopedia Classica, Sezione II: Lingua e Letteratura, volume V: La Lingua Greca nei mezzi della sua espressione, Tomo II : La Metrica Greca*, Torino, 1960, pp. 216-29. According to E. Moutsopoulos, the entity known as *basis* 'pourrait remonter à Platon, mais son importance pour Platon est purement mathématique, puisque, selon diverses combinaisons, elle engendre les divers rythmes' (E. Moutsopoulos, *La Musique dans l'Œuvre de Platon*, Paris, 1959, p. 78). On the idea of 'steps' (βάσεις), cf. V. Palmieri, 'Il Significato Metrico di ΒΑΣΙΣ', *Vichiana*, n.s. 15, 1986, pp. 3-24, and J. L. Moreno, *Arsis, Thesis, Ictus, Las Marcas del Ritmo en la Música y en la Métrica Antiguas*, Granada, 1994.

<sup>xviii</sup> Lasserre explains the obscurity thus: 'l'imprécision voulue de cet exposé donne l'impression que le texte de Damon était obscur, ou si différent des notions de Platon et de ses contemporains en matière de rythmique et de métrique qu'on n'en pouvait plus accepter la partie technique autrement que comme une curiosité' (*op. cit.*, p. 67).



<sup>xix</sup> From the purely hypothetical reconstructions which commentators have proposed for the content of Damon's doctrine as represented in Plato, Aristotle, and Aristides Quintilianus, D. Delattre retains the following: 'd'abord la nécessité d'une éducation de l'âme par la musique, impliquant un choix attentif des tonalités musicales à adopter (...) et à bannir, pour mener à la vertu et détourner des vices, et une sévère sélection des instruments de musique qui les mettent en œuvre, ainsi que l'adoption d'un système de quatre types de gamme (ou *harmoniai*): lydien, iastien, phrygien et dorien, privilégiant les deux derniers modes aux dépens des premiers. Devait y être développée aussi l'idée fondamentale que, en imitant les sons propres à chacune des activités humaines et aux sentiments qui les accompagnent, chaque harmonie provoque dans l'âme un mouvement correspondant. D'où il découle que le modèle donné par l'imitation musicale détourne l'âme des mauvais exemples et parvient à les corriger en l'entraînant en sens inverse (...). Damon développait probablement aussi dans son discours une étude des rythmes, complétée par une métrique dont il reste quelques bribes (...). Enfin, une théorie éthique, d'inspiration pythagoricienne, devait accompagner cette théorie musicale et métrique, à laquelle elle donnait tout son sens' (D. Delattre, *op. cit.*, pp. 605-6).

<sup>xx</sup> C. W. Müller, *Gleiches zu Gleichem. Ein Prinzip frühgriechischen Denkens*, Wiesbaden, 1965, p. xii, defines the principle thus: 'bei dieser Bedeutung von "Ähnlichkeit" und "Verwandtschaft" für das vorphilosophische Denken der

Griechen liegt es nahe, auch den naturphilosophischen Grundsatz *Gleiches zu Gleichem* in diesen Zusammenhang einzordnen. Hier wie dort wird der Gleichheit eine besondere Kraft beigemessen, die das Gleiche und Artverwandte über eine raum-zeitliche Trennung hinweg verbindet und in dieser als Identität empfundenen Verbindung eine Kausalitätsbeziehung sympathetischer Art entstehen läßt. Beide, Ähnlichkeitszauber und vorsokratisches ὁμοιον-ὁμοίω-Prinzip, haben ihren gemeinsamen Ursprung in dem, was Cassirer das "mythische Bewußtsein" nennt, in der Gedankenverbindung Gleichheit-Verwandschaft-Zugehörigkeit-Identität'.

<sup>xxi</sup> Although it used to be customary to regard Damon as a pythagorean, it is worth emphasizing that no ancient source expressly connects him with that school. The connection has been doubted; cf. T. Cardini (1969), A. Barker (1989), and B. Gentili (1988) as cited by D. Delattre, *op. cit.*, p. 602: 'Si Damon a bien en commun avec les pythagoriciens de considérer que les innovations musicales entraînent inévitablement des changements politiques, il s'en distingue radicalement en ce qu'il établit le lien de la musique et des affections de l'âme non sur une base abstraite, mais sur un base empirique, celle de la perception (aisthesis) et de l'expérimentation (peira) des différentes musiques, de sorte que sa classification des genres musicaux, harmoniai, rythmes, etc, reposait non sur des *a priori* mathématiques, mais sur l'expérience vécue. Quoi

qu'il en soit, l'aspect fondamentalement pythagoricien de son éthique musicale continue à paraître une évidence à tous les commentateurs modernes'.

<sup>xxii</sup> Cf. H. Abert, *Die Lehre vom Ethos in der griechischen Musik. art. cit. n. 1 supra*, Leipzig, 1899, p. 11: 'die Voraussetzung der ganzen Lehre ist dieselbe wie bei den Pythagoreern, nämlich die Annahme jenes geheimnisvollen Bandes, das zwischen der Welt der Töne und dem menschlichen Seelenleben besteht und jene wunderbaren Wirkungen erzeugt, welche in ihrer Gesamtheit die Musik als den bedeutendsten Faktor in der sittlichen Erziehung des Menschen erscheinen lassen. Jedes Melos, jeder Rhythmus übt einen bestimmten Einfluß auf unsern Charakter aus ; umgekehrt wohnt dem sittlich-guten Menschen ohne weiteres der Sinn für die richtige Art der Musik inne'.

<sup>xxiii</sup> Cf. A. Laks, 'Prodige et médiation: esquisse d'une lecture des *Lois*', in *D'une cité possible, sur les Lois de Platon*, sous la direction de J.-F. Balaudé, Les Temps Philosophique, Nanterre, 1995, pp. 11-28.

<sup>xxiv</sup> *Laws* VII, 802e8-11: τὸ δὴ μεγαλοπρεπὲς οὖν καὶ τὸ πρὸς τὴν ἀνδρείαν ῥέπον ἀρρενωπὸν φατέον εἶναι, τὸ δὲ πρὸς τὸ κόσμιον καὶ σῶφρον μᾶλλον ἀποκλῖνον θηλυγενέστερον ὡς ὄν παραδοτέον ἔν τε τῷ νόμῳ καὶ λόγῳ. 'Now we may affirm that what is noble and of a manly tendency is masculine, while that which inclines rather to decorum and moderation is to be regarded rather as feminine both in law and in discourse'. (trans. adapted from Bury)

<sup>xxv</sup> If the conflict between the rational and irrational tendencies cannot be assuaged spontaneously, the law intervenes by imposing, through reason, a violence that constrains irrational desires.

<sup>xxvi</sup> *Laws* II, 664e-665a.

<sup>xxvii</sup> If childhood has an essential place in education as envisaged in the *Laws*, that is because it is ‘à l’origine d’une vertu des affects qui se prolonge dans l’âge adulte, tout en s’estompant et se corrompant d’ailleurs de multiples façons au cours de la vie. L’enfance a également son importance comme période de la vie, mais ce qui lui confère son originalité et sa portée philosophique réside dans ce dont elle est le lieu, à savoir le surgissement d’une certaine vertu’ (A. Castel-Bouchouchi, ‘Comment peut-on être philosophe? La notion platonicienne de *paideia* et son évolution de la *République* aux *Lois*’, in *D’une cité possible, sur les Lois de Platon*, sous la direction de J.-F. Balaudé, Nanterre, 1995, p. 65).

<sup>xxviii</sup> When this irrational virtue is supplemented in adults by an accord (συμφωνία) with reason, it becomes complete virtue (σύμπασα ἀρετή). Complete virtue is distinct from the irrational virtue of childhood, from which it derives, to the extent that a reflective person will be able to account for the correctness of his feelings.

<sup>xxix</sup> For example, *Laws*, II, 654e9-655b2: τί δὲ δὴ τὸ καλὸν χρῆ φάναι σχῆμα ἢ μέλος εἶναί ποτε; φέρε, ἀνδρικῆς ψυχῆς ἐν πόνοις ἐχομένης καὶ δειλῆς ἐν τοῖς αὐτοῖς τε καὶ ἴσοις ἄρ’ ὅμοια τὰ τε σχήματα καὶ τὰ φθέγματα συμβαίνει γίνεσθαι; - Καὶ πῶς, ὅτε γε μηδὲ τὰ χρώματα; - Καλῶς γε, ὧ ἑταῖρε. Ἄλλ’ ἐν γὰρ μουσικῇ καὶ σχήματα μὲν

καὶ μέλη ἔνεστιν, περὶ ῥυθμὸν καὶ ἁρμονίαν οὕσης τῆς μουσικῆς, ὥστε εὐρυθμον μὲν καὶ εὐάρμοστον, εὐχρῶν δὲ μέλος ἢ σχῆμα οὐκ ἔστιν ἀπεικάσαντα, ὥσπερ οἱ χοροδιδάσκαλοι ἀπεικάζουσιν, ὀρθῶς φθέγγεσθαι· τὸ δὲ τοῦ δειλοῦ τε καὶ ἀνδρείου σχῆμα ἢ μέλος ἔστιν τε, καὶ ὀρθῶς προσαγορεύειν ἔχει τὰ μὲν τῶν ἀνδρείων καλὰ, τὰ τῶν δειλῶν δὲ αἰσχρά. ‘Well then, however shall we define goodness of posture or of melody? Come, consider: when a manly soul is beset by troubles, and a cowardly soul by troubles identical and equal, are the postures and utterances that result in the two cases similar? – How could they be, when even their complexions differ in color? – Well said, my friend. But in, fact, while postures and melodies do exist in music, which deals with rhythm and harmony, so that one can rightly speak of a melody or posture being rhythmical or harmonious, one cannot rightly apply the choir masters metaphor well-colored to melody and posture; but one can use this language about the posture and melody of the brave man and the coward, and one is right in calling those of the brave man good, and those of the coward bad’. Also *Laws* II, 655d5: μιμήματα τρόπων ἐστὶ τὰ περὶ τὰς χορείας ‘Choric performances are representations of character’. (trans. adapted from Bury)

<sup>xxx</sup> The elders will be able to adjust the melodies and make the appropriate musical choices for moral education because they possess wisdom (φρόνησις) and courage (ἀνδρεία, cf. *Laws* II, 659a4-5), and have acquired through their own education an especially fine sensibility in regard to matters of rhythms and

harmonies (*Laws* II, 669b-670e, VII, 802a-e). As the Athenian Stranger explains in book III (699d-701b), it is the moral criterion, not the pleasure that is experienced, that guides the choice of music.

<sup>xxxvi</sup> *Rep.* III, 398c1-403c8; IV, 424c-425a; VII, 522a2-b1; *Laws* II, 654a9-671a1; III, 700a7-701b3; VI, 764e3-765a1; VII, 798d7-804c1, 812b2-813a7.

<sup>xxxvii</sup> E.g. *Rep.* III, 399a7-8; 399c2-3 (in the latter passage φθόγγοι alone).

<sup>xxxviii</sup> E.g. *Rep.* III, 399e10-11; 400a7.

<sup>xxxix</sup> E.g. *Rep.* III, 400b2; 401a8.

<sup>xl</sup> E.g. *Laws* II, 655d5; VII, 798d9.

<sup>xli</sup> E.g. *Laws* VII, 812c3, where ψυχή is implied by the context.

<sup>xlii</sup> Cf. the adjectival substantives ὁ δειλός τε καὶ ἀνδρεῖος at *Laws* II, 655a9.

<sup>xliiii</sup> E.g. *Rep.* III, 399a7-8; III, 399c2-3; III, 399e10-11; *Laws* II, 655a9

<sup>xliiiii</sup> E.g. *Rep.* III, 399c2-3; III, 401a8.

<sup>xlv</sup> E.g. *Rep.* III, 399e10-11.

<sup>xlvi</sup> E.g. *Rep.* III, 400b2.

<sup>xlvii</sup> E.g. *Rep.* III, 398d1-2; III, 400a1, 2; *Laws* II, 654e4; II, 656c4; II, 660a7; II, 669b2.

<sup>xlviii</sup> E.g. *Rep.* III, 398d8; III, 398e1; III, 398e9; III, 399a5, 6; *Laws* II, 655a5; II, 660a7; VII, 802e1.

<sup>xlvix</sup> E.g. *Rep.* III, 398d8; III, 399e9, 10; III, 400b4; III, 400c3; *Laws* II, 655a5; II, 656c4; II, 669b2; II, 669c6, 7, 8; II, 669d6; VII, 798d8; VII, 802e2.

<sup>xlv</sup> *Rep.* III, 399e10; III, 400a5; III, 400b3.

<sup>xlvi</sup> *Rep.* III, 400a2; III, 400c2.

<sup>xlvii</sup> E.g. *Laws* II, 656c5; II, 669b2; II, 669c4.

<sup>xlviii</sup> E.g. *Rep.* III, 401d7; *Laws* II, 659d4; II, 659e6; II, 664b5; VII, 812c3; VII, 812c6.

<sup>xlix</sup> *Rep.* IV, 424d8.

<sup>l</sup> Cf. also *Pol.* VIII.5, 1340b10-13: ἐκ μὲν οὖν τούτων φανερόν ὅτι δύναται ποιόν τι τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ἦθος ἢ μουσικὴ παρασκευάζειν, εἰ δὲ τοῦτο δύναται ποιεῖν, δῆλον ὅτι προσακτέον καὶ παιδευτέον ἐν αὐτῇ τοὺς νέους. ‘Enough has been said to show that music has a power of forming the character, and should therefore be introduced into the education of the young’. (trans. Jowett)

<sup>li</sup> Cf. *EE* II.2, 1220b5-7 : διὸ ἔστω <τὸ> ἦθος ἴσοῦς τῷ λόγῳ, ψυχῆς κατὰ ἐπιτακτικὸν λόγον <τοῦ ἀλόγου μὲν,> δυναμένου δ’ ἀκολουθεῖν τῷ λόγῳ ποιότης. ‘Consider then character to be a quality in accordance with governing reason belonging to the irrational part of the soul which is yet able to obey the reason’. (trans. adapted from Solomon)

<sup>lii</sup> Cf. the parallel passage at *EE* II.2, 1220a39-b5.

<sup>liii</sup> But the rational capacities develop with age and they allow the individual to control the passions (pleasure and pain) on his own. As opposed to the *Laws*, in Aristotle human beings do not stay children throughout their lives and musical education only concerns childhood. The rational norm, which in effect guides this

education and whose function consists in orienting the pleasures and pains felt by children, remains exterior to the person only for a time; during that time it is located in the choice of musical rhythms and harmonies. But once the person has become an adult, the ethical virtue that has developed during the person's childhood does not remain irrational; it would be too fragile. Rather, ethical virtue will be sustained by right reason, ἀρετὴ διανοητική (dianoetic virtue), which will offer the person the rules and norms to observe in regard to the passions.

<sup>liv</sup> πραότης (gentleness) is discussed in *EN* IV.5, 1125b26-1126b10; *EE* III.3, 1231b5-26; *MM* I.22, 1192b23-38. ἀνδρεία (courage) is analyzed in *EN* III.6, 1115a4-10, 1117b21; *EE* III.1, 1228a26-1230a36; *MM* I.20, 1190b9-1191a35. σωφροσύνη (moderation) is studied in *EN* III.10, 1117b23-12, 1119b18; *EE* III.2, 1230a36-1231b4; *MM* I.21, 1191a36-b21.

<sup>lv</sup> The nature of this musical μίμησις, expressed in Greek by the word ὁμοίωμα, is discussed by J. Pépin ('ΣΥΜΒΟΛΑ, ΣΗΜΕΙΑ, ὍΜΟΙΩΜΑΤΑ. À propos de *De Interpretatione* 1, 16 a 3-8 et *Politique* VIII, 5, 1340 a 6-39', in *Aristoteles Werk und Wirkung. I. Band, Aristoteles und seine Schule*, J. Wiesner, ed., Berlin, New York, 1985, pp. 22-44), who translates ὁμοίωμα as 'correspondance', and explains that 'les formes produites par les plasticiens ne sont pas des ὁμοιώματα, elles n'ont rien qui corresponde vraiment aux dispositions morales; mais celles-ci sont signalées à l'extérieur par les formes et couleurs qui se produisent naturellement sur le corps. (...) Ainsi, par le truchement des signes naturels,



sculpteurs et peintres finiront par imiter indirectement les sentiments, sans toutefois parvenir à en réaliser des ὁμοιώματα. Il en va tout autrement de la musique, dont on a vu qu'elle imite directement les dispositions morales et que (de ce fait, peut-on penser) elle en offre, elle, des ὁμοιώματα. C'est à établir cette différence qu'Aristote voulait en venir dans cette apparente digression sur les arts visuels, ainsi d'ailleurs que l'ont généralement compris les interprètes modernes. On y trouvera confirmation de ce que la notion d'ὁμοίωμα n'est pas partout réductible à celle d'image; car, bien que relayée, l'imitation des sentiments par le peintre ou le sculpteur n'est nullement dénuée de valeur d'illustration; ce n'est d'ailleurs pas ce qu'Aristote lui reproche, mais bien de ne pouvoir agir sur les dispositions morales, alors que le musicien le peut, précisément en raison de cette correspondance privilégiée, qu'il exploite plus qu'il ne la produit, et qui s'exprime par le nom d'ὁμοίωμα' (p. 28).

<sup>lvi</sup> As Aristotle notes at the end of the chapter, the soul is related to the harmonies and rhythms.

<sup>lvii</sup> For the same reason young people must be encouraged to observe the works of Polygnotus rather than those of Pauson. The former is an ethical painter, that is, he represents the best ἦθη, endowed with ethical virtue. Aristotle also mentions the opposition of Polygnotus and Pauson at *Poetics* 2, 1448a1-9.

<sup>lviii</sup> *Pol.* VIII.7, 1341b32-34.

<sup>lix</sup> *Pol.* VIII.7, 1342a32-b12.