

[preprint]

FOSTER (M.), KURKE (L.) and WEISS (N.) (eds) *Genre in Archaic and Classical Greek Poetry: Theories and Models* (Mnemosyne Supplements 428; Studies in Archaic and Classical Greek Song 4). Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2020.

The debate on lyric genres and the criteria for their definition is notoriously long-standing and multifaceted. This volume marks a new step in studies of genre and lyric, and does so by ‘think[ing] laterally’, an expression used by David Fearn (‘Greek Lyric of the Archaic and Classical Periods’, *Classical Poetry* 1 (2020), 1–113, 68) to highlight the need for a methodologically comprehensive approach to lyric. Most chapters have been developed from presentations given at a conference of the Network for the Study of Archaic and Classical Greek Song (Berkeley, 2015).

The introduction (1–28) maps the paradigms applied to the study of genres in classical literature from the 1950s to the present, providing a precious tool for scholars and students alike. It then lays out the theoretical models that inform the eleven chapters, and their contributions.

In his keynote chapter on Sappho, Gregory Nagy (31–54) expands on his earlier work, arguing that genre structures performance, ‘capturing’ the primary performance occasion, that is, making it a theme of song and ‘absolutizing’ it. On the other hand, Sappho’s songs can thematize topics unrelated to the performance context, however intimate (for example, family crisis): the song’s persona and world are only *mimetic*, and could be re-enacted by a chorus on ritual occasions.

Andrew Ford (57–81) opens Part 1 (‘Genre, Generification, and Performance’) by looking at the functionality of genres. He examines how they are spoken of, and thus created (‘generified’), in texts antedating Plato’s and Aristotle’s definitions of mimesis. Ford argues that such texts engage with genres, their distinctive features and their origins, to locate themselves within an authoritative tradition. Timothy Power (82–108) proposes that some poems by Sappho, commonly regarded as choral (for instance, frs 17 and 30 Voigt), could instead be monodic, and thus only ‘parachoral’: choral performance during rituals (for example, weddings) would be a *theme* of solo singing, rather than the real performative mode of those poems. Francesca Schironi (109–32) shows how Pindaric scholia account for the choral nature of Pindar’s poetry: they disregard the reality of choral performances (who sings what) and hold the chorus purely as a poetic persona, a speaking character, not unlike the voice of Pindar and that of the victor.

Three chapters engage with ‘generic mixing’ (Part 2). Deborah Steiner (135–66) regards catalogic lists as a genre, and examines the shared traits of literary catalogues and textual and visual representations of choruses. She argues that catalogues in epic are informed by the visibility of choral performances, while choral songs, in turn, might look at hexameter poetry when including a catalogue. Drawing chiefly from Euripidean plays, Naomi Weiss (167–90) shows how tragic choral parts engage with many choral genres. She makes a compelling case for the complementation of musical narrative, achieved through generic modulations in choral songs, and dramatic narrative, maintaining that such deep interconnection is a defining trait of tragedy. Margaret Foster (191–228) reads Bacchylides’ Ode 16 as upholding the local and autonomous character of specific song genres. Yet, at the same time, the ode, by compressing the narrative of Sophocles’ *Trachiniae* and thus changing the genre of its medium, makes tragedy, a distinctively Attic genre, ready for importation and performance in other communities.

Opening the last part on the ‘somatics of genre’, Mark Griffith (231–70) takes less travelled paths and a welcome turn to Korybantic-type musical rituals. He analyses Aristotle’s take on the functions of music, dwelling specially on emotional arousal, typical of Korybantic-type performances. He then highlights the formal, social and functional (affective) features that, he argues, make Korybantic rituals a distinct genre within Greek song culture. Mario Telò (271–97) suggestively searches for ‘hint[s] of iambic texture’ (290) in iambic texts and some reception instances, highlighting the rough, spiky, frigid features of bodies, objects and places mentioned in iambs. He holds the psychosomatic effects roused in the audience by such iambic imagery and language to be intrinsic features of the iambic genre. Seth Estrin (298–324) analyses a sixth-century BC elegiac inscription on an Ambracian cenotaph, arguing that a disjunctive tension is realized in the metrical structure: the hexameter makes us visualize the dead, whereas the pentameter takes us back to the reality of death, absence. Such a disjunctive structure, he maintains, is a generic feature of funerary elegy; it is extended to the materiality of the Ambracian inscription and of the monument, and consequently to the bodily and cognitive experience they impose

on readers. Finally, by looking at the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* and Pindar's *Paeon* 6, Sarah Olsen (325–46) argues that evoking sensory memories of choral performances is a generic feature of choral song. Such evocation allows choral texts to retain their generic distinctiveness across multiple modes and contexts of reperformance.

The contributors engage with the matters of lyric genres on a wide spectrum, considering occasionality and rituality, intertextual and intergeneric relationships, ancient interpretations, and sensory and cognitive effects in viewers and receivers. They offer fresh takes on both canonical authors and sources less frequently discussed. On the whole, this volume succeeds in showing how different conceptualizations of genre can complement each other and open new ways to think about Greek lyric. Undoubtedly, each chapter will summon an array of questions in readers, thus, hopefully, prompting further research in new, or now renewed, directions.

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