

Musical and Dance Performances around the Apollo's Statue: A Case from South Italy

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## **MUSICAL AND DANCE PERFORMANCES AROUND THE APOLLO'S STATUE: A CASE FROM SOUTH ITALY**

ANGELA BELLIA

*Abstract.* The representations of musical and dance performances around statues allow us not only to explore the mythical, cultic, and historical contexts within which they were performed, but also their relationship with local cults and ceremonies. Taking into account visual evidence from Magna Graecia, this paper aims to take an interdisciplinary “big picture” approach, as opposed to a micro-focus on organology.

### INTRODUCTION

Vase paintings from the Archaic to the Hellenistic periods often depicted musical performances around statues.<sup>1</sup> However, no study has explored this subject as an important aspect of musical iconography related to religious aspects of ancient cultures in terms of the behaviour of worshippers and cult practices.<sup>2</sup> This is in sharp contrast to the field of musical iconography, where the study of musical instruments and musical scenes in mythical contexts has been the main subject of investigation. However, paintings of musical performances around stat-

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<sup>1</sup> Brand 2000, 99-113; Kubatzki 2016, 5-8.

<sup>2</sup> Nordquist 1992.

ues merely scratch the surface of a large field of inquiry that leads to questions regarding performance, space, and ritual, and the role of music and dance in ancient society and religion more widely. Indeed, these representations allow us not only to investigate the cultic and ritual contexts, but also the symbolic role of musical instruments in sacred sphere.<sup>3</sup>

In this essay I would like to focus on one of the masterpieces of music and dance performances around statues in Greek visual culture: the fragment of the Apulian red-figure calyx-krater from the Spartan colony of Taras, modern Tarentum, attributed to the painter of the *Birth of Dionysus* (Fig. 1).<sup>4</sup> Preserved at the Allard Pierson Museum in Amsterdam, this vase depicts the meeting of Apollo and Dionysus.<sup>5</sup> It is possible that the fragmented vase came from Apollo's sanctuary in Tarentum, but we do not know where this was located in the Doric polis.<sup>6</sup> As Clemente Marconi has argued,<sup>7</sup> this vase belongs to a group of Greek and South Italian vases where the rare coexistence of the divinity in close proximity to its statue is represented. Since the Early Classical period, vase painters tended to differentiate the statues of gods from the "living gods": representation and represented are separated, and the image of the divinity is doubled, with both the "living god" and its representation standing close to one another.<sup>8</sup> This brings us back to the general interpretation of this series of vases featuring "living gods" alongside their images:<sup>9</sup> "by showing the divinity in close proximity to its statue," as Marconi pointed out, "these vases are emphasizing the fact that statues of gods translate in a visible way the

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<sup>3</sup> Bellia 2016, 16-17; 2018, 89-91.

<sup>4</sup> Amsterdam, Allard Pierson Museum, 2579. *RVAp* I, 34, 36, nr. 10, tav. 9,2.

<sup>5</sup> Schefold 1937, 48-49; Schneider-Herrmann 1972, 31-34, fig. 1; Todisco 1990, 921-928, fig. 4; Alroth 1992, 39, fig. 20; de Cesare 1997, 94-97, fig. 46; Oenbrink 1997, 385, nr. D7; Marconi 2011, 162-164, fig. 17; Platt 2011, 120-122, fig. 2.10; Todisco 2012, 336, tav. 56.

<sup>6</sup> Hernández Martínez 2004, 92-99; Chaniotis 2011, 164.

<sup>7</sup> Marconi 2011, 162.

<sup>8</sup> Shapiro 1989, 24-27.

<sup>9</sup> Schefold 1937, 48-49.

invisible presence of the gods, acting as symbolic manifestations of their presence, and that statues of gods are powerful catalysts for the divine presence.”<sup>10</sup> The Apulian vase fragment shows a temple of Apollo with open doors and a colossal bronze statue of the god inside. The statue is an Early Classical figure holding a phiale and a bow: though the posture has been rendered relatively stiff, the muscles are well-depicted. The attempt to foreshorten the columns and the door, as well as the use of highlights and shading on the statue painted white, gold and brown to simulate the metal original, clearly illustrate the new approach towards the problem of perspective.<sup>11</sup> Marconi has noted that the configuration of Apollo’s statue,<sup>12</sup> which is holding attributes recalling his role as a vengeful god or as a justice dispenser, are suggestive of antiquity of the sanctuary and the local worship of the divinity, albeit in an archaic and primitive form.<sup>13</sup>

Sitting on the ground in front of him, the “living Apollo,” holding a string instrument, is a High Classical figure positioned in three-quarter view beside his Doric temple. Next to him, a fragmentary figure of Artemis is sitting holding a spear. As Gisela Schneider-Herrmann pointed out,<sup>14</sup> the god has a youthful aspect and a sad expression: above his reclining head there is the inscription ΑΠΟΛΛ[ΩΝ].<sup>15</sup> A tripod and the temple seem to separate this “Apollonian” scene from a Dionysiac group also depicted on another fragment from the vase: the god, named by the inscription ΔΙΟΝΥΣΟΣ above his head, is holding a branch; he is accompanied by his retinue composed of a maenad playing a tambourine with her right hand, and by a satyr in lively movement raising a *kantharos*. The percussion instrument is a frame drum enriched by small rattling disks and a handle, and by the presence of stiffening bands along both edges of the frame: since the 5<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Marconi 2011, 162.

<sup>11</sup> *RVAp* I, 34.

<sup>12</sup> Marconi 2011, 163.

<sup>13</sup> Scheer 2015, 173-176.

<sup>14</sup> Schneider-Herrmann 1972, 37.

<sup>15</sup> Todisco 2012, 46.

century B.C., this is the distinctive trait of the tambourines depicted on the vase paintings of southern Italy.<sup>16</sup> Used typically to accompany dance, these large instruments were usually kept almost vertical like the tambourine held by the maenad on the vase from Tarentum.

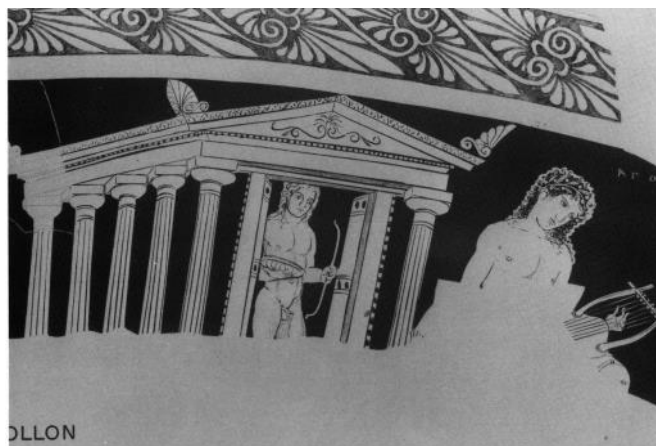


Figure 1. Fragments of a calyx krater depicting Apollo and his cult image and Dionysiac group (400-385 B.C.). Amsterdam, Allard Pierson Museum 2579 (from de Cesare 1997, 95, fig. 46).

<sup>16</sup> Di Giglio 2009; Bellia 2014, 25-29; Vergara Cerqueira 2014, 53-57.

Dating to ca. 400-385 B.C., these fragments feature a unique scene within the context of South Italian vases. Visual evidence from this Apulian red-figure calyx-krater suggests a Dionysiac connotation of a festival devoted to Apollo cult, recalling the particular sacred sphere in South Italy, where the celebrations related to Apollo and Dionysus were often associated with seasonal rituals.<sup>17</sup> This vase seems to show that the Apolline festival might have involved Dionysiac elements and the related musical and sonic aspects. Thus, the uniqueness of this depiction concerns not only the coexistence of the statue of Apollo and of the “living god” holding a lyre, but also the scene of musical and dance performances and sonic events in a Dionysiac setting, however, linked to an “Apollonian” figurative context and to the epiphany of the god.

#### DANCING AROUND THE APOLLO'S STATUE

Taking into account that cults of Apollo Hyacinthus – and possibly that of Artemis Hyacinthotrophus (“the one who nourished Hyacinthus”) – existed in the Spartan colony of Taras, Schneider-Herrmann has interpreted the scene on the Apulian vase from Tarentum as a depiction related to the Hyacinthus feast, during which a festival dedicated to Apollo was celebrated both in Amyclae, near Sparta, and in Tarentum.<sup>18</sup> This festival was celebrated among Dorian Greeks;<sup>19</sup> it is directly attested at Sparta, but there is indirect evidence from many other Doric areas.<sup>20</sup> We know very little about Hyacinthus honoured annually at the Amyclaeon shrine and about the identities and cults of Hyacinthus and Apollo of Amyclae. In the historical period, Hyacinthus was regarded as a hero. As Pausanias said (3.19.1-5), his grave was honoured at Amyclae in order to celebrate him as the beautiful boy with whom Apollo and the wind god Zephyrus fell in love: while Apollo and Hyacinthus were competing in discus throwing, the jealous west wind made Apollo's discus turn and kill the boy.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Lippolis, Garraffo, and Nafissi 1995, 172-174. See also Carbon 2015, 538.

<sup>18</sup> Schneider-Herrmann 1972, 31-34.

<sup>19</sup> Chaniotis 2011, 164.

<sup>20</sup> Hernández Martínez 2004, 81-85.

<sup>21</sup> Calame 2001, 174-175.



Figure 2. Marble gable-topped stele (3<sup>rd</sup> Century B.C.).

Sparta, Archaeological Museum, 689.

From the Amyclaeum (from Moreno Conde 2008, 79, fig. 6).

At the shrine of Amyclae a Late Geometric fragmented vase and a marble gable-topped stele dating to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. with the depiction of musical and choral performances were found. On the Geometric vase, a group of three dancers joining hands is depicted and at the head of the group are two solo dancers.<sup>22</sup> This round dance, which is performed with accompaniment from the lyre around the Apollo's statue, is also carved on a dedicatory stele from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. (Fig. 2).<sup>23</sup> The stele has been linked to the Hyacinthia and to musical

<sup>22</sup> Papadopoulou 2004, 322.

<sup>23</sup> Sparta, Archaeological Museum, 689. Papadopoulou 2004, 323, nr. 193; Moreno Conde 2008, 78-79; Petropoulou 2011-2012, 155.

and dance activities belonging to the older cultic tradition of Amyclae performed during the festival. The upper zone shows a sacrificial scene around the archaic statue of Apollo, who is helmeted and holds a spear and a bow; there is an altar in front of him, and a man drawing bull to the altar. Below, there is a scene of five women: the first is dancing the *kalathiskos*, the second and the third are probably dancers (or spectators) resting, the fourth is holding a lyre and a plectrum, also resting, and the fifth is an *aulos* player.

According to Angeliki Petropoulou, these performances were related to Hyacinthus' apotheosis, which had been depicted on the exterior of an altar in the last quarter of the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.<sup>24</sup> Written sources could also show that since the Archaic period, music and dance around Apollo's statue were performed in Amyclae. Since the written sources mention only the Spartan version of the festival, it seems that it acquired a more or less fixed form at Amyclae, from where it was diffused to other Doric areas.<sup>25</sup> As Claude Calame highlighted, the process of absorption was very rapid, as is proven by the event linked to the foundation of the only Spartan city in the West:<sup>26</sup> indeed, the festival bearing the name Hyacinthus is first accepted in connection with the conspiracy of the Partheniae and the foundation of Taras. The importance of the Hyacinthus festival to the Tarentines is such that it features in their origin story when Antiochus of Syracuse<sup>27</sup> describes how during the ἄγων of the Hyacinthia, the signal for the attack of the conspirators was to be given because the whole Spartan population was present. Thanks to a Delphic oracle, Sparta rid itself of the conspirators, who then sought their fortune at Tarentum, which was traditionally founded around 700 B.C. These athletic games of the Hyacinthia are the oldest known religious events related to the Hyacinthus' supposed burial place under the colossal statue of Apollo.<sup>28</sup> This statue had already been erected around the 7<sup>th</sup> century B.C., given that an inscription

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<sup>24</sup> Petropoulou 2011-2012, 154.

<sup>25</sup> Chaniotis 2011, 162.

<sup>26</sup> Calame 2001, 179.

<sup>27</sup> Strab. 6.3.2 = *FGrH* 555 F 13.

<sup>28</sup> Paus. 3.19.3.

dated to 600 B.C. is the earliest indication of a cult devoted to Apollo at the shrine of Amyclae.<sup>29</sup> It is worth noting that during roughly the same period (650-600 B.C.), Alcman composed a poem to be sung by a chorus of young girls that might have taken place in Amyclae, perhaps during the Hyacinthia.<sup>30</sup> The idea that it was performed around the colossal Apollo's statue at the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century B.C. cannot be dismissed.<sup>31</sup> To judge from the chorus of young boys described by Polycrates<sup>32</sup> which sang on the second day of the Hyacinthia, it is likely a chorus of young girls sang on the same day; this would have occurred as early as the second half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century B.C.<sup>33</sup>

An echo of the joyful cultic sonic event of the Hyacinthia is also described in *Helen*,<sup>34</sup> in which Euripides quotes the nocturnal female rituals involving dances or revels for the Hyacinthus slain.<sup>35</sup> The nocturnal celebration culminated with a common banquet and dances of women and *komoi*, perhaps including a short song; the brevity of this song was categorized by Nonnus (*Dion.* 19.102-105) as being in the Amyclaeon style. At the end of this joyful moment, the words – “Apollo restored to life the long-haired Hyakinthos, and Dionysos will make Staphylos live for ever” – were sung.<sup>36</sup> Thus, nocturnal *komoi* and dances performed by women and the presence of Dionysus in the joyful celebration suggest

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<sup>29</sup> Petropoulou 2011-2012, 154.

<sup>30</sup> Ferrari 2008.

<sup>31</sup> Petropoulou 2011-2012, 155.

<sup>32</sup> Polycrates, *FGrH* 588 F 1 in Ath. 4.139d-f: “But in the middle of the three-day period there is held a spectacle with many features, and a remarkable concourse gathers which is largely attended... full choirs of young men enter and sing some of national songs, and dancers mingling among them go through the figures in the ancient style, accompanied by the flute and the voice of the singers.” Trans. Gulick. Papadopoulou 2004, nr. 178.

<sup>33</sup> Papadopoulou 2004.

<sup>34</sup> Eur. *Hel.* 1468-1470: “And shalt join in the dances again, or the revels for Hyacinth slain, when with rapture night’s pulses shall quiver.” Trans. Way 1930. Papadopoulou 2004, nr. 176.

<sup>35</sup> Papadopoulou 2004, 321.

<sup>36</sup> Petropoulou 2011-2012, 154.

the Dionysiac aspects of Hyacinthia:<sup>37</sup> they seem to echo the Hyacinthus' identity as a dying and reborn god of the Dorians.<sup>38</sup>

#### A LYRE RECALLING A RITE OF PASSAGE?

There is no doubt that the components of Hyacinthus' heroic cult consisted of mourning for his violent death at a young age, propitiatory offerings at his tomb, and the celebration of a festival in his honour involving the whole community.<sup>39</sup> The main source of the Spartan festival discusses how on the first day, a sacrifice was offered to Hyacinthus, perhaps during the evening in the form of a funerary ritual honouring the memory of the hero.<sup>40</sup> On this day of the feast, it seems the singing of the *paian*, Apollo's song par excellence, was not permitted in order to express grief for the death of Hyacinthus.<sup>41</sup> As Calame pointed out,<sup>42</sup> the second day was characterized by a different mood including a sort of many-coloured spectacle: musical and choral performances were an important part of this phase of the feast and of the procession to the sanctuary of Apollo and Hyacinthus. Boys played the lyre; they also sang songs, perhaps including the song for Apollo not sung on the first day. Moreover, choruses of young people performed dances accompanied to the sound of the *aulos*. The dances performed by both youths and maidens had a local and traditional character, and stood in direct relation to the past of the city, annually renewed by the children at each festival.<sup>43</sup>

The two ritual phases seem to translate a sort of passage from death to life in which, after a short period of death, Hyacinthus is reborn and begins a new life. Thus, as Calame has argued, music, songs and dances in the Hyacinthia have been interpreted as elements of initiation

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<sup>37</sup> Nobili 2014, 140-141.

<sup>38</sup> Chaniotis 2011, 164.

<sup>39</sup> Calame 2001, 182; Papadopoulou 2004, 322.

<sup>40</sup> Burkert 2003, 85-86.

<sup>41</sup> Polycrates, *FGrH* 588 F 1 in Ath. 4.139d-f. Chirassi Colombo 1968, 157-177; Chaniotis 2011, 166.

<sup>42</sup> Calame 2001, 174.

<sup>43</sup> Papadopoulou 2004, 322.

rites aimed at the integration of adolescents into the civic body, as well as to express gratitude to Apollo, their protector god.<sup>44</sup> It is worth noting that this phase of the feast was linked to musical performances of the boys playing their lyres not only to accompany the rhythm of the procession, but also to strengthen the bonds in the community.

Taking into account this element of the ritual aimed to dramatize the myth of Hyacinthus and his resurrection, one wonders if the lyre represented on the fragmented vase from Tarentum may depict not only the passage from childhood to adulthood, but also musical performances related to the Hyacinthia introducing youths in the society of adults. This iconography could allude to premature death of Hyacinthus as an element associated with the periodic death and birth of vegetation, a motif linked to a male rite of passage and to the ritual death of the boys before they were accepted into the male adult community in the city. In this case, the depiction of the instrument held by Apollo on the Apulian vase fragment helps us to reconstruct its symbolic role in a specific context of worship.

#### MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS AS SYMBOLS OF DEATH AND REBIRTH

On the Apulian vase fragment the “living Apollo” is holding a seven-string lyre stretched on his left knee while he pulls two strings with his left thumb and index finger (Fig. 3). The fingers are bent forward and look as if they hold or pull rather than pluck the strings, whereas no action is combined towards the strings by the right hand with the plectrum: the position of the right arm does not entirely exclude the possibility that Apollo is holding a plectrum. Indeed, as his arm lying at his right side, the god does not seem to play his lyre or to sing; his gesture apparently illustrates the god checking his instrument before tuning or starting to play it.<sup>45</sup> The depiction of tuning the seven-string lyre is a clear way of illustrating the preparation for a musical performance that is about to start, indicating that within the musical context

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<sup>44</sup> Calame 2001, 174-185.

<sup>45</sup> For visual evidence of musical scenes and musical instruments, especially on vase paintings of the Classical period, including details of playing technique, see Goulaki-Voutyra 2016, 364-365.

depicted, the instrument is not yet being played. On the one hand, the representation of the lyre may be a reference to an upcoming musical event, but on the other hand, the lyre may be related to the particular religious customs of the Italiote community of Southern Italy and to the festival dedicated to Apollo in Tarentum, which the ancient observer knew how to decode.<sup>46</sup>

As Schneider-Herrmann highlighted,<sup>47</sup> the image of the “living god” could be linked to the first day of the festival dedicated to Hyacinthus, austere and funerary, during which his death was celebrated without music. In this case, the Apollo’s sad face on the Apulian vase fragment could be related to his sadness at Hyacinthus’ death. Thus, the representation seems to evoke the notion that Apollo is displaying a silent “musical symbol” belonging to the Hyacinthus age as a young man ready to enter into society and able to take part in the symposium after a symbolic death:<sup>48</sup> thanks to music, resurrection could be celebrated through expressing the joy of the Hyacinthus’ apotheosis. On the second day, numerous animals were sacrificed and fire burned on the grave of the hero in Tarentum,<sup>49</sup> possibly culminating with a banquet and the joyful nocturnal dances of women.<sup>50</sup> It is worth noting that the male statuettes probably representing Hyacinthus holding the kithara (Fig. 4)<sup>51</sup> and the tambourine,<sup>52</sup> which were found in the different sanctuaries of Tarentum, could have been offered during this celebration: these instruments are depicted as merely being held in the hand, functioning as attributes or sacred objects<sup>53</sup> related to musical performances in seasonal celebrations and rituals dedicated to Apollo Hyacinthus.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Fontannaz 2014, 71-72.

<sup>47</sup> Schneider-Herrmann 1972, 31-34. See also de Cesare 1997, 94-97.

<sup>48</sup> Bellia 2016, 8-11.

<sup>49</sup> Lippolis, Garraffo, and Nafissi 1995, 225-226.

<sup>50</sup> Papadopoulou 2004, 321-322.

<sup>51</sup> Tarentum, National Archaeological Museum, 52024, tav. XV, 2.

<sup>52</sup> Lippolis, Garraffo, and Nafissi 1995, 56-58.

<sup>53</sup> Angliker 2018, 25-32; Bellia 2018, 89-95; Bundrick 2018, 15-21; Liveri 2018, 39-46.

<sup>54</sup> Vergara Cerqueira 2019, 102-108.



Figure 3. Particular of the Apulian vase fragment depicting Apollo holding a lyre (400-385 B.C.).

Amsterdam, Allard Pierson Museum 2579  
(from de Cesare 1997, 95, fig. 46).



Figure 4. Male terracotta statuette likely representing Hyacinthus (?)  
 holding a lyre (4<sup>th</sup>-3<sup>th</sup> century B.C.).  
 Tarentum, National Archaeological Museum, 52024  
 (from Lippolis, Garraffo, and Nafissi 1995, tav. XV, 2).

Furthermore, the reclining banqueters holding a lyre discovered in Tarentum have been identified in terms of votive contexts (Fig. 5).<sup>55</sup> Their interpretation has given rise to many discussions concerning the meaning of this theme, some of which contradict one another. Interpretations range from a divine figure (and in particular Dionysus) to a deceased hero, sometimes in connection with the funerary realm and the chthonic cults. Arguments in favour of Dionysus are based on the drinking vessels held by the male figure, which are related to the symposium. It has been also proposed<sup>56</sup> that the reclining banqueter holding a lyre could be considered a specific votive offering that recalls the symposium during which, as is well known, music was a fundamental component.

<sup>55</sup> Tarentum, National Archaeological Museum, 20074. Bellia 2016, 5-11, fig. 1.

<sup>56</sup> Lippolis, Garraffo, and Nafissi 1995, 56-58; Bellia 2016, 4-11.

The presence of tortoise shells, used for the sound box of lyres and found in graves at Tarentum (Fig. 6),<sup>57</sup> seems also connected to the idea that music and banquets additionally represent the joys of the afterlife.<sup>58</sup> It is not particularly surprising that a Dionysiac group is depicted on the vase from Tarentum: while the lyre recalls rituals celebrated in the “Apollonian” sacred sphere and its role of a musical instrument related to initiation and changes of status, the tambourine and dance within the Dionysiac scene are a parallel reference to re-birth and new life.



Figure 5. Terracotta figurine of a banqueter holding a lyre  
(6<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.).

Tarentum, National Archaeological Museum, 20074  
(from Bellia 2016, 7, fig. 1).

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<sup>57</sup> Tarentum, National Archaeological Museum, 66158. Bellia 2012, 67, fig. 69.

<sup>58</sup> Bellia 2016, 5-11.

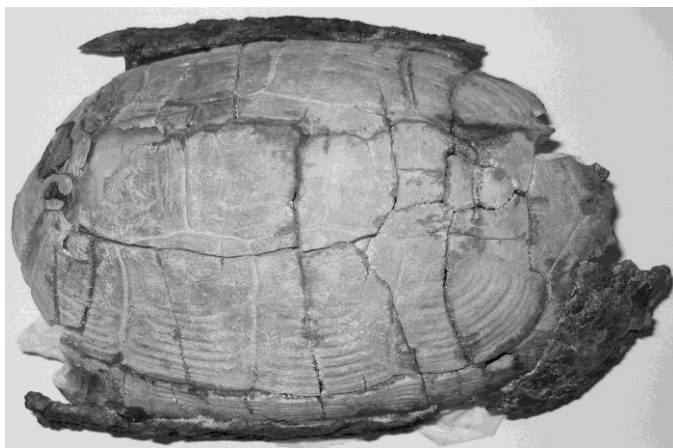


Figure 6. Sound box of lyres found in the grave 57,  
necropolis of "via Otranto" at Tarentum (5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.).

Tarentum, National Archaeological Museum, 66158

(from Bellia 2012, 67, fig. 69).

Furthermore, depicted on the fragment of the Apulian red-figure calyx-krater from Tarentum is the double power of Apollo: on the one hand, he is the bringer of death and disease (symbolized by the bow); on the other hand, he is able to heal through the music of the lyre. It is also possible to attribute a symbolic value to the stringed instrument, one that is connected with the affirmation of religious afterlife beliefs in the western Greek colonies from the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.: particularly for those concerned with personal salvation, the music of string instruments was indispensable in raising the soul of the faithful to overcome death.<sup>59</sup> Thus, if on the one hand the coexistence of musical themes in the same figurative space seems related to the local rituals and cults in Tarentum to which Apollo and Dionysus are often closely associated, on the other, music seems to be linked to the cycle of human and chthonic life. Moreover, music could be also symbolically linked to the leisured life of the cultured male élite in Tarentum, where the *paideia*, particularly those involving music and gymnastics, were fundamental to the education of young people.<sup>60</sup> This aspect would also have been relevant to the potential owner of the vessel.

It is interesting to note that the “Dionysiac” scene on the Apulian vase fragment (Fig. 7) has a parallel on a volute krater (400 B.C.), preserved at the National Archaeological Museum in Naples, also attributed to the painter of the *Birth of Dionysus*.<sup>61</sup> In this complex depiction of a sacrifice to Dionysus from the indigenous tomb 152 from Ruvo a naked young god reclines above while below him preparations are made for a sacrifice of a goat in front of a bearded statue of the god. On this vase music and dance performances are also depicted in the representations of the “living Dionysus” along with his archaic idols (Fig. 8).<sup>62</sup>

According to Oliver Taplin, the viewers of the depictions on these vas-

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<sup>59</sup> Burkert 1972, 350-368.

<sup>60</sup> Bellia 2016, 10; Vergara Cerqueira 2019, 108.

<sup>61</sup> Naples, National Archaeological Museum, 82922. *RVAp* I, 35, nr. 8; Alroth 1992, 39, fig. 21; de Cesare 1997, 95-96, fig. 47; Carpenter 2014, 272, fig. 12.4.

<sup>62</sup> de Cesare 1997, 95-96.

es from Apulia could be also viewers of the actual performances.<sup>63</sup> In this case, a painter's use of a distinctive version of myth and ritual can point to familiarity on the part of his audience with the performance itself and the spread of these kinds of religious rites. The primitive figure of the god stands behind the altar in his sanctuary, where libations, offerings, and music and dances are performed.<sup>64</sup> The cult image is stiff and front-facing wearing a *polos*, and holding a *kantharos* and a thyrsus staff.<sup>65</sup> Lively dancing maenads are playing tambourines and cymbals around his archaic idol, while one maenad is holding a sacrificial basket and another maenad is killing a goat with a knife at the table where a fire is depicted. The "living Dionysus" himself is watching the performance of a sacrifice in his honour from the upper register. The god is seated with a thyrsus and is accompanied by his retinue formed by a seated satyr holding a *kantharos* and a maenad playing a tambourine: the instrument is enriched not only by small rattling disks and a handle like those of the instrument of the fragmentary krater housed in Amsterdam, but also by the depiction of thyrsus or vegetal elements related to the rebirth of the cycle of vegetation. As a percussion instrument suited to marking time and producing an exciting sound for the rhythmic movements, the tambourine was particularly connected with cults and closely related to dancing movements, shaping the soundscape and dancescape<sup>66</sup> of celebrations of seasonal festivals of fertility. It is not by chance that its depiction is often related to performances linked to the cycle of vegetation, as well as to wedding rituals: on the Sicilian red-figure *skyphos* from Lipari attributed to the Painter of Palermo 401 a woman holding a *tympanon* is depicted in a nuptial scene (Fig. 9):<sup>67</sup> this frame drum is enriched by decorative ribbons and small rattling disks embedded in the frame suited to emphasize the rhythm of dance.

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<sup>63</sup> Taplin 2007, 25.

<sup>64</sup> Platt 2011, 60-72.

<sup>65</sup> Alroth 1992, 39.

<sup>66</sup> Naerebout 2017, 39.

<sup>67</sup> Lipari, Regional Archaeological Museum Luigi Bernabò Brea, 185 bis. Trendall 1967, 3/80; Bernabò Brea and Cavalier 1986, 18, fig. 26.



Figure 7. Particular of the Apulian vase fragment depicting a maenad playing a tambourine (400-385 B.C.). Amsterdam, Allard Pierson Museum 2579 (from de Cesare 1997, 95, fig. 46).



Figure 8. Volute krater from Ruvo.  
The “living” Dionysus along with his archaic idols (400 B.C.).  
National Archaeological Museum in Naples, 82922.  
(from Carpenter 2014, 272, fig. 12.4).



Figure 9. *Skyphos* representing a woman holding a *tympanon* in a wedding scene (4<sup>th</sup> century B.C.).  
Lipari, Regional Archaeological Museum Luigi Bernabò Brea, 185 bis  
(from Bernabò Brea and Cavalier 1986, 18, fig. 26).

## SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

As Marconi has noted, by juxtaposing the “living god” and his archaic idol, “the vase painter ... appears here to be carrying to their extreme limits both the notion that the statue of a god is inanimate and the notion that the statue makes the living god present.”<sup>68</sup> The representations of percussion instruments on the fragmentary krater in Amsterdam and on the volute krater in Naples appear to communicate the function of their sounds: to accompany dance during the epiphany of a deity.<sup>69</sup> Percussive rhythms served to emphasize the presence of the god, creating a sacred soundscape around the idol; this soundscape was a distinct element of the ritual sphere and the related religious experience.<sup>70</sup> As a founding act of the cult, epiphany in a sacred space was usually established in places where divinities have chosen to “reveal” themselves. Musical and dance performances served to add prominence to their appearances. The depiction of a god (or a goddess) next to a temple is therefore an allusion to the foundation of the sanctuary’s cult. This means that the fragmented vase from Tarentum may have meant far more than a mere visual display of gods meeting; by alluding to the epiphany of Apollo that was the basis for the establishment of a local cult, they may have reminded the viewer of how close the “living god” and his idol had come and how musical and dance performances were offerings to the deities completed in the framework of the ritual ceremony. Thus, music and sound, alongside dance as a component inseparable from music in the sacred sphere, strengthen the power of performances, which relies in great part on the effect of the heightened multisensory experience.<sup>71</sup>

The desire to retain a tangible memento of a musical performance in a sacred place could have brought worshippers to offer particular dedications that depicted musical and dancing performances; this may have contributed to evoking the presence of the gods in the worship-

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<sup>68</sup> Marconi 2011, 164-165.

<sup>69</sup> Platt 2011, 120-121.

<sup>70</sup> For the sound experience in a sacred environment, see Miles 2016, 183-186.

<sup>71</sup> Bell 1997, 159-164.

pers by recalling sounds related to their epiphany and their soundscape in a sacred setting.<sup>72</sup> These depictions are emphasizing the fact that music and sound are acting as “aural manifestations” of the divine presence; translating in a visible way the invisible presence of the god, the representations of music and dance performances are powerful recalls to their epiphany. Keeping this perspective in mind, the musical scenes on the Apulian vase fragment could be associated not only with a specific idea of ritual and musical performances in the local cult of Apollo Hyacinthus in Tarentum, but also to an explicit preservation of their memory.

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<sup>72</sup> Bundrick 2018, 19.

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