

## CONCERNING MUSIC.\*

ONESICRATES, SOTERICUS, LYSIAS.

1. THE wife of Phocion the just was always wont to maintain that her chiefest glory consisted in the warlike achievements of her husband. For my part, I am of

\* No one will attempt to *study* this treatise on music, without some previous knowledge of the principles of Greek music, with its various moods, scales, and combinations of tetrachords. The whole subject is treated by Boeckh, *De Metris Pindari* (in Vol. I. 2 of his edition of Pindar); and more at length in Westphal's *Harmonik und Melopöie der Griechen* (in Rossbach and Westphal's *Metrik*, Vol. II. 1).

An elementary explanation of the ordinary scale and of the names of the notes (which are here retained without any attempt at translation) may be of use to the reader.

The most ancient scale is said to have had only four notes, corresponding to the four strings of the tetrachord. But before Terpander's time two forms of the heptachord (with seven strings) were already in use. One of these was enlarged to an octachord (with eight strings) by adding the octave (called *νήτη*). This addition is ascribed to Terpander by Plutarch (§ 28); but he is said to have been unwilling to increase the number of strings permanently to eight, and to have therefore omitted the string called  *τρίτη*, thus reducing the octachord again to a heptachord. The notes of the full octachord in this form, in the ordinary diatonic scale, are as follows:—

|                    |          |                    |                   |
|--------------------|----------|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1. <i>ὑπάτη</i>    | <i>e</i> | 5. <i>παραμέση</i> | <i>b</i>          |
| 2. <i>παρῦπάτη</i> | <i>f</i> | 6. <i> τρίτη</i>   | <i>c</i>          |
| 3. <i>λιχανός</i>  | <i>g</i> | 7. <i>παρανήτη</i> | <i>d</i>          |
| 4. <i>μέση</i>     | <i>a</i> | 8. <i>νήτη</i>     | <i>e</i> (octave) |

The note called *ὑπάτη* (*hypate*, or *highest*) is the lowest in tone, being named from its position. So *νήτη* or *νεύτη* (*nete*, or *lowest*) is the highest in tone.

The other of the two heptachords mentioned above contained the octave, but omitted the *παραμέση* and had other changes in the higher notes. The scale is as follows:—

|                    |          |                    |          |
|--------------------|----------|--------------------|----------|
| 1. <i>ὑπάτη</i>    | <i>e</i> | 5. <i> τρίτη</i>   | <i>b</i> |
| 2. <i>παρῦπάτη</i> | <i>f</i> | 6. <i>παρανήτη</i> | <i>c</i> |
| 3. <i>λιχανός</i>  | <i>g</i> | 7. <i>νήτη</i>     | <i>d</i> |
| 4. <i>μέση</i>     | <i>a</i> |                    |          |

opinion that all my glory, not only that peculiar to myself, but also what is common to all my familiar friends and relations, flows from the care and diligence of my master that taught me learning. For the most renowned performances of great commanders tend only to the preservation of some few private soldiers or the safety of a single city or nation, but make neither the soldiers nor the citizens nor the people any thing the better. But true learning, being the essence and body of felicity and the source of prudence, we find to be profitable and beneficial, not only to one house or city or nation, but to all the race of men. Therefore by how much the more the benefit and advantage of learning transcends the profits of military performances, by so much the more is it to be remembered and mentioned, as most worthy your study and esteem.

2. For this reason, upon the second day of the Saturnalian festival, the famous Onesicrates invited certain persons, the best skilled in music, to a banquet; by name Soterichus

This is not to be confounded with the reduced octachord of Terpander. This heptachord includes two tetrachords so united that the lowest note of one is identical with the highest note of the other; while the octachord includes two tetrachords entirely separated, with each note distinct. The former connection is called *κατὰ συναφῆν*, the latter *κατὰ διάζευξιν*. Of the eight notes of the octachord, the first four (counting from the lowest), *ὑπάτη*, *παρυπάτη*, *λιχυνός*, and *μέση*, are the same in the heptachord; *παρამέση* is omitted in the heptachord; while *τρίτη*, *παρανήτη*, and *νήτη* in the heptachord are designated as *τρίτη συνημμένων*, *παρανήτη συνημμένων*, and *νήτη συνημμένων*, to distinguish them from the notes of the same name in the octachord, which sometimes have the designation *διεζευγμένων*, but generally are written simply *τρίτη*, &c.

These simple scales were enlarged by the addition of higher and lower notes, four at the bottom of the scale (i.e. before *ὑπάτη*), called *προσλαμβανόμενος*, *ὑπάτη ἵπατων*, *παρυπάτη ἵπατων*, *λιχυνός ἵπατων*; and three at the top (above *νήτη*), called *νήτη*, *παρανήτη*, *τρίτη*, each with the designation *ὑπερβολαίων*. The lowest three notes of the ordinary octachord are here designated by *μέσων*, when the simple names are not used. Thus a scale of fifteen notes was made; and we have one of eighteen by including the two classes of *τρίτη*, *παρανήτη*, and *νήτη* designated by *συνημμένων* and *διεζευγμένων*.

The harmonic intervals, discovered by Pythagoras, are the *Octave* (*διὰ πασῶν*), with its ratio of 2:1; the *Fifth* (*διὰ πέντε*), with its ratio of 3:2 (*λόγος ἡμιόλιος* or *Sesquialter*); the *Fourth* (*διὰ τεσσάρων*), with its ratio of 4:3 (*λόγος ἐπίτριτος* or *Sesquiterce*); and the *Tone* (*τόνος*), with its ratio of 9:8 (*λόγος ἐπόγδοος* or *Sesquioctave*). (G.)

of Alexandria, and Lysias, one of those to whom he gave a yearly pension. After all had done and the table was cleared,—To dive, said he, most worthy friends, into the nature and reason of the human voice is not an argument proper for this merry meeting, as being a subject that requires a more sober scrutiny. But because our chiefest grammarians define the voice to be a percussion of the air made sensible to the ear, and for that we were yesterday discoursing of Grammar, — which is an art that can give the voice form and shape by means of letters, and store it up in the memory as a magazine, — let us consider what is the next science to this which may be said to relate to the voice. In my opinion, it must be music. For it is one of the chiefest and most religious duties belonging to man, to celebrate the praise of the Gods, who gave to him alone the most excelling advantage of articulate discourse, as Homer has observed in the following verses : —

With sacred hymns and songs that sweetly please,  
The Grecian youth all day the Gods appease ;  
Their lofty paeans bright Apollo hears,  
And still the charming sounds delight his ears.\*

Now then, you that are of the grand musical chorus, tell your friends, who was the first that brought music into use ; what time has added for the advantage of the science ; who have been the most famous of its professors ; and lastly, for what and how far it may be beneficial to mankind.

3. This the scholar propounded ; to which Lysias made reply. Noble Onesicrates, said he, you desire the solution of a hard question, that has been by many already proposed. For of the Platonics the most, of the Peripatetic philosophers the best, have made it their business to compile several treatises concerning the ancient music and the reasons why it came to lose its pristine perfection. Nay,

\* II. I. 472.

the very grammarians and musicians themselves who arrived to the height of education have expended much time and study upon the same subject, whence has arisen great variety of discording opinions among the several writers. Heraclides in his Compendium of Music asserts, that Amphion, the son of Jupiter and Antiope, was the first that invented playing on the harp and lyric poesy, being first instructed by his father ; which is confirmed by a small manuscript, preserved in the city of Sicyon, wherein is set down a catalogue of the priests, poets, and musicians of Argos. In the same age, he tells us, Linus the Euboean composed several elegies ; Anthes of Anhedon in Boeotia was the first author of hymns, and Pierus of Pieria the first that wrote in the praise of the Muses. Philammon also, the Delphian, set forth in verse a poem in honor of the nativity of Latona, Diana, and Apollo, and was the first that instituted dancing about the temple of Delphi. Thamyras, of Thracian extraction, had the best voice and the neatest manner of singing of any of his time ; so that the poets feigned him to be a contender with the Muses. He is said to have described in a poem the Titans' war against the Gods. There was also Demodocus the Corcyraean, who is said to have written the Destruction of Troy, and the Nuptials of Vulcan and Venus ; and then Phemius of Ithaca composed a poem, entitled The Return of those who came back with Agamemnon from Troy. Not that any of these stories before cited were compiled in a style like prose without metre ; they were rather like the poems of Stesichorus and other ancient lyric poets, who composed in heroic verse and added a musical accompaniment. The same Heraclides writes that Terpander, the first that instituted the lyric *nomes*,\* set verses of Homer as well as his

\* According to K. O. Müller (History of Greek Literature, Chap. XII. § 4), the *nomes* were "musical compositions of great simplicity and severity, something resembling the most ancient melodies of our church music." (G.)

own to music according to each of these nomes, and sang them at public trials of skill. He also was the first to give names to the lyric nomes. In imitation of Terpander, Clonas, an elegiac and epic poet, first instituted nomes for flute-music, and also the songs called *Prosodia*.\* And Polymnestus the Colophonian in later times used the same measure in his compositions.

4. Now the measures appointed by these persons, noble Onesicrates, in reference to such songs as are to be sung to the flutes or pipes, were distinguished by these names, — Apothetus, Elegiac, Comarchius, Schoenion, Cepion, Tenedius, and Trimeles (or of three parts).

To these succeeding ages added another sort, which were called Polymnastia. But the measures set down for those that played and sung to the harp, being the invention of Terpander, were much more ancient than the former. To these he gave the several appellations of Boeotian, Aeolian, Trochaean, the Acute, Cepion, Terpandrian, and Tetraeodan.† And Terpander made preludes to be sung to the lyre in heroic verse. Besides, Timotheus testifies how that the lyric nomes were anciently appropriated to epic verses. For Timotheus merely intermixed the dithyrambic style with the ancient nomes in heroic measure, and thus sang them, that he might not seem to make too sudden an innovation upon the ancient music. But as for Terpander, he seems to have been the most excellent composer to the harp of his age, for he is recorded to have been four times in succession a victor at the Pythian games. And certainly he was one of the most ancient musicians in the world; for Glaucus the Italian in his treatise of the ancient poets and musicians asserts him to have lived before Archilochus, affirming him to be the second next to those that first invented wind-music.

\* *Προσόδια* were songs sung to the music of flutes by processions, as they marched to temples or altars; hence, songs of supplication. (G.)

† See Rossbach and Westphal, II. 1, p. 84. (G.)

5. Alexander in his Collections of Phrygia says, that Olympus was the first that brought into Greece the manner of touching the strings with a quill; and next to him were the Idaean Dactyli; Hyagnis was the first that sang to the pipe; after him his son Marsyas, then Olympus; that Terpander imitated Homer in his verses and Orpheus in his musical compositions; but that Orpheus never imitated any one, since in his time there were none but such as composed to the pipe, which was a manner quite different from that of Orpheus. Clonas, a composer of nomes for flute-music, and somewhat later than Terpander, as the Arcadians affirm, was born in Tegea or, as the Boeotians allege, at Thebes. After Terpander and Clonas flourished Archilochus; yet there are some writers who affirm, that Ardalus the Troezenian taught the manner of composing to wind-music before Clonas. There was also the poet Polymnestus, the son of Meles the Colophonian, who invented the Polymnestian measures. They farther write that Clonas invented the nomes Apothetus and Schoenion. Of Polymnestus mention is made by Pindar and Alcman, both lyric poets; but of several of the lyric nomes said to be instituted by Terpander they make Philammon (the ancient Delphian) author.

6. Now the music appropriated to the harp, such as it was in the time of Terpander, continued in all its simplicity, till Phrynis grew into esteem. For it was not the ancient custom to make lyric poems in the present style, or to intermix measures and rhythms. For in each nome they were careful to observe its own proper pitch; whence came the expression *nome* (from νόμος, law), because it was unlawful to alter the pitch appointed for each one. At length, falling from their devotion to the Gods, they began to sing the verses of Homer and other poets. This is manifest by the proems of Terpander. Then for the form

of the harp, it was such as Cepion, one of Terpander's scholars, first caused to be made, and it was called the Asian harp, because the Lesbian harpers bordering upon Asia always made use of it. And it is said that Periclitus, a Lesbian by birth, was the last harper who won a prize by his skill, which he did at one of the Spartan festivals called Carneia; but he being dead, that succession of skilful musicians, which had so long continued among the Lesbians, expired. Some there are who erroneously believe that Hipponax was contemporary with Terpander, when it is plain that Hipponax lived after Periclitus.

7. Having thus discoursed of the several nomes appropriated to the stringed as well as to the wind instruments, we will now speak something in particular concerning those peculiar to the wind instruments. First they say, that Olympus, a Phrygian player upon the flute, invented a certain nome in honor of Apollo, which he called Polycephalus,\* or of many heads. This Olympus, they say, was descended from the first Olympus, the scholar of Marsyas, who invented several forms of composition in honor of the Gods; and he, being a boy beloved of Marsyas, and by him taught to play upon the flute, first brought into Greece the laws of harmony. Others ascribe the Polycephalus to Crates, the scholar of Olympus; though Pratinas will have Olympus the younger to be the author of it. The Harmatian nome is also said to be invented by Olympus, the scholar of Marsyas. This Marsyas was by some said to be called Masses; which others deny, not allowing him any other name but that of Marsyas, the son of that Hyagnis who invented the art of playing upon the pipe. But that

\* This seems to be the nome referred to by Pindar, Pyth. XII. 12, as the invention of Pallas Athena. The Scholia on the passage of Pindar tell us that the goddess represented it in the lamentation of the two surviving Gorgons for their sister Medusa slain by Perseus, and the hissing of the snakes which surrounded their heads, — whence the name *πολυκέφαλος*, or *many-headed*. (G.)

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