

Rules for Musical Contests

ORSAMUS PEARL

P.Mich.inv. 4682 i 11.3 × 5.5 cm. ii 10.7 × 5.5 cm.
iii 2.9 × 4.5 cm. iv 1.5 × 1 cm.

II–III A.D.

This fragmentary text was recovered during the University's excavations at Karanis in 1926. It survives on three small pieces, plus a scrap which bears only indecipherable traces. The papyrus was of poor quality, coarse and rough, and the writing is crabbed and irregular. Most features of the writing suggest the late second or early third century of our era as the date of our copy. Documents and coins found in the same area as this papyrus fall in the period A.D. 117–235.¹ The writing runs with the fibers.

No comparable text is at present known. Even so, the form and content suggest a tradition of specifications, both of requirements and prohibitions, which set the standards for the several categories of musical competition.² The opposition to innovation consistently maintained by conservatives, such as Aristophanes, the Spartan ephor, Plato, and a large section of the Athenian public, is well known.³ The musical contests at the great games, to judge from the strict formalism imposed in such a genre as the Pythian

¹ A. E. R. Boak and Enoch Peterson, *Karanis: Topographical and Architectural Report, 1924–28*, 9.

² Emil Reisch, *De Musicis Graecorum Certaminibus* (Vienna, 1885), which collects and interprets the evidence to that date, is still useful. The documentation is mainly epigraphic, and usually identifies only the victors in the several categories of competition. It is principally valuable in showing the large number of contests throughout the Greek world and the wide variety of performances in many of them.

³ Aristophanes: *Nub.* 961 ff., quoted with approval by Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. Mus.* 14–15, and paralleled in Pherocrates, quoted by Ps.-Plutarch, *De Mus.* 30 (1141C–1142). Sparta: Plutarch, *Inst. Lac.* 17 (238C). Terpander was fined and his lyre nailed to the wall because of one extra string. The ephor proposed to cut from Timotheos' lyre the strings beyond the traditional seven; Timotheos himself (*Pers.* 215 ff.) alludes to expulsion from Sparta and defends his "new songs." Plato: *Republic* 3.398–399. Athens: Plutarch, *An seni* 23 (745D); Satyros, *Vit. Eur.* (*P.Oxy.* IX 1176) col. 22.

nome,⁴ must have been a stronghold of traditionalism. We judge that, to assure the perpetuation of tradition, requirements similar to those set forth in the Michigan text must have been imposed on the contestants. At what time the earliest rules were codified and set down, we do not know, and our text bears no evidence of its own antecedents or of its origin. Its presence and recovery in so provincial and undistinguished a village as Karanis is an oddity; yet even in the *chōra*, towns and villages featured musical contests at their major festivals.⁵ Even for these, a written set of rules may have been required. The Museum at Alexandria may have been the source, and our copy was possibly commissioned from Alexandria by a local official or dignitary.

In our text, the rules are presented in a pattern clearly observable in the two sections which are substantially complete, lines 5-15 and 24-32. A heading specifies the genre of the performance—lines 5 and 24. Sub-species may be later indicated, as in lines 13 and 28. Following the heading, a sentence with a verb in the imperative prescribes what is to be done—lines 6 and 25-27. A further imperative—line 14—applies to the soloist of line 13. The several errors or blunders are described for which the contestant is disqualified—lines 6-10, 13-14, and 27. Certain permissible variations in personnel and performance are indicated—lines 10-13 and 29-32.

As is evident, it is throughout assumed that the contestants were well aware of the conventions which prescribed the form of the νόμοι and μέλη which were to be performed. Our imperfect knowledge of these matters offers a considerable obstacle to our comprehension. We meet with additional difficulties in the rare terms *παρὰ θύραν*, line 8, and *μεσόχορ[ος]*, line 14. The choral, or choral-dramatic implication of these words, however, diminishes the surprise at the unanticipated indications of a dramatic or semi-dramatic performance. This feature is adumbrated by the presence of the *persona*, line 9, *ἐξόδους*, line 26, and *κωμικ[ούς]*, line 12 and probably in the same form, line 32. The latter apparently refers to assisting citharists or to added actors or dancers. The piper's nome, as described in Pollux 4.84, suggests at least *mimēsis*, but by Greek concepts of music, music in itself had strong mimetic and depictive capabilities. At least in the earlier period, it is quite clear (e.g., from Strabo 9.3.10)

⁴ Described in Strabo, *Geog.* 9.3.10; a different account is given by Pollux 4.84.

⁵ H. I. Bell, "A Musical Competition in the 3rd Century B.C.," *Raccolto Lombroso* 13-23; the occasion was perhaps the accession of Euergetes. See also Wilcken, *Chrest.* 491 (= *P.Giss.* 3), one column of a libretto for a pageant introducing a festival in which there will be athletic and musical exercises, probably competitive; the occasion was the accession of Hadrian.

that actors or dancers were not required or even permissible. Pollux⁶ may be describing later elaborations of the performance, resembling pantomime, into which dramatic features had been introduced. Since the text here may reflect later practices and even derive from contemporary conventions, the evidence in Pollux need not be discounted.

It has proved impossible to establish with confidence the length of the lines and the extent of the loss at the right. Most suggestions for restoration can only be offered *exempli gratia*, and are presented in the notes.⁷

Fragment i

Column 1

]εῦασμα ()
].αλη.

Column 2

	λειωθῆναι μέρος μελῶν προσπ[ο[τε-]
5	ν(όμος) ἀλλητῶν κυκλῖών []
	ἀλλητῆς κύκλιος ἀλλεῖτω τὸν νόμον. ἐὰν δὲ]
	παραλίπη μέρος, ἕξαθλ(ός) ἐστι. ἐὰν δὲ ἦττο[]
	[εἶσα]γάγῃ ἢ παρὰ θύραν εἰσέλθῃ ἢ εἰσμ[]
	[. .] εἰσκομία τῷ προσώπῳ ὡστεν[]
10	τούτων, ἕξαθλ(ός) ἐστ(ι). ἐξέεται δὲ ἐν τῷ []
	τῷ βουλομένῳ συνεισάγειν κιθαρ[ιστ		οὐκ]
	[ἐλ]άττους τριῶν ὦν τοὺς βῆ κωμικ[οὺς]
	[. .]μένους. ἐφ' ὅσοις δὲ ἑτέροις ὁ πυθ[ικὸς ἀλλητῆς		ἕξ-]
	[αθ]λός ἐστι καὶ αὐτὸς ἔστω μεσόχορ[ος]
15	[. . . . ε]ισάγων [.].σ[. .]. .[]

Fragment ii

Column 1

].ς

(In 17, 18 traces of two and one letter, respectively)

].ψ

20 (Trace of one letter)

]κας

(in 22 trace of one letter)

⁶ The terms used by Pollux are sufficiently ambiguous to suggest either the presentation by music alone of emotional states and even activities, or an accompanying dramatic miming of the action.

⁷ For assistance in restoration and interpretation, I am especially grateful to J. J. Bateman, G. M. Browne, E. W. Handley, L. Koenen, G. M. Sifakis, and H. C. Youtie.

exits perform on the same terms as the cyclic pipers. And on the same terms also he is disqualified. But if (?) . . . the one in charge of the cithara for the Pythian citharists . . ., let him also be in charge of the cyclic citharists . . . Let it be permitted for him to have also two accompanying citharists . . . and in the final part comic . . .

COMMENTARY

Traces of the ends of lines of preceding columns are preserved on both fragments i and ii. The intercolumnar space was only carelessly maintained. Where the first word of a section in column 2 is set to the left, there is no space. For example, the mark of abbreviation over alpha of line 1 extends over alpha beginning line 6; the doubtful sigma of line 16 is almost above the kappa of line 25.

1 $\epsilon\psi\alpha\sigma\mu\alpha$ (): $\epsilon\psi$ —possibly pi (Koenen). The dithyramb frequently figures in the contests, and would account for the presence of the Bacchic cry.

3-4 $\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\iota\omega\theta\eta\gamma\alpha\iota$: Youtie. An articular infinitive, one of result or purpose, or in temporal construction?

4-6 A small piece of papyrus, attached by two fibers, fell away and was lost after the first transcription, and the text it carried is marked off by dotted lines.

4 $\pi\rho\sigma\pi\omicron$ [: no compound verb offers a convincing supplement, and the possibilities for adjective or noun with the preposition are too numerous to be reckoned with.

5 $\alpha\lambda\eta\tau\omega\upsilon\upsilon\kappa\kappa\lambda\iota\omega\upsilon\upsilon$: references to these are offered by Lucian, *De salt.* 2 and 26, "pipers who accompany cyclic dancers." They are cited with approval by Crato (section 2), who mentions that they are eligible to enter officially sponsored contests. We may conjecture that the music may have, on occasion, been performed as music, without dancers, as is much of our dance and ballet music.

5-6 As with $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\omicron\varsigma$, $\nu\acute{\omicron}\mu\omicron\varsigma$ is a term of wide application. That it had specific meaning here is indicated by what follows; but we are in doubt as to precisely what the agonothetes and performers understood by it. A formalized sequence of musical patterns and action is envisaged with the assistance of a *persona* (an actor? or a dancer?).

7 The $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\rho\omicron\varsigma$ was either specified in the lacuna, or might have been any well-known and traditional section of the performance.

$\xi\gamma\alpha\theta\lambda(\omicron\varsigma)$: as in the scholion to *Od.* 21.76, explaining that the suitor is out of contention if the arrow he shoots fails to pass through the twelve axe-holes.

ἤτρο[: the possibilities are: accusative neuter, singular or plural (adverbial?), or accusative masculine or feminine plural.

8 παρὰ θύραν: "beside the door," i.e., perhaps the central door; or παραθύραν, "through the side door." The opposition between κατὰ ("right") and παρὰ ("wrong") may give this the sense of "enter by the wrong door." Of interest is Demosthenes' complaint, *Against Meidias* 17, citing Meidias' harassment of Demosthenes as chorus-leader: "blocking the side-wings, a private citizen nailing up public property." (Bateman) The purpose appears to have been to force the chorus to come in by other than their normal entrance, the *paraskēnia*.

εἰσμ[: εἰς μ[έσον? (Handley). Perhaps it was followed by μῆ.

9 τῷ προσώπῳ: in nine instances elsewhere no iota adscript is indicated in the text, and the dual is extremely unlikely here.

ὥστεν[: ὥστε ν[or ὥστ' ἐν [.

At the end of the line perhaps καὶ ἀπὸ], "... also because of these . . ." (Sifakis).

10 τούτων: a partitive genitive, or after a preposition (cf. preceding note) or controlled by a verb?

ἐν τῷ [: cf. 31 ἐν τῷ τελευταίῳ μέρ[ει, and also 32.

12-13 [. .] μένους: context suggests a future participle, indicating the function of the ancillary performers; for the presence of added musicians, see line 30. An assumption that these were "comic" is startling, since the aulos was characteristically associated with comic dances and action. Conceivably the lacuna may have specified the number of citharists, followed by, e.g., (line 11) καὶ ὑποκριτὰς οὐκ [ἐλ]άττους with the participle modifying the latter, or κιθαρ[ιστὴν καὶ χορευτὰς οὐκ κτλ. Either conjecture would avoid the unexampled concept of "comic citharists."

13 ὁ πυθ[ικός: the Pythian nome was performed by pipers as well as by citharists: Strabo 9.3.10 and Pollux 4.84.

14 μεσόχορος: the central position of the flute player in dithyrambic and cyclic choruses is attested very early; see Pickard-Cambridge, *Dithyramb, Tragedy, Comedy* (1962) 35: "The flute player . . . stood in the midst of the dancers," and footnote 2: "in circular choruses the flute player stood in the middle." The term present here came into use rather late, but is found in a Delphic inscription of the second century B.C.—*Fouilles de Delphes* 3 (1) No. 219, p. 126, and is regarded as equivalent to the *πρωτόχορος* noted by Foucart, *Rev. Phil.* 22 (1903) 223. The meaning is plainly *coryphaeus* ("chorus leader"), and even Pliny's use of the term (*Ep.* 2.14) is not as far from this meaning as the mention in *Fouilles* would indicate. The *Thes.Ling.Lat.* cites four instances much later than Pliny.

In Greek usage, D. M. Pippidi, "Album agonistique d'Istros," *BCH* 84 (1960) 434-458, notes several instances of the term and its companion verb in the mid-second and early third century of our era in inscriptions from the Koinon of the Pentapolis. Without specific evidence, Pippidi would regard the function of the dignitary as the recruitment and training of choruses, as well as directing the performances.

The dubious term *μουσόχορος* (see *LSJ*⁹ s.v. and Addenda) is ruled out by the context here.

23 [..]αυτον:]κλυτον is also possible.

βάλλων: may refer to percussion of the heavier (higher, in ancient terminology) strings (Bateman). Otherwise it might fit a comic context.

25 σκευήν: a term which covers any type of gear or equipment for a performance; καὶ στολήν may have been the second element. παρόδους, balancing ἐξόδους, probably stood at the end of the line. The sense might be "entrance and exit melodies." In the lacuna there may have been an intervening ἔχων, or ἐχόμενος, controlling the initial accusatives.

27 ὁ]: (Browne)—to accommodate the following prepositional phrase: "the one in charge of the cithara for the Pythian citharists." Otherwise, ἐπί with the genitive is extremely difficult to construe.

29 ηται: apparently reveals the subjunctive of another vivid future condition, as in 6-7 and following. Therefore, ἐάν δὲ probably stood in the lacuna, line 27.

καὶ ἐπὶ κτλ.: to indicate the extension of his supervision, or his judgment on conformity with the rules, to the cyclic performers? (Koenen)

30 ὑ[πο]κιθαρ[ιστάς: the noun has no parallel, but the verb (see *LSJ* s.v.) offers a firm base for the noun, which better accords with the structure here.

31-32 It is very difficult to determine whether or not a new section begins here. Uncertainty arises from the careless maintenance of line spacing and straightness, and the irregularity of intercolumnar space which is mentioned above at the beginning of the commentary. The nu of 33 is very doubtful, and the protrusion into the margin of the illegible letter and the kappa of 34 cannot be guaranteed. They may belong to the preceding column. In addition, the very dubious reading of 34 offers no discernible sense.

35 α: either the last letter of a numeral with "of dancers," or "of (performances) without dancers."

38 The reading is decisively influenced by 31 and 32.

