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MAKING (NEW) SENSE OF MARSYAS IN LATE ANTIQUITY: A FORAY INTO JOHN MALALAS' CHRONICLE AND ITS LITERARY HORIZON

Abstract: This paper aims to outline a preliminary study of the founding figures and narratives of the *aulos* in Late Antiquity, addressing their structure, popularity/reception, and discursive uses against the changing socio-cultural and ideological background of their production. After following the dominant synthetic Athenian narrative in the culture of Imperial and Late Antique *paideia*, I focus on John Malalas' radically revised account of Marsyas' invention of the *aulos* and death, arguing for its origins in the rationalizing and euhemeristic Greco-Roman mythography. A wider analysis of the musical references in Malalas' book IV brings to light an underlying, coherent succession of musical *protoi heuretai* rooted in the tradition of Classical and Hellenistic musical historiography.

Keywords: Ancient Greek music, Greek literature, Marsyas, *aulos*, historiography, mythography, heurematography, chronography, John Malalas, Agathias of Myrina, late Antiquity

"After Gideon, Tholas led Israel. During the time of Tholas, Marsyas, the philosopher, lived in the land of Phrygia. He invented through (his knowledge of) music pipes made out of reeds ..."

With these words, John Malalas' 6th century AD world chronicle (*Chronographia*) introduces two figures belonging to the distinct worlds of Jewish biblical historiography and Greco-Roman mythography: the vetero-testamentary judge Tola and the ill-fated (satyr) musician Marsyas.¹ While the former receives as little attention as possible, merely serving as a chronological reference point, Marsyas' story represents one of the last developed accounts in a literary tradition built around the founding

figures of the *aulos*, and spanning almost one millennium of Greco-Roman culture. At the end of a career oscillating between *hybris*, satyric grotesque, vanity or sheer stupidity, on one hand, and the position of a proper first inventor (*prōtos heuretēs*) and teacher (*didaskalos*) placed at the very dawn of Greek musical tradition, Marsyas enters Byzantine literature as a solitary philosopher and musician devoid of any satyric features or divine competitors whatsoever. What does this singular account tell us about the shorter and long-term dynamics and discursive uses of a narrative repertoire which had yet to become what the modern European tradition called *mythology*? How does it engage or bridge the pagan / Christian hiatus which underlies the syncretic efforts of late antique chroniclers, including Malalas? Does it bear any relation whatsoever to the contemporary musical practices of the 5th and 6th centuries AD – and if so, in what ways?

The present paper, developed from a classical scholar's perspective (rather than a byzantinologist's), can only attempt to provide a few preliminary answers and directions for future research at this point. At the very least, it responds to a serious lacuna in the current bibliography on the founding figures and narratives of the *aulos*: when not looking for sweeping generalizations rooted in formalist and/or structuralist readings, recent studies have privileged by and large late Archaic/Classical and early Imperial material and contexts, while the development of the same cultural lineage in Late Antiquity remains largely unexplored.² Something all the more problematic, if one takes into account the fact that a significant part of our extant, fully preserved textual sources does in fact stem from the late antique production of rhetorical *exempla* and mythographic *compendia*. Thus, covering some of these under-researched links within the Greek tradition on Marsyas becomes an imperative for any wider socio-cultural history of the *aulos* in the Greco-Roman world.

1. Dominant narratives on the invention of the *aulos* and discursive uses in imperial and late antique Greek literature

Following these introductory remarks, let us start with a brief overview of the main issues regarding the Greek literary tradition on Marsyas, focusing on the organization of mythographic knowledge and the development of narrative prose forms comparable to Malalas' account in the Imperial period and Late Antiquity.

The earliest extant references to a founding figure of *auletikē* date back to the turn of the 5th century BC, of which Pindar's twelfth Pythian *epinikion*, composed to celebrate the Delphic victory of the *aulos*-player Midas of Akragas (490 BC), remains the only fully preserved poetic articulation of the theme prior to the Hellenistic period.³ Although clearly different in pragmatic scope and actual musical references, they all link the establishment or transmission of *auletikē* to the goddess Athena. Marsyas is first attested in the extant historical record around 460 BC, in a now lost painting decorating the *Leschē* of the Cnidians in Delphi, which represented Odysseus' voyage to the Underworld (*Nekyia*); the satyr was depicted teaching his disciple, Olympos, to play the pipes, within a complex setting of transgressive figures which also included Thamyris, Orpheus, Acteon and Pelias.⁴ Such company suggests that Marsyas' own hubristic competition with Apollo was, at this point, already a part of the satyr's narrative baggage. The same seems to be true about Marsyas' strong ties to Phrygia and, more precisely, with the topography of the Phrygian town of Kelainai (refounded in the 3rd century BC as Apameia).⁵ By the third quarter of the 5th century BC, Marsyas seems to have been integrated in a markedly Athenian narrative which fused the satyr's musical competition against Apollo and the preexisting association of the *aulos* with the goddess Athena.⁶ Thus, Athena would have invented, and then abandoned or passed on the instrument to Marsyas, after seeing the facial distortion caused by the playing of the *aulos* - a narratological device which also provided the story with a new ideological spin, not only directed against the general notion of *hybris*, but arguably questioning the art of *auletikē* itself.⁷ Recent literature has looked for the implications of this narrative in the political conflicts between Athens and Thebes, in the volatile social environment within Athens, and more precisely in the projection of these tensions on the Athenian performance culture, as documented by the late 5th and early 4th c. BC debates around the so-called New Music.⁸ For the matter at hand, following the intricacies of such social readings is less important than understanding the dominant position held by this *synthetic Athenian narrative*, as I would propose to call it from this point onwards, in the extant literary corpus.

Any attempt to follow the tradition of this narrative has to address an overarching problem: the surviving textual sources on Marsyas which can be securely dated to the 5th and 4th c. BC are either fragmentary, or amount to little more than short, conjectural references.⁹ In fact, no extensive account of Marsyas' auletic misfortunes prior to Diodorus' *Historical*

Library (1st c. BC) survives, and even that one is a highly original version which has more to do with a particular euhemerist trend in Hellenistic mythography, as we shall see later on, than with a direct Classical lineage.¹⁰ One will have to refer to the less ambitious mythographic compilations of the Roman period, such as Hyginus' *Fabulae* or Ps.-Apollodorus' *Library* for linear, albeit sketchy synopses starting with Athena's invention of the instrument and ending with Marsyas' death (and metamorphosis).¹¹ These later texts are indeed compatible with the Classical corpus to the extent where one feels secure to posit the existence of a Classical tradition informing, more or less directly, the synthetic narratives of the Roman period – although this should not authorize, *vice versa*, any implicit projection of later features on the lacunar aspects of the earlier Classical material. Looking from a reception point of view, what one misses is, in fact, a traceable, authoritative reference which could underlie the enduring popularity of this synthetic narrative in the Greek literary tradition, despite the obvious changes in social contexts and performance culture. For instance, Melanippides' *Marsyas* may have held an important role in the genesis of the Athenian synthetic narrative, but its later echo is nearly impossible to trace outside Athenaeus' quotation which ensured its fragmentary survival. The repeated references to Marsyas and Olympos in the platonic corpus and Aristotle's appeal to the rejection of the *aulos* by Athena in the *Politics* would certainly qualify for authoritative sources in the canonic *paideia* of the Imperial period, but that doesn't make up for a major *narrative* antecedent.¹² To be sure, this is not *Quellenforschung* for its own sake: the lack of a familiar authority seems in fact to be echoed in Malalas' chronicle and another contemporary text to be discussed at the end of this section. In this respect, the Greek corpus stands in significant contrast to the less complex Latin tradition on Marsyas, where Ovid and Hyginus are clearly situated at the origin of a lineage of mythographic summaries and commentaries which include the *Narrationes fabularum Ovidianarum* attributed to Lactantius Placidus, Fulgentius' *Mythologiae* and the much later *fabularia* of the first two Vatican Mythographers.¹³

Going back to the Imperial and late antique Greek textual corpus, one can pinpoint the major tradition of extant prose summaries on the founding narratives of the *aulos* at the crossroads of two seemingly separate genres: mythographic *compendia* and rhetorical *exempla*. The most often-cited example of the former group is Ps.-Apollodorus' text, reproduced below for all practical purposes:

Ἀπέκτεινε δὲ Ἀπόλλων καὶ τὸν Ὀλύμπου παῖδα Μαρσύαν. οὗτος γὰρ εὐρῶν αὐλοῦς, οὗς ἔρριπεν Ἀθηνᾶ διὰ τὸ τὴν ὄψιν αὐτῆς ποιεῖν ἄμορφον, ἦλθεν εἰς ἔριν περὶ μουσικῆς Ἀπόλλωνι. συνθεμένων δὲ αὐτῶν ἵνα ὁ νικήσας ὁ βούλεται διαθῆ τὸν ἠττημένον, τῆς κρίσεως γινομένης τὴν κιθάραν στρέψας ἠγωνίζετο ὁ Ἀπόλλων, καὶ ταῦτὸ ποιεῖν ἐκέλευσε τὸν Μαρσύαν· τοῦ δὲ ἀδυνατοῦντος εὐρεθείς κρείσσων ὁ Ἀπόλλων, κρεμάσας τὸν Μαρσύαν ἐκ τινος ὑπερτενοῦς πίτυος, ἐκτεμῶν τὸ δέρμα οὕτως διέφθειρεν.

Apollo also killed Marsyas, the son of Olympos; for Marsyas had discovered the pipes that Athena had thrown away because it disfigured her face, and he challenged Apollo to a musical contest. They agreed that the victor should do what he wished with the loser, and when the test was under way, Apollo played his kithara upside down and told Marsyas to do the same; and when he was unable to, Apollo was recognized as the victor, and killed Marsyas by suspending him from a lofty pine tree and flaying him.¹⁴

It is worth noting, as far as the organization of mythographic information is concerned, that Ps.-Apollodorus' narrative is framed in a double catalogic structure: a list of mythical figures killed by Apollo and Artemis (1.4.1-5), itself subsumed to the larger genealogical design of the work. In contrast, no obvious classificatory principle can be identified in the cluster of summaries (including a Marsyas narrative) preserved at the end of Palaephatus' *Peri apistōn* (*On Incredible Tales*), but certainly belonging to a different mythographic tradition.¹⁵

In the age of the second sophistic, Marsyas seems to have also become part of a repertoire of rhetorical *topoi* used and abused, it would seem, at the expense of Attic conciseness. For instance, the 2nd century AD rhetorician Antiochos was reputed to have criticized his rival Alexander Peloplaton for building his discourses around "Ionias, Lydias, Marsyai, nonsense".¹⁶ Interestingly enough, this anecdote is mirrored in the rhetorical handbook transmitted under the name of Aelius Aristides by a commentary on Xenophon's brief reference to Marsyas, served as an illustration of the ancient style (*ἀρχαῖος τρόπος*) and interspersed with counter-examples of rhetorical excess.¹⁷ A short version of the synthetic narrative is included as a model of narration (*diēgēma*) in Libanius' *Progymnasmata*, a collection of exercises meant to provide aspiring orators with basic compositional and argumentative skills, making extensive use of mythological references.¹⁸ Such rhetorical *savoir faire* wasn't ignored in Christian territory, as illustrated by an oration of Gregory of Nazianzus, which resorts to the *topos* of Athena's facial deformation in order to ironize

the pagan emperor Julian the Apostate.¹⁹ More significantly, as we are getting closer to John Malalas' time, it would seem that such classical references were becoming less intelligible for 6th century Christian readers, leading to the compilation of a mythological commentary on some of Gregory's orations, attributed in the subsequent manuscript tradition to Nonnos of Panopolis. Not surprisingly, the commentary on Gregory's auletic reference takes the form of a standard mythographic summary in the vein of Ps.-Apollodorus:

<δεκάτη ἐστὶν ἱστορία κατὰ τὴν Ἀθηνᾶν καὶ τοὺς αὐλοῦς. ἔστι δε αὕτη> Ἀθηνᾶ ποτε τοὺς αὐλοῦς λαβοῦσα καὶ αὐλοῦσα παρήλθε ποταμόν. θεασαμένη δὲ ἐν τῷ ὕδατι τὴν ἑαυτῆς σκιὰν πεφουσημέναν ἔχουσαν τὰς γνάθους, καὶ ἀπρεποῦς ἐκ τοῦτου φαινομένης αὐτῆς, ἔρριψε τοὺς αὐλοῦς ὡς ἀμορφίας αἰτίους. ἐν γὰρ τῷ αὐλεῖν τὸ πνεῦμα ἐξογκοῖ τὰς γνάθους, καὶ ἀμόρφους ποιεῖ τοὺς αὐλοῦντας. τούτους τοὺς ῥιφθέντας αὐλοῦς λέγεται Μαρσύας εὐρηκέναι καὶ ἐρίσαι τῷ Ἀπόλλωνι, καὶ ἠττηθῆναι καὶ ἐκδαρῆναι παρὰ τὸν ποταμόν, ἐξ οὗ Μαρσύας ὁ ποταμὸς λέγεται.

*Tenth is the story about Athena and the pipes. It is this. Athena once took up the pipes and passed by a river as she played. But when she saw her reflection with distended cheeks in the water, an unseemly sight to her, she threw the pipes away for causing ugliness. For in playing the pipes the breath distends the cheeks and disfigures the ones who play the pipes. Marsyas is said to have found the abandoned pipes and to have competed with Apollo, and to have lost and been flayed by the river, which was then called the Marsyas.*²⁰

Such examples illustrate well enough, I think, the convergence of rhetorical *paradeigmata*, mythographic summaries and commentaries within the written culture of Late Antiquity, to the point where they become practically indistinguishable in their textual form and pragmatics, as long as they envisaged the fast accumulation of an operational and canonized *paideia*.

The last stop in this textual itinerary doesn't qualify for a comprehensive attestation of the synthetic narrative on the invention of the *aulos*, as it only deals with Marsyas' competition with Apollo and its violent outcome, but its discursive context (a contemporary historical account), the altered details in the mythical narrative and the extensive accompanying reflection provide an extremely relevant analogy to both Malalas' Marsyas and the rhetorical *paradeigmata* discussed above. The following passage comes

from a section of Agathias' *Histories* dealing with the siege of Phasis (555-556) during the so-called Lazic War, fought against Sassanid Persia. The reference to Marsyas is prompted by the flaying of the Persian general Nachoraban on the orders of king Chosroes, as an exemplary punishment for having retreated and abandoned Phasis in the hands of the Roman army:

τὰ μὲν γὰρ ἐπὶ Μαρσύᾳ θρυλούμενα τῷ Φρυγί, ὡς ἔρις αὐτῷ πρὸς Ἀπόλλωνα ξυνέστη ὑπὲρ τῶν αὐλῶν καὶ τῆς αὐλητικῆς ἐπιστήμης ὅτι τε ἡσσήθη ἀνά κράτος ὁ Μαρσύας, καὶ μάλα δικάϊως, ἅτε δῆθεν, εἰ μὴ λίαν εὐηθες εἶπειν, οἰκείῳ θεῷ ἀνταυλίσας, καὶ ὡς τήνδε ἀνέπλησε τὴν τιμωρίαν τῆς προπετείας ὑπὸ τοῦ νενικηκότος, ἀποδαρὲν αὐτῷ ἅπαν τὸ δέρμα καὶ ἐπὶ δένδρῳ ἠωρημένον· ταῦτα δὴ οὖν ἅπαντα ποιητῶν ἂν εἴη τερατεία καὶ μῦθοι καὶ παίγνια, οὔτε τῶν ἀληθῶν οὔτε τῶν εἰκότων ἐστοχασμένα, εἴ γε αὐλητὴν φασὶ τὸν Ἀπόλλω γεγονέναι καὶ ἀμυλλώμενον ἐπὶ τῇ τέχνῃ καὶ ἐς τοσοῦτο μετὰ τὴν νίκην χαλεπήναντα, ὡς ἄνοσιαν οὕτω καὶ μανιώδη ποινὴν ἐπαγαγεῖν τῷ ἠττημένῳ. πῶς δὲ ἂν καὶ ἤρσκεν αὐτὸν ἐκ τοῦ μετεώρου φαινόμενον τῆς ἀπανθρωπίας τὸ κατηγορήμα; [5] ταῦτα γὰρ οἱ τε πρότερον ποιηταὶ ἄδουσι καὶ οἱ νέοι παραλαβόντες συνάδουσιν. ὦν δὴ καὶ Νόννος, ὁ ἐκ τῆς Πανὸς τῆς Αἰγυπτίας γεγενημένος, ἐν τινι τῶν οἰκείων ποιημάτων, ἅπερ αὐτῷ Διονυσιακὰ ἐπωνόμασται, οὐκ οἶδα ἐφ' ὅτῳ ὀλίγα ἅττα τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος περὶ ἀφηγησάμενος (οὐ γὰρ δὴ τῶν προηγουμένων ἐπὶ ἐπιμέμνημαι) εἶτα ἐπάγει·

Ἐξότε Μαρσύῳ θεμιάχον αὐλὸν ἐλέγξας

Δέρμα παρηώρησε φυτῷ κολπούμενον αὔραις.

[6] ὡς μὲν οὖν ἐξ ἐκείνου τὸ μίasma τοῦτο οὕπῳ τῷ ἀνθρωπιῷ γένοι διέγνωστο, σαφῆ τὰ τεκμήρια καὶ ἀποχρῶντα παρὰ τοῖς ὀρθῶς ἀναθεωρεῖν καὶ τεκμαίρεσθαι τὰ παλαιάτα πεφυκόσιν, ἀλλὰ μὴ ποιητικῇ θεολογίᾳ παρακρουομένοις.

There is a well-known story about Marsyas the Phrygian according to which there was a pipe-playing competition between him and Apollo, in which Marsyas was roundly beaten and rightly so, since he had the temerity (if it does not seem too absurd to put it that way) to play the flute against his own particular god. Whereupon his victorious opponent is supposed to have punished him for his rashness by flaying him and hanging his skin on a tree. The whole tale is, of course, a wildly improbable fabrication of the poets, a mere flight of fancy without a shred of truth or likelihood about it, involving as it does the far-fetched assertion that Apollo became an aulos-player, took part in a musical contest and became so violently enraged after his victory that he inflicted such an altogether wicked and insane punishment on his unsuccessful competitor. And is it really conceivable that he could have been ready to have the indictment of his cruelty displayed in mid air? [5] At all events this theme, which is handled by the poets

of old, has been taken over and exploited also by modern poets, one of whom Nonnus of Panopolis in Egypt, after having made some mention of Apollo (I cannot say in what precise connection because I do not recall the preceding verses) in a poem of his called the *Dionysiaca*, goes on to say [Nonn. *Dion.* 1.42-43]:

“Ever since he humbled Marsyas’ god-defiant pipe,
and hung his skin on a tree to belly in the breeze.

[6] *That this abomination was at the time still unknown to man should be sufficiently obvious to anyone who is capable of viewing the distant past with the right degree of critical detachment and who does not allow himself to be misled by the tales the poets tell about gods.*²¹

Agathias’ account of the flaying of Marsyas fits the traditional elements known from Classical and Hellenistic sources, with one striking difference. The competition has lost its strings vs. *aulos* profile, on which so much ink has been spilt in the last 150 years of scholarship, and Apollo becomes himself a divine *aulos*-player, thus establishing a far stronger connection than whatever implicit affinity one might have looked for in the traditional Athena-Marsyas aetiological transaction: Apollo is nothing less than Marsyas’ private god (οἰκεῖός θεός).²² Ironically, Agathias himself dismisses the prospect of the divine *aulos*-player as far-fetched, suggesting that the origin of this unique development must lie elsewhere. Or does it? His handling of poetic references is obscure at best: the poets of the old (largely meaning, at that point, pre-Nonnian poetry) are conveniently left unnamed, while the *Dionysiaka* quotation from memory doesn’t have anything to do with an *aulos*-playing Apollo.²³ One should not forget that Agathias has been recently shown to be a versatile literate who might well provide a perceptive reader with a multilayered, intertextual experience, to the point of altering historical facts for a mythological *clin d’œil*.²⁴

The corollary of this logical reconfiguration of the entire narrative has much to do with the ambivalent attitude of Agathias’ literary persona towards poetic discourse, Greco-Roman heritage and the (musical) past. On one hand, the rant against the marvelous fabrications of the poets could have been perceived just as legitimate by a non-Christian audience brought up with Plato’s *Republic*, as it would have struck a familiar chord for a Christian reader – the difference being that a Christian wouldn’t have any obvious reasons to care about Apollo coming off just as irrational and cruel as a Persian king. In fact, some of the more sophisticated extant (pre- or non-Christian) texts on Marsyas do attempt to address or compensate in some way for the incongruity between Apollonian piety

and the satyr's gruesome punishment. In Diodorus' version, Apollo flays Marsyas in a momentary fit of bitterness, only to repent soon afterwards, destroying the new kitharodic *harmonia* that he had just invented for the contest and then dedicating both his kithara and Marsyas' *auloi* in a sacred cave of Dionysos.²⁵ Lucian's decidedly less pious humor makes Hera appreciate that if the verdict of the Muses hadn't been corrupted from the very beginning, Marsyas would have been the one flaying Apollo.²⁶ As for Agathias, the concluding remarks of the passage preserve its ambivalence – or perhaps cultural dissonance: it remains unclear whether this ποιητική θεολογία is to be dismissed as misleading because it soils Apollo's stature and a less violent past, or because it invented Apollo and Marsyas in the first place.²⁷ However, the appeal to the distant past (τὰ παλαιάτατα) seems to imply that there are at least some kernels of truth to recover from such poetic fictions – and this leaves us on the threshold of Malalas' chronographic project.

2. Marsyas without competitors: Reinventing the *aulos* for the Christian reader

Up to this point, I have attempted to outline a coherent, if selective overview of the dynamics and uses of the dominant synthetic narrative on the invention of the *aulos* within the world of Greek paideia, and Agathias' finely staged, ambivalent reflections on the poetic fabrication of Marsyas' competition with Apollo provided this itinerary with a fitting coda. In doing so, I left aside intentionally more than a handful of sources and traditions which, either due to their regional references, technical / antiquarian character or fragmentary state have to be regarded as minor in relation to the "mythographic boulevard" we have just crossed. That doesn't mean at all that such sources, taken individually or grouped, are less relevant to an exhaustive study of the founding figures of the *aulos*; on the contrary, niche euhemerist mythography, such as Diodorus' source on Marsyas, regional monographs and catalogues of *heuremata* represent some of the most dynamic and expressive witnesses of the full, polyphonic semantics of an aetiological repertoire such as the one built around the *auletikē technē*. Moreover, some of these minor lineages may end up redefining the dominant tradition in times of profound cultural change – and this might have happened with the entrance of Marsyas in Christian chronography.

This is the full passage on Marsyas in John Malalas' chronicle mentioned in the opening of this paper:

Μετὰ δὲ Γεδεῶν ἡγήετο τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ Θῶλας. ἐν δὲ τοῖς καιροῖς τοῦ Θῶλα ἦν ἐν τῷ Φρυγίᾳ χώρα Μαρσύας ὁ φιλόσοφος, ὅστις ἐφεύρε διὰ μουσικῆς αὐλοὺς ἀπὸ καλάμων. καὶ ἀπενοεῖτο ἀποθεῶν ἑαυτὸν καὶ λέγων, “εὗρον τροφήν ἀνθρώποις διὰ τοῦ μέλους τῶν μουσικῶν καλάμων”. ὤκει δὲ ὁ αὐτὸς Μαρσύας εἰς τοὺς ἰδίου ἀγροὺς τὸν ἅπαντα χρόνον· ὅστις Μαρσύας θεοχολωθηθεὶς ἐξέστη τοῦ ἰδίου νοός, καὶ παραφρονήσας ἔρριπεν ἑαυτὸν εἰς τὸν ποταμὸν καὶ ἀπόλετο· ὄντινα ποταμὸν οἱ τῆς αὐτῆς χώρας Μαρσύαν καλοῦσιν ἕως τῆς νῦν. περὶ οὗ ἱστοροῦσιν οἱ ποιηταὶ ὅτι πρὸς ἔριν τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος ἦλθε· τοῦτο λέγουσι, φησὶν, ὅτι οὗτος βλασφημήσας ἐξέστη τοῦ ἰδίου νοός καὶ ἐφονεύθη, καθὰ καὶ ὁ σοφώτατος Νίνος συνεγράψατο. καὶ ὁ σοφώτατος δὲ Λουκιανὸς ἐμνημόνευσε τῆς ἱστορίας ταύτης, ὅστις εἶπεν αὐτὸν ἀπὸ Καλχίδος εἶναι.

After Gideon, Tholias led Israel. During the time of Tholias, Marsyas, the philosopher, lived in the land of Phrygia. He invented through (his knowledge of) music pipes made out of reeds and then he went out of his mind, proclaiming himself divine and saying “I have found nourishment for men through the melody of musical reeds”. Marsyas lived on his own estates for the whole of his life. He incurred divine anger and went out of his mind and while he was distraught, hurled himself into a river and perished. Men of that country call this river Marsyas to the present day. The poets say of him that he had a quarrel with Apollo. They mean, according to the story, that he blasphemed and went out of his mind and was killed, as the most learned Ninus has written. The most learned Lucian, who said that Marsyas came from Kalchis, has also recorded this story.²⁸

Marsyas' textual encounter with a vetero-testamentary judge is not the only surprise provided by Malalas' account. In fact, the entire narrative has undergone a radical reconfiguration which evacuated Athena, Apollo, and Marsyas' own identity as a satyr from the story; the musical competition and punishment are reduced to little more than a psychological anecdote ending in suicide, with the eponymous Phrygian river coming to be known as Marsyas precisely because of this suicide and not as the result of a metamorphosis. On the surface, this handling of the narrative recalls the explanatory strategies employed by Classical and Hellenistic rationalizing mythographies, such as Palaephatus' *Peri apistōn*, so as to reduce incredible myths to their natural explanations.²⁹ Here, however, both *hybris* and divine anger remain active elements of the plot, one becoming more interiorized, the other one more abstract – needless to

say, both are thus rendered compatible with Christian thought. From this point of view, Malalas' narrative can be viewed as one of the available responses to Agathias' cultural dissonance explored earlier: one can save morals and the mythical past by purging the pantheon.

It is time to take a closer look at the central content of the narrative, Marsyas' identity and invention. Without Athena or other minor predecessor (such as his obscure father, Hyagnis) left around, Marsyas becomes the indisputable *prōtos heuretēs* of the aulos.³⁰ This, in itself, is far from being a unique situation in our surviving record: from earlier classical texts to Hellenistic and Imperial antiquarian sources, a variety of musical inventions have been ascribed to Marsyas, including the aulos *per se*.³¹ What we miss for the most of them is the *emplotment*, the narrative assumptions and articulation which make it possible for Marsyas, rather than Athena or other divine figure, to step up in the position of the first inventor. In fact, the only other fully preserved account which allows us to better understand these narrative and heurematographic mechanics is the story of Rhea-Cybele included in Diodorus' *Historical Library*, book III – in fact, a digression of uncertain Hellenistic origin in the middle of a larger quotation taken from the *Libyka* of Dionysios Scytobrachion, a better documented euhemerist romance datable to the 3rd c. BC.³² While a detailed analysis of this extremely rich narrative will have to wait for a future publication, it must be said that there, as in Malalas, Athena disappears and Marsyas loses his satyr attributes, becoming the wise and chaste friend of Cybele. If Marsyas' invention appears isolated in Malalas, the Hellenistic account situates it in a more complex musical genealogy underlain by a certain notion of progress, as Cybele is first credited with the invention of the syrinx; Marsyas is then led to imitate the notes of the syrinx and to adapt its entire scale on a new instrument, the *aulos*.³³ The text does not do away with Marsyas' antagonist, as Malalas' chronicle, but rather humanizes him, true to its euhemerist outlook, transforming Apollo into a successful and innovative citharode in his own rights.

One additional contact point: both narratives tend to show a peculiar intellectualist inclination towards musical invention, emphasizing Marsyas' wisdom in a manner which strongly contrasts with his dismissing characterization in other types of rhetoric or poetic discourses. Diodorus' text returns several times to Marsyas' *sōphrosynē* and, when the competition starts unfolding against his fortune thanks to Apollo's trick of joining vocal singing to the sound of the kithara, Marsyas actually makes an appeal to the higher intellectual aim of the competition: it was

all about *examining* (ἐξετάζεσθαι) the tuning and the melodic features of the two instruments, not winning with the help of two arts against one. Malalas' boastful Marsyas doesn't use the vocabulary of a *harmonikos*, but he is nonetheless described as a philosopher.³⁴ Moreover, if the rather contrived syntax of the sentence ἐφεῦρε διὰ μουσικῆς αὐλοὺς ἀπὸ καλάμων is understood correctly, Malalas' text too emphasizes Marsyas' musical knowledge which led to the actual invention of the instrument.³⁵ Admittedly, these similarities do not show any obvious connection of Malalas' account with the euhemerist version in Diodorus, but they draw, at the very least, the outlines of a revisionist, innovative mythography which makes use of similar strategies in order to circumnavigate the narrative commonplaces of Greco-Roman *paideia*.

Behind the surface of Malalas' narrative reconstruction and musical content, one may still identify discrete echoes of the epichoric aspects of Marsyas known from previous sources. First, the text only mentions the river and not the city of Kelainai / Apameia Kibotos, but the peculiar detail about Marsyas living his entire life on his own estates (εἰς τοὺς ἰδίους ἀγροὺς) like a late antique aristocratic landowner sounds very much like a 'rationalization' of the satyr's status of local hero and strong ties to the Apameian landscape.³⁶ Secondly, Marsyas' death in the waters of the eponymous river has several parallels outside the standard mythographic accounts.³⁷ The Vatican Paradoxographer maintains that one could sometimes hear sounds of aulos and kithara near the river, because Marsyas the aulos-player drowned in it (ἀποπνιγέντος ἐν αὐτῷ Μαρσίου τοῦ αὐλητοῦ).³⁸ The Pseudo-Plutarchian *De fluviis* mentions the itinerary of Marsyas' skin, carried away at one point by the wind, then by the waters of the river, eventually leading to the foundation of a city called Norikos at the place where it was recovered by a fisherman.³⁹ Last but not least, Maximus of Tyre relates that the Phrygians of Kelainai sacrifice to the Maeander and the Marsyas by throwing thigh-bones into the common source of the two rivers and whispering the name of the recipient; when the two rivers finally separate their courses, the offerings to each river will miraculously follow the adequate stream respectively.⁴⁰ Of course, there is no easy way to make sense of this wild web of aetiologies, substitutions and *mirabilia*, but at least they allow us to presume that Malalas' suicide of Marsyas is not just the logical result of Apollo's expurgation from the narrative, but very probably shows some knowledge of earlier mythographic traditions with an interest in Phrygian topography.

The previous points provide us with valuable insights, when confronted with Malalas' patterns of reference to other authors and the construction of authority within our Marsyas passage. As it has been shown before, Malalas' chronicle includes an unusually large number of such references, many of them probably acquired from his primary sources (some of which are left unmentioned), some of them erroneous, not attested elsewhere (almost one third of his references) or downright spurious.⁴¹ In our passage, Malalas supports his reconstruction of the narrative on the authority of Ninos, to which Lucian is added as a secondary reference, although it is not clear whether we are supposed to understand that he, too, rationalized Marsyas' narrative. The traditional version of Apollo's competition, as in Agathias' account, is wrapped up with "the poets" without any further details. And here comes the problem: this "most learned Ninos" is not attested outside Malalas' text, if what we are looking for is a historian or mythographer; Jeffreys observes optimistically that "the reported comment would appear appropriate to a Christian allegorist", but his name obviously recalls the mythical husband of Semiramis and founder of Niniveh in Greco-Roman historiography, turned into the protagonist of a successful Greek novel in the first c. AD.⁴² Replacing one far-fetched speculation with another one is no great gain, but I wonder whether Malalas' Ninos might not hide a misunderstood reference to the novel or some other text derived from it. In the end, it wouldn't be surprising if a "local" figure like Ninos were especially popular in Antiochene literate circles.⁴³ The second reference is not less problematic, because no mention of Kalchis in relation to Marsyas is to be found in the surviving corpus of Lucian's works, although Marsyas does indeed appear in four different texts of his.⁴⁴ It would seem then that Malalas (or his source) has either mixed up the information in Lucian, or is trying to use his reader's hazy memory of Lucian to further his own revised version of the Marsyas narrative. Still, if Kalchis is to be emended to Chalkis, as Jeffreys proposes, we have to add a second entry to the list of Syrian connections in the passage.⁴⁵ In the end, this may just be the primary pragmatic function of these citations, be they misunderstood or invented: to anchor Malalas' revised history of Marsyas in a more familiar Antiochene field of references.

At this point, all these seem then to leave us with a narrative which makes use of the "toolbox" provided by the older tradition of rationalizing mythography and shares some similarities with a Hellenistic euhemerist experiment on the Marsyas narrative, while reconfiguring it for the ideological needs of a Christian audience. Purging Greco-Roman gods,

playing with topographical references and ambiguous citations seem to make for a constituent part of this process, as much as one is able to discern intention from accident in Malalas' writing. Among the many questions raised by this account, one seems particularly adequate at this point: why even bother to save a still hubristic Marsyas and his distant musical past for a Christian chronicle, if Apollo is expendable?

3. Provisional epilogue: Musical past(s) for a Christian chronicle

From the very beginning, Malalas' narrative is set apart from the entire corpus of narratives on the *aulos* discussed beforehand by the synchronization of biblical historiography with the Greco-Roman mythographic tradition represented by Marsyas. At the beginning of the 6th century AD, this feature could have hardly qualified for a novelty in itself: Christian writers had been experimenting with the notion of unifying their Jewish biblical outlook with the Greco-Roman chronological conventions into a coherent worldview ever since Julius Africanus' *Chronographiai* (early 3rd century), which in turn informed Eusebius' influential two-part chronicle.⁴⁶ Malalas' work, unlike his Christian predecessors, does not attempt to lock events on a rigorous annalistic timeline, relying instead on laxer synchronisms with biblical figures and events, interspersed at intervals with absolute dates counted "from Adam".⁴⁷ In the case of the passage under scrutiny here, the biblical reference is Tholas or Tola, the son of Puah, one of the vetero-testamentary judges who are recorded to have ruled over the Israelite tribes before the establishment of the first Kingdom of Israel – in fact, the most obscure among the twelve mentioned in the Book of the Judges.⁴⁸ As it is, this correspondence doesn't tell us much, but a preliminary look at the chronological structures underlying Malalas' book IV places Marsyas not only in a much more complex mythographic context but also, more interestingly, within a rudimentary series of *protoi heuretai*. Since this is not the place for a full analysis of these structures, I have isolated for now the following synchronisms which include musical figures:

- (1) thirteen judges who succeeded Joshua and Phinees | Prometheus (inventor of writing), **Epimetheus (inventor of music)**, Atlas (inventor of astronomy), Argos (inventor of the arts in the regions of the West) [Malal. 4.3 Thurn].

(2) Barach and Deborah | the (Delphic?) Sibyl, the Athenian kings Kekrops & Kranaos | **Sappho, the first female musician** (πρώτη μουσική) / **the first of the Muses** (πρώτη Μουσῶν)? [Malal. 4.5-6 Thurn]

(3) Gideon | **Orpheus of Thrace, Odryssian lyre-player** (λυρικός), the most learned and famous **poet** (ὁ σοφώτατος καὶ περιβόητος ποιητής) [Malal. 4.7 Thurn]

(4) Tola | Herakles and the Argonauts | **Marsyas, inventor of the auloi** [Malal. 4.7-8 Thurn]

When detached from its confused context, this series of musical inventions would appear to follow a largely coherent pattern based on instruments and genres, which could find its (admittedly more complex) counterparts in the late Classical and Hellenistic musical historiography: music > lyric poetry (and implicitly its associated string instrument) > aulos and auletikē.⁴⁹ But what should we do with Sappho, who would seem in any classical scholar's eye totally out of place in this succession of early, archetypal musicians? On one hand, Sappho's anachronistic interference must have something to do with Malalas' mishandling of two different chronologies used in the process of compilation. Given the general chronological inaccuracy of the work for earlier periods, this is a hardly adventurous proposition; in fact, at least one instance of blatant anachronism (Democritus and Hippocrates as contemporaries of Pelops) might well show the interaction of the same two sources in book IV.⁵⁰ But, chronographic accuracy left aside, this doesn't really tell us if Sappho had a place in this underlying succession of musicians, addressed only in its internal coherence and closed worldview. There are at least two points which may suggest that Sappho is in the right place, after all: first, no canonic Archaic poet / musician among those normally cited in chronographic tables appears in book IV; Homer, for instance, appears only in book V, in the generations between king Solomon and Hezekiah. Secondly, her entry in the list not as a lyric poet, but as the first female musician (πρώτη μουσική) or, according to an alternative scribal tradition, as the first of the Muses (πρώτη Μουσῶν) does not actually alter the logic of the succession on the whole, providing it instead with a paired counterpoint: Epimetheus was the first (male) musician, Sappho the first (female) musician, just as Orpheus and Marsyas respond each other as lyre and *aulos* players.

If my preliminary reading of these references is indeed correct, not only are we able to provide Malalas' revised narrative on Marsyas with a few musical analogies, but we gain a larger, internally coherent, and decidedly surprising perspective on the Greco-Roman musical past, as it would have been revisited and conceptualized at the end of Antiquity – that is, at a time when the institutional structures of the Greco-Roman musical tradition had already disappeared, and its actual performing practices were undergoing changes at the same time irreversible and, in many cases, invisible for the modern researcher.⁵¹

NOTES

- ¹ Mal. *Chron.* 4.7 Thurn; for the English translation, see §2.
- ² Formalist, structuralist analyses and other related approaches to the founding figures of the *aulos* include: I. Weiler, *Der Agon im Mythos*, Springer, Berlin / Heidelberg, 1974, 37-59; J.-P. Vernant, *La mort dans les yeux. Figures de l'Autre en Grèce ancienne*, Hachette, Paris, 1985, 55-63; B. Leclercq-Neveu, "Marsyas, le martyr de l'aulos", in *Mètis* 5, 1989, 251-268; J. Svenbro, "Ton luth, à quoi bon? La lyre et la pierre tombale dans la pensée grecque", in *Mètis* 7, 1992, 135-160; M.R. Maniates, "Marsyas Agonistes", in *Current Musicology* 69, 2000, 118-162; Ph. Monbrun, "Le notion de retournement et l'agôn musical entre Apollon et Marsyas chez le ps.-Apollodore: interprétation d'un mythe", in *Kernos* 18, 2005, 269-289. See also note 8 for the Classical Athenian context.
- ³ Pind. *Pyth.* 12; Epicharm. *Mousai*, fr. 92 Kassel-Austin = Athen. 4.184f + *Schol. Pind. Pyth.* 2.127 + Ael. *Arist. Or.* 37.22; Corinna, PMG 668 = Plut. *De mus.* 14.1136b (if one accepts Corinna's traditional dating). For Pindar's Pythian XII, see notably J. Strauss Clay, "Pindar's Twelfth Pythian: Reed and Bronze", in *American Journal of Philology* 113.4, 1992, 519-525; C. Segal, "The Gorgon and the nightingale: the voice of female lament and Pindar's twelfth Pythian Ode", in L.C. Dunn & N.A. Jones (eds), *Embodied Voices. Representing Female Vocality in Western Culture*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge / New York, 1994, 17-34; G.F. Held, "Weaving and Triumphal Shouting in Pindar, Pythian 12.6-12", in *Classical Quarterly* 48.2, 1998, 380-388; Z. Papadopoulou & V. Pirenne-Delforge, "Inventer et réinventer l'aulos: autour de la XIIe Pythique de Pindare", in P. Brulé & C. Vendries (eds), *Chanter les dieux. Musique et religion dans l'Antiquité grecque et romaine. Actes du colloque des 16, 17 et 18 décembre 1999 (Rennes et Lorient)*, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, Rennes, 2001, 37-58.
- ⁴ The Leschē of the Cnidians is described by Paus. 10.25-31, with the Marsyas-Olympos section mentioned at 10.30.9. For several tentative reconstructions of the Nekyia, see L. Faedo, "Breve racconto di una caccia infruttuosa: Polignoto a Delfi", in *Ricerche di storia dell'arte* 30, 1986, 5-15 and M. Stansbury-O'Donnell, "Polygnotos' Nekyia: A Reconstruction and Analysis", in *American Journal of Archaeology* 94.2, 1990, 213-235. For political readings of the entire visual program, see R.B. Kebric, *The paintings in the Cnidian Lesche at Delphi and their historical context*, Brill, Leiden, 1983 and D. Castriota, *Myth, ethos and actuality: official art in fifth-century B.C. Athens*, The University of Wisconsin Press, Madison WI, 1992, 89-127.
- ⁵ The association of Marsyas with Kelainai in the Classical period is documented by Hdt. VII, 26; Xen. *An.* I, 2, 7-9; Eur., TrGF 1085 Kannicht = Strab. XIII.1.70. Later references: Tit. Liv. *A.u.c.* 38.13.5-7; Strab. 12.8.15 and 13.1. 70; Plin. *NH* 5.106 and 113, 16.239-240; Stat. *Theb.* 4.185-6;

- Mart. 10.62; Aelian. *Hist. Var.* 13.21; Paradox. Vat. 20; Ps.-Plut. *De fluv.* 10.1-3 (including Alex. Polyhist. FGrHist 273 F 76); Paus. 10.30.6-9; Philostr. *Imag.* 1.20 (Σάτυροι); Arist. Quint. 2.18; Ps.-Plut. *Prov. Alex.* 2; Claudian. 20.255-69. For secondary bibliography, see also note 37.
- ⁶ The earliest evidence for this synthetic Athenian narrative is provided by Myron's Athena and Marsyas statuary group, dated around 450 BC, described by Paus. 1.24.1 and Plin., NH 34.57 and documented by several Roman replicas and compositional parallels in Attic 5th century vase painting. See notably K. Junker, "Die Athena-Marsyas-Gruppe des Myron", in *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts* 117, 2002, 127-184 and H. Bumke, *Statuarische Gruppen in der frühen griechischen Kunst*, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin, 2004, 145-154.
- ⁷ Fifth and fourth century BC sources for the synthetic narrative: Melanippides, *Marsyas*, PMG 758 and Telestes, *Argo*, PMG 805, both quoted by Athen. 14.616e-617a; Fr. trag. ades. TrGF 381 Snell-Kannicht = Plut. *De cohib. ira* 6, 456b-c (tentatively ascribed to Iophon's *Aulodoi* by R. Krumeich, N. Pechstein & B. Seidensticker, *Das Griechische Satyrspiel*, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt, 1999, 549-551); Arist. *Pol.* 8.5.15-16, 1339b-1340a.
- ⁸ A concise bibliography on Marsyas, New Music, and the Athenian socio-political context of the late 5th century includes H. Froning, *Dithyrambos und Vasenmalerei in Athens*, Konrad Triltsch Verlag, Würzburg, 1971, 29-44; P. Wilson, "The aulos in Athens", in *Performance culture and Athenian democracy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999, 60-62; Junker, "Die Athena-Marsyas-Gruppe des Myron", esp. 148-153; P. Wilson, "Athenian Strings", in P. Murray & P. Wilson (eds), *Music and the Muses. The Culture of the 'Mousike' in the Classical Athenian City*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004, 274-277; A. Heinemann, "Performance and the Drinking Vessel: Looking for an Imagery of Dithyramb in the time of the 'New Music'", in P. Wilson & B. Kowalzig, *Dithyramb in Context*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2013, 282-309, esp. 294-298, with further references.
- ⁹ See above, note 7.
- ¹⁰ Diod. Sic. 3.58.1-59.6; for this passage, see below, §2.
- ¹¹ Greek mythographic summaries: Ps.-Apoll. *Bibl.* 1.4.2; Lib. *Progymn.* 20; (Ps.-)Palaeph. *Incr.* 47, discussed below, to which add the mosaic of quotations in Plut. *De cohib. ira* 6, 456b-c (including Simias, fr. 3 Powell) and Schol. in Plat. *Symp.* 215b. The synthetic narrative is equally implied in Nonn. *Dion.* 10.230-234. Latin versions of the synthetic narrative: Ov. *Fasti* 6.693-710, *Met.* 6.382-400, cf. *Ars am.* 3.503-506; Hyg. *Fab.* 165; Fulg. *Myth.* 3.9; Myth. Vat. I, 2.23 Kulcsár and Myth. Vat. II, 2.138-9 Kulcsár.
- ¹² Plat. *Symp.* 215a-216e, *Resp.* 3.399e, *Euthyd.* 285c, *Leg.* 3.677d, *Min.* 318b; Arist. *Pol.* 8.5.15-16, 1339b-1340a. For a possible intertextual play on the

- passage from Aristotle's Politics in Athenaeus, see P. LeVen, "New Music and Its Myths: Athenaeus' Reading of the Aulos Revolution (Deipnosophistae 14.616e-617f)", in *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 130, 2010, 35-47. Cf. Xenophon's reference to Marsyas in the *Anabasis* used for didactic purposes in 2nd or 3rd century AD rhetoric schools: see below, note 17.
- ¹³ See note 11.
- ¹⁴ Ps.-Apollod. *Bibl.* 1.24, in the edition of P. Dräger (ed.), *Apollodor. Bibliothek: Götter- und Heldensagen*, Artemis & Winkler Verlag, Düsseldorf, 2005, 18-20; English translation adapted after R. Hard (transl.), *Apollodorus: The Library of Greek Mythology*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1999, 32.
- ¹⁵ On the structure of this surviving epitome, see the comments of J. Stern, *Palaephatus: On Unbelievable Tales*, Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, Wauconda IL, 1996, 5 and 22-24.
- ¹⁶ Philostr. *Vit. soph.* 2.574: Ἰωνία Λυδία Μαρσύαι μωρίαί, δότε προβλήματα.
- ¹⁷ Ps.-Ael. Arist. 2.127-130, quoting Xen. *An.* 1.2.8. The same passage is used as an example of *paradiegesis*, without any close commentary, by Rufus, *Ars rhet.* 23.
- ¹⁸ Lib. *Progymn.* 20. On the specifics of *progymnasmata*, see for instance the introduction of C.A. Gibson, *Libanius's Progymnasmata: Model Exercises in Greek Prose Composition and Rhetoric*, Society of Biblical Literature, Atlanta, 2008, xx-xv with further reference.
- ¹⁹ Greg. Naz. *Or.* 5, in its turn most likely inspired Plutarch's own reference to this episode in relation to the facial deformations caused by anger: Plut. *De cohib. irae* 6, 456b-c.
- ²⁰ Ps.-Nonn. *Narrat. ad Greg. Invect.* 5.10, in the edition of J. Nimmo Smith, S. Brock & B. Coulie (eds), *Pseudo-Nonniani in IV orationes Gregorii Nazianzeni commentarii*, Brepols, Turnhout, 1992, 186. English translation adapted after J. Nimmo Smith, *A Christian's Guide to Greek Culture: The Pseudo-Nonnus Commentaries on Sermons 4, 5, 39 and 43 by Gregory of Nazianzus*, Liverpool University Press, Liverpool, 2001, 76-77.
- ²¹ Agath. *Hist.* 4.23.4-6, in the edition of R. Keydell (ed.), *Agathiae Myrinaei Historiarum libri V*, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin, 1967, 152. English translation adapted after J.D. Frendo, *Agathias: The Histories*, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin / New York, 1975, 125-126.
- ²² A series of late 5th century BC Attic painted vases do represent Marsyas playing the lyre or kithara (see references at note 8), but an aulos-playing Apollo confronting Marsyas seems to be a *hapax*. The closest one gets to this notion is Corinna, PMG 668 = Plut. *De mus.* 14.1136b, stating that Athena taught Apollo to play the *aulos*.
- ²³ On "modernist" late antique poetry and its use in schools, see G. Agosti, "Greek Poetry", in S.F. Johnson (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Late*

- Antiquity*, Oxford University Press, Oxford / New York, 2012, 361-404, esp. 373-376 with further references.
- ²⁴ On this point, see A. Kaldellis, "Things Are Not What They Are: Agathias 'Mythistoricus' and the Last Laugh of Classical Culture", in *Classical Quarterly* 53.1, 2003, 295-300; A. Alexakis, "Two Verses of Ovid Liberally Translated by Agathias of Myrina (Metamorphoses 8.877-878 and *Historiae* 2.3.7)", in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 101.2, 2008, 609-616.
- ²⁵ Diod. Sic. 3.59.5.
- ²⁶ Luc. *Dial. Deor.* 18(16).2.
- ²⁷ On the relation between poetry and historiography in Agathias, see A. Kaldellis, "Agathias on History and Poetry", in *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 38, 1997, 295-305, who goes one step further in remarking that "Whereas a Christian apologist would reject Apollo on the basis of the story, Agathias rejects the story for the sake of Apollo" (300, n. 16).
- ²⁸ Mal. *Chron.* 4.7, in the edition of J. Thurn, *Ioannis Malalae Chronographia*, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin / New York, 2000, 54; English translation adapted from E. Jeffreys, M. Jeffreys & R. Scott et al., *The Chronicle of John Malalas: A Translation*, Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, Melbourne, 1986, 37.
- ²⁹ See an overview of these strategies in Stern, *Palaephatous: On Unbelievable Tales*, 18-24 with further references.
- ³⁰ On Hyagnis, see Aristox. fr. III 3 70 Kaiser, 78 Wehrli = Athen. XIV, 624b; *Marmor Parium*, FGrHist 239, §10; Dioscorides, *Anth. Gr.* 9.340; Alex. Polyhist. FGrHist 273 F 77; Kallistratos, FGrHist 433 F 3; Apul. *Flor.* 3.5; Clem. Alex. *Strom.* 1.76.5 ("Agnis the Phrygian"); Nonn. *Dion.* 10.233 and 41.374.
- ³¹ Metrod. *Troika*, fr. 1 Fowler = FGrHist 43 F 1 (syrinx and aulos); Plat. *Symp.* 215c (θεῖα ἀυλήματα); Plat. *Leg.* 677d (τὰ περὶ μουσικῆν), Plat. *Min.* 318b (ἐν τοῖς ἀυλητικοῖς νόμοις νομοθέτης), Sim. Rhod. fr. 3 Powell (phorbeia?), Euph. fr. 182 van Groningen = 69 Cusset (syrinx kērodetos), Poseid. FGrHist 87 T16 (aulos), Diod. Sic. 3.58.3 (aulos), Alex. Polyhist. 273 F77 (aulos), Plin. *NH* 7.204 (*tibiae geminae* and the Phrygian modes), Paus. 10.30.9 (the nome of the Mother of Gods), Plut. *De mus.* 14.1135f (aulos), Clem. Alex. *Strom.* 1.74.6 and 76.6 (aulos, the Phrygian, Mixophrygian and Mixolydian modes), Hagiopolites fr. 2.1-3 di Giglio (aulos).
- ³² Diod. Sic. III.58.1-59.6, in the larger passage ascribed to Dion. Scytobrachion, III.49-74. On the euhemerist mythography of the latter, see J.S. Rusten, *Dionysius Scytobrachion*, Westdeutscher Verlag, Opladen, 1982; S.A. Stephens, *Seeing Double: Intercultural Poetics in Ptolemaic Alexandria*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2003, 39-43; M. Winiarczyk, *The Sacred History of Euhemerus of Messene*, De Gruyter, Berlin / Boston, 2013, 125-128.

- 33 Diod. Sic. III.58.3: τὸ μιμήσασθαι τοὺς φθόγγους τῆς πολυκαλάμου σύρριγγος
καὶ μετενεγκεῖν ἐπὶ τοὺς αὐλοὺς τὴν ὅλην ἄρμονίαν.
- 34 Other mythical figures are also qualified as philosophers by Malalas:
Aphrodite and Adonis (1.9), Tiresias (2.14) and Chiron (5.5).
- 35 Jeffreys et al., *The Chronicle of John Malalas*, 37 translates it as “he invented
reed flutes for music”, but such a turn is not warranted by the construction
διὰ μουσικῆς, which suggests agency, rather than finality; on the other hand,
the semantic spectrum of the term μουσική, unlike its modern counterpart,
gravitates around the performer’s craft or (technical) knowledge, rather
than the aural product *per se*. It would seem preferable then to understand
Malalas’ words as pointing out the resource of Marsyas’ invention, his
musical competence. A similar line of thought is followed by J. Thurn &
M. Meier, *Johannes Malalas: Weltchronik*, Anton Hiersemann, Stuttgart,
2009, 98 in their German translation of the passage: “welcher mittels seiner
Musikkenntnisse die Rohrflöte erfand”.
- 36 On Marsyas’ poorly documented local Apameian aspect, see note 5 and
Leclercq-Neveu, “Marsyas, le martyre de l’aulos”, 266-267; P. Chuvin,
*Mythologie et géographie dionysiaques. Recherches sur l’œuvre de Nonnos
de Panopolis*. Adosa, Clermont-Ferrand, 1991, 116-120; N. Zwingmann,
“Erinnerungslandschaften und Identitäten in einer Kulturellen Kontaktzone:
Mythen und Denkmäler in Kelainai-Apameia Kibotos”, in L. Sumerer, A.I.
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urbain dans le contexte anatolien. Actes du colloque international Munich,
2-4 avril 2009*, Ausonius éditions, Bordeaux, 2011, 96-98.
- 37 I leave aside Suid. s. v. Μαρσύας, M 230, which is dependent on Malalas’
text.
- 38 Paradox. Vat. 20.
- 39 Ps.-Plut. *De fluv.* 10.2 (= Euem. Cnid. FHG IV 408, if this is not a fictitious
source), with the comments of Ch. Delattre, *Pseudo-Plutarque: Nommer le
monde. Origine des noms de fleuves, de montagnes et de ce qui s’y trouve*,
Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, Villeneuve-d’Ascq, 2011, 130-135
ad. loc. and 54-68 on fiction, aetiology and the specificities of this strange
text.
- 40 Max. Tyr. *Diss.* 2.8. For the hydrography of the Kelainian area in ancient
sources, see L. Sementchenko, “Sources of Maeander and Marsyas in
classical texts”, in Sumerer, Ivanchik & Kienlin (eds.), *Kelainai - Apameia
Kibotos*, 63-70, and 68-69 on the passage discussed here.
- 41 The primary study on the topic remains E. Jeffreys, “Malalas’ sources”, in E.
Jeffreys, B. Croke & Roger Scott (eds.), *Studies in John Malalas*, Australian
Association for Byzantine Studies, Sydney, 1990, 167-216. W. Treadgold,
“The Byzantine World Histories of John Malalas and Eusthatius of Epiphania”,
in *The International History Review* 29.4, 2007, 709-745, esp. 722-5 uses
these erratic reference patterns, among other features of the text, to build

- his radical case on Malalas as a mere fraud who paraphrased the chronicle of Eusthatius of Epiphania.
- 42 Thus J. Thurn & M. Meier, *Johannes Malalas: Weltchronik*, Anton Hiersemann, Stuttgart, 2009, 99 (“möglicherweise eine Verwechslung”), cf. Jeffreys, “Malalas’ sources”, 187-188. For the Greek tradition on Ninos and the surviving fragments of the novel, see S.A. Stephens & J.J. Winkler, *Ancient Greek Novels. The Fragments*, Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ, 1995, 23-71.
- 43 In fact, one of the two extant mosaics depicting Ninos comes from Antiochia: D. Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1947, vol. 1, 117-119; LIMC s.v. Ninos 1 = Semiramis 2.
- 44 Luc. *D. Deor.* 18/16, *Podagr.* 314-315, *Ind.* 5.13, *Harm.* 1.32.
- 45 Jeffreys, “Malalas’ sources”, 186.
- 46 On Julius Africanus, see now the edition of M. Wallraff, U. Roberto, K. Pinggéra (eds.) & W. Adler (transl.), *Julius Africanus Chronographiae. The Extant Fragments*, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin / New York, 2007. On the Christian chronographic tradition, see A.A. Mosshammer, *The Chronicle of Eusebius and Greek Chronographic Tradition*, Bucknell University Press, Lewisburg PN, 1979; W. Adler, *Time Immemorial: Archaic History and Its Sources in Christian Chronography from Julius Africanus to George Syncellus*, Dumbarton Oaks, Washington D.C., 1989, and the recent overview of M. Whitby, “Imperial Christian Historiography”, in A. Feldherr & G. Hardy (eds.), *The Oxford History of Historical Writing, vol. 1: Beginnings to AD 600*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2011, 346-371 with further references.
- 47 John Malalas’ chronological system is analyzed in detail by E. Jeffreys, “Chronological structures in the chronicle”, in Jeffreys, Croke & Scott (eds.), *Studies in John Malalas*, 111-166.
- 48 Jud. 10:1-2. On the biblical context of Tola, see for instance B.G. Webb, *The Book of the Judges: An Integrated Reading*, Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield, 1987, 160.
- 49 On this topic, see first A. Barker, *Ancient Greek Writers on their Musical Past. Studies in Greek Musical Historiography*, Fabrizio Serra, Pisa / Roma, 2014.
- 50 Malal. 4.15 Thurn.
- 51 For an overview of the late antique performance culture, see R. Webb, *Demons and Dancers. Performance in Late Antiquity*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge Mass. / London, 2008.

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