

## A Democratic Music:

### Procession, Sacrifice, and the *Aulos* in 5th c. Athenian Vase-Painting

The role of music in ancient Greek cult practice has been a topic of scholarly attention for decades, and since musical instruments and their performances leave little archaeological trace, the majority of existing scholarship centers around literary sources and visual representations. Greek vases serve as a particularly important source of evidence for music in religious practice: they not only exist in large quantities but also reflect changes over time in musical tastes, techniques, and contexts. One must be careful not to interpret scenes of musical performance literally, however, and should always take into consideration artistic and compositional restrictions and, importantly, social and cultural trends. Such trends in vase imagery have been recognized in important works on sacrificial iconography (van Straten 1995, Gebauer 2002), sacrifice and citizenship (Borgers 2008, Blok 2009, Bundrick 2014), and musical iconography (Nordquist 1992, Bundrick 2005).

Building on these previous studies, the present paper explores the significance of music in scenes of sacrifice, identifying iconographical developments in Athenian black- and red-figure vases from the 6th and 5th centuries BCE. It will be suggested that significant historical and sociopolitical events determined changes in musical accompaniment in sacrificial imagery through time, most importantly the redefinitions of Athenian citizenship in the Kleisthenic reforms of 508/507 BCE and the Periclean citizenship laws of 451/450 BCE. Kleisthenes and Pericles, both leaders of the Athenian democracy, enacted reforms that changed the organization and classification of Athenian citizenship, impacting Athenians' sense of civic identity and restricting who was allowed to participate in state-sponsored sacrifice. The paper argues that the

way music is represented in sacrificial scenes on Athenian vases reflects these political changes. During the 5th century the *aulos* became increasingly associated with everyday performance and acquired a non-elite status that made it appealing to a newly democratized civic body (see Pl. *Laws* 700a-701d; Arist. *Pol.* 1341<sup>b</sup>15-18). As difficult-to-learn instruments like the *kithara* became more restricted to professionals in the 5th century the *aulos* emerged as an instrument of the *demos*, played by professionals, amateurs, citizens, and slaves alike. The status of the *aulos* as a symbol of the Athenian *demos* is evidenced by the fact that sacrificial scenes made after Pericles' citizenship laws represent the instrument to the exclusion of all others. Ways of seeing and marketing democratic imagery might have been at the forefront of Athenian vase painters' minds as the local government solidified its democratic identity through the redefinition of citizenship and the expansion of state-sponsored sacrifices. Within this political framework, the connotations of sacrificial imagery shifted with the wholesale inclusion of the *aulos* on vases after 450 BCE. In examining these objects, the *aulos* emerges as a powerful visual symbol of the Athenian democracy.

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