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**Correcting *ēthos* and Purifying the Body.
Musical Therapy in Iamblichus' *De vita pythagorica***

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Keywords

Catharsis – *Ēthos* – Iamblichus – Porphyry – Pythagoras – *Paideia* – *Aisthēsis* – medicine

* Iamblichus' *De vita pythagorica* is quoted from Deubner and Klein (1975); Porphyry's *Vita Pythagorae* from Des Places (2003); Aristoxenus' *Elementa Harmonica* from Da Rios (1954); Aristides Quintilianus' *De Musica* from Winnington-Ingram (1963); Ptolemy's *Harmonica* from Düring (1930). Translations from Aristoxenus, Aristides Quintilianus and Ptolemy have been taken from Barker (1989); other translations are mine.

The therapeutic function of music in ancient Greece sometimes appears connected, particularly in some testimonies by Plato and Aristotle,¹ to the notion of catharsis,² understood in a medical-magic and ritual-religious sense. Catharsis designates a specific sphere of the notion of therapy, whose origins go back to a context of religious rites and traditional purification practices found at all levels in Greek society from the most ancient times; in the case of musical therapy, catharsis proves to be connected in particular with the effects of the Dionysiac rites on the participants, who also resorted to them for treatment of passions and psycho-physical agitation.³ The notion of catharsis, however, does not only designate the effects of music in such spheres, but is used, in general, to interpret the therapeutics of passions among the Pythagoreans: in this connection, the Pythagoreans are indicated in sources that concern them as creators and promoters of musical catharsis.⁴

*Pythagoras in Iamblichus' De vita pythagorica and Porphyry's
Vita Pythagorae*

Most of the testimonies relating to early Pythagoreanism belong to times very distant from it: a great deal was said about Pythagoras and his followers, but the descriptions relating to their way of living and their ideas become all the more detailed, as well as numerous, as they become more distant from it.⁵ The work in which we most clearly find the association between the Pythagoreans and musical catharsis is *On the Pythagorean Way of Life (De vita*

1 Cf. for instance Pl. *Lg.* 790c5-791b2, on catharsis by means of music and dance within the Corybantic rites; Arist. *Pol.* 1341b36-1342a15, on the threefold distinction of melodies (μέλη) as ἠθικά ('ethical', useful for improving *ēthos*), πρακτικά ('practical', useful for stimulating action) and ἐνθουσιαστικά ('enthusiastic', melodies that arouse emotions and allow the participants in the rites to purge their souls by means of music and dance).

2 On the manifold aspects of *katharsis* in ancient Greece: Parker (1983); Hoessly (2001).

3 On music and *enthousiasmos* in the Dionysiac rites, I limit my reference to Dodds (1968, 78-80; 270-82); Bélis (1988). The effects of the *aulos* and the ecstatic *trance* have been thoroughly studied by Rouget (1985).

4 Cf. Aristox. fr. 26 Wehrli (quoted in n. 7). For an overview of the issue: Provenza (2012, 93-5).

5 Philip (1966, 3-7).

pythagorica) by Iamblichus of Chalcis (c. 245-325 AD),⁶ whose main source on this matter is Aristoxenus of Tarentum.⁷

Not all ancient authors, however, designate musical therapy for passions as catharsis; this is particularly evident in the *Life of Pythagoras* (*Vita Pythagorae*) by Porphyry of Tyre⁸ and also, as regards musical treatises, in Aristides Quintilianus' *De Musica*.⁹

Although both Porphyry and Iamblichus aim to present Pythagoras as an example of the *bios philosophikos* and his doctrines as an authoritative precedent of Plato's thought, the differences between their works appear significant, and seem to delineate a different cultural intent. Iamblichus must have known Porphyry's work on Pythagoras—he had also been a student of the former,¹⁰ before a harsh controversy broke out between them¹¹—but does not seem to depend on it and, indeed, distances himself from it considerably. Even in the respective titles different intents emerge: Iamblichus' *On the Pythagorean Way of Life* is presented as a work-manifesto centring on the *Lebensform* of Pythagoras and his disciples, proposed as a model for the attainment of that understanding of the divine at which the speculative striving of the Neoplatonic philosopher aims;¹² in the case of Porphyry, writing some decades before Iamblichus, we are, instead, dealing with a piece of writing that more clearly presents the characteristics of a biography. In this way Porphyry, although he too considers Pythagoras as a perfect example of the *bios* by which contemporary philosophers must be inspired, mostly concentrates on the philosopher,

6 Iamblichus' work on the doctrines of the Pythagoreans included ten books, five of which have come down to us: O'Meara (1989, 30-105); Staab (2002), especially on Iamblichus' sources.

7 Aristox. fr. 26 Wehrli = Cramer, *Anecd. Paris.* 1. 172, 'the Pythagoreans, as Aristoxenus said, used medicine for the purification of the body, and music for that of the soul' (οἱ Πυθαγορικοί, ὡς ἔφη Ἀριστόξενος, καθάρσει ἐχρῶντο τοῦ μὲν σώματος διὰ τῆς ἰατρικῆς, τῆς δὲ ψυχῆς διὰ τῆς μουσικῆς); Provenza (2012).

8 This work appears as a portion of the first book of a long treatise concerning the history of philosophy down to Plato. The title attested for this treatise—preserved only in some short sections—is Φιλόσοφος Ἱστορία. On Porphyry's sources: Staab (2002, 109-34).

9 The evidence supports a dating of the treatise between the end of the 3rd and the beginnings of the 4th c. AD: Mathiesen (1983, introduction, especially 10-4); Mathiesen (1999, 521-4). According to Luisa Zanoncelli (1977, 86-93), Aristides Quintilianus was active around the middle of the 4th c. AD, in the same cultural environment as Iamblichus. Among studies, I refer to Zanoncelli (1977); Mathiesen (1983, 10-57); Mathiesen (1999, 521-82); Barker (2007, 45-52, on Aristides' *harmoniai*); Moretti (2010, 93-101).

10 Cf. Eun. vs 5. 1. 2.

11 For the sources and bibliographical references on this matter: O'Meara (1989, 25).

12 von Albrecht (2002, 259).

rather than on his way of living. Moreover, in Iamblichus' *On the Pythagorean Way of Life*, which appears a markedly propagandist work, Pythagoras emerges with the traits of a wise thaumaturge, a sort of "pagan saint"¹³ proposed as an antidote to the spread of Christianity,¹⁴ while Porphyry's *Life of Pythagoras* shows marked sobriety,¹⁵ which is also evident in his lack of interest in the anecdotes given by Iamblichus: for instance, the stories relating to the auletic musical therapy practised by Pythagoras on a drunken youth (Iamb. *VP* 112) and to Empedocles using the soothing power of music on a guest of his (*VP* 113) are absent in Porphyry.

Another fundamental difference lies in the fact that Porphyry never uses *katharsis* in reference to the effects of music on those who listen to it,¹⁶ and instead attributes its healing function to the power of the rhythms and the melodies, as well as to spells (*epodai*),¹⁷ or he expressly speaks of music as *θεράπεια* ('care') and *παραμυθία* ('comfort'), referring the first action to the body and the second to the soul.¹⁸ Therefore Porphyry, though mentioning Pythagoras' use of healing songs (*VP* 33, μέλη [...] παιώνια), unlike Iamblichus does not refer to them using the notion of musical catharsis; for Iamblichus, by contrast, catharsis is the essential basis of music's effectiveness both in medicine and in *paideia*. Indeed, Iamblichus, considering the beneficial effects of music under the common denominator of catharsis,¹⁹ affirms that the Pythagoreans used music for ailments of the body but, above all, for psychic ailments and mental states of upheaval and restlessness, on which it seemed to act as a purifying

13 According to the definition in Fowden (1982).

14 Burkert (1982, 13). On the soteriological and thaumaturgic aspects of Pythagoras in Iamblichus *De vita Pythagorica*: Du Toit (2002); Dillon (2002).

15 O'Meara (1989, 27) highlights that Porphyry ascribes a universal value to Platonism, finding it "both in Pythagoras and in very many other quarters".

16 The word *κάθαρσις* appears in different contexts in Porphyry's *Life of Pythagoras* (cf. 29; 34; 39; 46), but it never refers to the effects of music.

17 Porph. *VP* 30, '(Pythagoras) enchanted the sufferings of the soul and that of the body by means of rhythms, melodies and spells' (κατεκλήλει δὲ ῥυθμοῖς καὶ μέλεσι καὶ ἐπωδαῖς τὰ ψυχικὰ πάθη καὶ τὰ σωματικά).

18 Porph. *VP* 33, 'and he always spent time with his disciples when they were healthy, and on the other hand he treated the diseases of their bodies, and soothed their suffering souls, as we have told, in one case by means of spells and magical remedies, and in the other by means of music' (καὶ ὑγιαίνουσι μὲν αὐτοῖς αἰεὶ συνδιέτριβεν, κάμνοντας δὲ τὰ σώματα ἐθεράπευεν, καὶ τὰς ψυχὰς δὲ νοσοῦντας παρεμυθεῖτο, καθάπερ ἔφαμεν, τοὺς μὲν ἐπωδαῖς καὶ μαγείαις τοὺς δὲ μουσικῇ).

19 Iamb. *VP* 110, '(Pythagoras) was accustomed to use—and not occasionally—this type of catharsis; this indeed was the name he gave to musical healing' (εἰώθει γὰρ οὐ παρέργως τῇ τοιαύτῃ χρῆσθαι καθάρσει· τοῦτο γὰρ δὴ καὶ προσηγόρευε τὴν διὰ τῆς μουσικῆς ἰατρείαν).

agent, causing a liberating release of such passions.²⁰ Iamblichus also states that Pythagoras used music for ‘correction’ of the soul (ἐπανόρθωσις τῆς ψυχῆς),²¹ like a true φάρμακον.

It does not appear to be by chance that Porphyry, the author of the *Commentary on Ptolemy's Harmonica*,²² neglects analysis of the emotional reception of music and the philosophical-religious concepts that could motivate it. In Ptolemy's opinion, the beauty and order of the musical structures are also detectable in other realities, such as the movement of the stars and the human soul.²³ The latter seems to ‘recognize’ that its own structure is based on the same mathematical ratios on which melodies are based, and is sensible to the movements featuring the different melodies.²⁴ Human souls are led by music ‘sometimes into pleasures and relaxations, sometimes into griefs and contractions; they are sometimes stupefied and lulled to sleep, sometimes invigorated and aroused; and they are sometimes turned towards peacefulness and restraint, sometimes towards frenzy and ecstasy (ποτὲ δὲ εἰς οἴστρον καὶ ἐνθουσιασμόν), as the melody itself modulates in different ways at different times, and draws our souls towards the conditions constituted from the likenesses of the ratios (ἄλλοτε ἄλλως τοῦ μέλους αὐτοῦ τε μεταβάλλοντος καὶ τὰς ψυχὰς ἐξάγοντος ἐπὶ τὰς ἐκ τῆς ὁμοιότητος τῶν λόγων συνισταμένας

20 Cf. for instance Iamb. *VP*. 68; 110.

21 See further below.

22 In this very important work, Porphyry mainly focuses on the introduction of Ptolemy's treatise, concerning the fundamental principles and methods of science, and seems instead less interested in the technical aspects of Ptolemy's harmonic analyses: Barker (1989, 229). On Ptolemy's *Harmonics*, I refer the reader to Barker (1994); Barker (2000(b)); Barker (1989, 270-75, introduction to the translation of the treatise [276-391]; a further english translation is by J. Solomon [2000]). Ptolemy hands down Archytas' theories on acoustics, considering him as the most skilled Pythagorean musicologist (Ptol. *Harm.* 1. 13-4, pp. 30.9-31.18 = Archyt. Test. A16 Huffman [2005, 402-28, with a very useful comment]; Barker [1989, 43-5]). In his approach to issues central to the understanding of music he is close to the Pythagoreans in important respects: Barker (1991); Barker (2000(b), especially 14-32); Meriani (2003(a), 100-3).

23 The relationship between music and the soul is dealt with in Ptol. *Harm.* 3. 4-7 (pp. 95, 28-100, 18).

24 Ptol. *Harm.* 3. 7, pp. 99, 25-100, 1, ‘indeed, our souls are quite plainly affected in sympathy (σμπάσχουσιν) with the actual activities of a melody, recognising the kinship, as it were, of the ratios belonging to its particular kind of constitution (τὴν συγγένειαν ὥσπερ ἐπιγινώσκουσαι τῶν τῆς ἰδίας συστάσεως λόγων), and being moulded by the movements specific to the idiosyncracies of the melodies (τυπούμεναί τισι κινήμασιν οἰκείοις ταῖς τῶν μελῶν ιδιοτροπίαις)’.

διαθέσεις).²⁵ Thus catharsis—not mentioned by Ptolemy, even if it might be lurking behind *enthousiasmos*—could be just one of the manifold aspects of the reactions aroused by music thanks to its strong similarities with the human soul. Porphyry might have kept in mind this aspect, linked with the notion of *enthousiasmos*; but he could also have considered the cathartic power of mathematical knowledge (τὰ μαθήματα) on the individuals' way of life, which is stressed, for instance, in *de abst.* 1.29.²⁶ As it is a *mathēma*, music is cathartic in an epistemological sense, because of its mathematical structure.

The lack of reference to musical catharsis in Porphyry could also be connected with his direct knowledge of Aristides Quintilianus' *De Musica*, which however is not proven.²⁷

Even if we admit that neither Porphyry nor Iamblichus had ever read the work of Aristides Quintilianus, we cannot ignore their participation in ideas similar to his, which were available in the same Neoplatonic milieu as their

25 *Harm.* 3. 7, p. 100, 3-7. Ptolemy also records that the Pythagoreans usually performed melodies as they woke up in order to 'make their souls well-attuned and concordant for the actions of the day'. The same reference can be found also in Porphyry's *Vita Pythagorae* (32)—at dawn Pythagoras sang the ancient paeans composed by Thaletas—and in Iamblichus' *De vita pythagorica* (65; 114; see further below).

26 On catharsis by means of knowledge in Porphyry cf. Staab (2002, 110-1; 130-4).

27 There is no reason to cast doubt on Aristides Quintilianus' proximity to Neoplatonism, which lurks behind several passages in his treatise (cf. for instance *De Mus.* 2. 2, p. 54, 1-26; 2. 8, p. 66, 6-10). Aristides Quintilianus mentions musical catharsis at *De Mus.* 1.1, p. 2, 4-5 and 2. 5, p. 58, 6-32. In both passages he seems to make an allusion to musical *paideia* in Plato's *Republic* (cf. for instance 401d-402a as far as the former passage is concerned; 398d-399c for the latter, which also seems to use Arist. *Pol.* 1341b-1342b as a source). He also refers to *enthousiasmos* in *De mus.* 2. 4 (pp. 57, 31-58, 2: human beings turn to melody-making because of pleasure, pain or *enthousiasmos*) and 3. 25 (pp. 128, 28-129, 15), where he states that *enthousiasmos* is the first and most natural cause of melody, and originates in the rational part of the soul. Once on Earth, the soul is affected by ignorance and forgetfulness, filled with confusion and excitement, and is soothed by melody. Individuals appease it either 'through imitations of their own', or 'through the use of their eyes and ears'. Thus the Dionysiac rites appease the agitation of the most ignorant individuals, who must seek for someone performing music in order to listen to it. Aristides Quintilianus seems to link *enthousiasmos* and the necessity of catharsis to the descent of the soul from Heaven, which contaminates it with passions. Catharsis seems to consist in the soul's acknowledgement of its contamination in its descent from the aerial regions, and in its attempts to get rid of it by means of music (the affinities between the heavenly world, music and the soul are emphasized, for instance, in *De mus.* 3. 9, p. 107, 20-24). These notions appear very similar to considerations expressed by Porphyry in *Sent.* 32 (cf. especially 101-3, πρῶτον μὲν οἷον θεμέλιος καὶ ὑποβάθρα τῆς καθάρσεως τὸ γνῶναι ἑαυτὸν ψυχὴν ὄντα ἐν ἀλλοτρίῳ πράγματι καὶ ἑτεροουσίῳ συνδεδεμένον).

investigations of philosophy and music. Porphyry in particular, with his deep musical knowledge, could approach more closely than Iamblichus the conceptions that seem to animate the reflections of Aristides Quintilianus, if not his work itself and the original psycho-musicological conception that is worked out in it. When Aristides Quintilianus makes reference to a soul between Heaven and Earth, reaching out towards the former but necessarily relegated to the latter because of its 'contamination' by desires, which drive it to go in search of a body in which to become incarnate,²⁸ in actual fact he harks back to Platonic concepts taken up by the Neoplatonic philosophers, above all Plotinus.²⁹ Then, in reference to the terrestrial aspect, he seems to refer to the educability of the soul, which sets up a very specific ethical paradigm. Such concepts cannot have been extraneous to Porphyry and Iamblichus, and could have driven their interest in Pythagorean ethics.

Regarding the musical aspects, Nicomachus of Gerasa is a common source for both of them:³⁰ his *Introduction to Arithmetic*³¹ is an object of deep admiration in Book IV of Iamblichus' work on Pythagoreanism, devoted precisely to an exposition with commentary of the mathematical doctrines of the Neopythagorean philosopher.³² Nicomachus was also the author of a *Life of Pythagoras* which has not come down to us; its influence can clearly be seen

28 Aristid. Quint. *De Mus.* 2. 8, p. 66, 6-10.

29 Plot. *Enn.* 4. 8. 4; 8. 8, dealing with the separation of soul from the whole, its 'descent' into the body and its 'imprisonment' within it (for reflections on the soul between the Heaven and Earth: 4. 8. 4, 31-3; 8. 8, 16-23). On the relationship between Aristides Quintilianus, Porphyry and Plotinus, cf. Mathiesen 1983, 11-13.

30 For questions concerning Porphyry's and Iamblichus' sources, and for a general survey on the relationship between their works on Pythagoras: Burkert (1972, 97-109); von Albrecht (2002); Staab (2002, 12-8; 109-34; 217-37); Hägg (2012, 352-67).

31 For what concerns Nicomachus of Gerasa (2nd c. AD; his works can be dated in the first half of the century): Dillon (1977, 352-61); O'Meara (1989, 14-23); Staab (2002, 81-91, reporting ancient evidence on Pythagoras in Nicomachus' works). Nicomachus is inclined to identify Pythagoreanism and Platonism, going "so far as to mathematize Platonic philosophy entirely" (O'Meara 1989, 22). He was the author of a *Handbook on Harmonics* (*Enchiridion*: Barker [1989, 245-7; English translation on 247-69]; Levin [1975]; Barker [2007, 445-7]), based on both the Pythagorean musical theories and some Aristoxenian principles.

32 The relationships between music, arithmetics, geometry and astronomy in Nicomachus' *Introduction to Arithmetic* are to be found in Boethius (especially *Inst. arithm.* 1. 1, p. 9, 28-9 Friedlein; *Inst. mus.* 1. 1).

in the *Life* by Porphyry, who—unlike Iamblichus—indicates every time how much he takes from it.³³

The principal source on the Pythagoreans and music is however, for both the Neoplatonic philosophers, Aristoxenus of Tarentum,³⁴ with respect to whom Nicomachus represents an intermediary. Aristoxenus, who appears to be the initiator of the biographical tradition on Pythagoras,³⁵ also seems to be the source of the stories relating to Pythagoras' use of musical therapy, in which one notes an attention to *ēthos* that is very close not only to what we read in fr. 26 Wehrli,³⁶ but also to the notions that emerge from the fragments of Aristoxenus' *Pythagorean Precepts*.³⁷

Porphyry and Iamblichus share an interest in representing care over *ēthos*, to which *paideia* is connected,³⁸ as the principal objective pursued in Pythagorean communities. In this connection, this paper will focus on the dynamics of the musical 'correction of soul' (ἐπανόρθωσις τῆς ψυχῆς) in Iamblichus' *De vita Pythagorica*.

Paideia and Musical Therapy in Iamblichus' *De vita pythagorica*

In Iamblichus' representation of Pythagoreanism, everything that is considered as ethically acceptable appears to be absolutely oriented towards *paideia*; this peculiar aspect shapes the delineation of the character of Pythagoras and

33 Dillon (1977, 353). As Philip (1966, 19) remarks, Pythagoras appears in Neopythagoreanism as a wise man "half mystic, half mathematician".

34 In his youth, before becoming a disciple of Aristotle, Aristoxenus studied in Athens under the guidance of the Pythagorean Xenophilus (Aristox. fr. 1 Wehrli = *Suda*, s.v. Ἀριστόξενος). He also became acquainted with the last Pythagoreans (Aristox. fr. 19 Wehrli = D.L. 8. 46). Aristoxenus wrote several works on Pythagoreanism (a *Life of Pythagoras* [Πυθαγόρου βίος], also known in some sources as *On Pythagoras and His Followers* [Περὶ Πυθαγόρου καὶ τῶν γνωρίμων αὐτοῦ]; a work *On the Pythagorean Way of Life* [Περὶ τοῦ Πυθαγορικοῦ βίου]; the *Pythagorean Precepts* [Πυθαγορικά ἀποφάσεις]. The surviving fragments are collected as Aristox. fr. 11-41 Wehrli).

35 Cf. on this Zhmud 2012.

36 Above, n. 7.

37 Provenza (2012, 110-3).

38 The presentation of the Pythagorean *paideia* is much more detailed in Iamblichus' work than in Porphyry's one. Lurje (2002, 229) distinguishes three stages in the Pythagorean *paideia*: perception (αἴσθησις)—linked with listening to melodies suitable for education—activities (ἐπιτηδεύματα) and doctrines (μαθήματα: Iamb. *VP* 68). Such stages seem to recall the three stages towards the contemplation of ideal Beauty in Plato's *Symposium* (210a-c), replacing ὄψις with ἀσχή.

the Pythagorean *bios*. A distinctive element linked to it are the *akousmata*, the rules on which the association is founded, an expression of the purposes of the teaching of Pythagoras. In the account by Iamblichus, they are divided into three groups, and are conceived as answers to the questions: 'What is it?', 'What more than everything?' and 'What is it necessary to do or not do?'. Among the *akousmata* of the second type, three appear particularly important for our research: 'Which is the wisest thing? Medicine' (τί σοφώτατον τῶν παρ' ἡμῖν; ἰατρική); 'Which is the most beautiful? Harmony' (τί κάλλιστον; ἁρμονία); 'Which is the best? Happiness' (τί ἄριστον; εὐδαιμονία).³⁹

There is a close connection between health, harmony and happiness: musical compositions, on the basis of harmony and rhythm, are considered able to re-establish harmony when the physical and psychic equilibrium has been upset by illness. The fundamental purpose of the Pythagorean doctrine is therefore striving for harmony, a condition that the individual must pursue by seeking that equilibrium that is translated into health,⁴⁰ over which medicine (ἰατρική) in turn presides. For Pythagoras the process of *paideia* itself becomes a therapy of *ēthos*, to which music makes a decisive contribution.

The Use of Music before Night-Time Rest and on Awakening

Iamblichus represents musical catharsis among the Pythagoreans as a liberation from disturbances and from a pathological state of depression and dejection through music, used as a true medical remedy. This catharsis took on different modalities at the various moments in the day at which it was effected, as a preparation for facing the day well, or dissolving tensions in view of night-time rest.⁴¹ Specifically, catharsis against disturbances and the noises of the day (τῶν ἡμερινῶν ταραχῶν καὶ ἐνηχημάτων) before night-time rest produced divinatory dreams (μαντικούς τοὺς ὕπνους αὐτοῖς ἀπειργάζετο),⁴² while,

39 Iamb. *VP* 82.

40 This notion is well expressed in the famous fragment of Alcmaeon of Croton on *ισονομία* (DK 24 B 4 = Aët. 5. 30. 1). Among the many sources on soul as *harmonia*, and on the balance within the body as essential for health: Aristox. *fr.* 118-21 Wehrli; Dicaearch. 21A Mirhady = *fr.* 11 Wehrli.

41 Iamb. *VP* 65.

42 Plato (*Ti.* 71d1-e6) ascribes divination to the irrational soul, set in the liver. Divination takes place while sleeping (71d3-4), when λόγος and φρόνησις—which belong to the rational soul—withdraw. This faculty is the gift of the Divinity to human beings so that they can 'improve also the weak part of it [...], somehow letting it come close to Truth' (71d7-e1). The faculty of divination belongs to the irrational soul, for divination takes place 'either

on awakening, Pythagoras freed his disciples from numbness and tiredness ‘through special kinds of songs and melodies performed by simply playing on the strings of an instrument, using the lyre, or by also using the voice’, (διὰ τινων ἰδιοτρόπων ῥισμάτων καὶ μελισμάτων, ψιλῇ τῇ κρούσει⁴³ διὰ λύρας, ἢ καὶ φωνῆς συντελουμένων).

The beneficial effects of music before the night-time rest and on awakening are also mentioned, as a form of catharsis, in *VP* 114 in which explicit reference is made to musical catharsis (ἐξεκάθαιρον τὰς διανοίας ὥδαίς τισι καὶ μελῶν ἰδιώμασι) before and after night-time rest, also obtained through melodies devoid of vocal accompaniment (ἄνευ λέξεως μελισμάτων): the sense is the same as in *VP* 65, since the expression ψιλῇ τῇ κρούσει used in that passage corresponds to ἄνευ λέξεως. Besides, the repetitions appear functional to the propaganda aspect of Iamblichus’ work.

The Pythagorean custom of playing melodies with the lyre before and after sleep had already been mentioned, before Iamblichus, by Dio of Prusa (*Or.* 32. 57), who refers to this custom as an example of the fact that music ‘was invented’ (εὐρήσθαι) to cure the passions and to calm restless minds, and also by Plutarch, who in *De Iside et Osiride* (80. 384a), speaks of the exhalations of a mixture, called κῶφι, able to purify the imaginative faculty proper to dreams, like the sounds of the lyre which the Pythagoreans used before sleep, ‘to enchant, and so to take care of, the emotional and irrational part of the soul’ (τὸ ἐμπαθὲς καὶ ἄλογον τῆς ψυχῆς ἐξεπάρχοντες οὕτω καὶ θεραπεύοντες).

It seems, therefore, that the use of music before and after night-time rest represented a widespread motif in the anecdotal tradition on the Pythagoreans,

when the mind is constrained by sleep or when it is altered, because of some illness or inspired ecstasy’ (71e4-6, ἢ καθ’ ὕπνον τὴν τῆς φρονήσεως πεδηθεὶς δύναμιν ἢ διὰ νόσον, ἢ διὰ τινα ἐνθουσιασμόν παραλλάξας). Melodies performed in order to arouse divination dreams in Iamb. *VP* 65 seem then to hint at the contemplation of the heavenly world, since they are imitations (*mimēsis*) of the cosmic harmony (see further below, 104-6).

- 43 Deubner’s edition accepts the manuscripts’ reading κράσει. This scholar (1935, 669 = 1982, 530) explains κράσει on the basis of *VP* 64, in which κεράσματα τινων μελῶν διατονικῶν τε καὶ χρωματικῶν καὶ ἐναρμονίων are mentioned. Yet we cannot state that the theory concerning the three γένη—diatonic, chromatic and enharmonic—had been formulated before Archytas. In my opinion, the mention of the lyre justifies the emendation of κράσει to κρούσει, since κρούσις is a technical word for musical performance with stringed instruments. Moreover κράσει (κράσις, ‘mixing’, ‘blending’) seems to be in conflict with ψιλῇ (ψιλός, ‘bare’, ‘simple’). If we accept this conjecture, the punctuation has to be adjusted by erasing the comma after κρούσει and adding one after λύρας. The text was emended with κρούσει already by L. Kuster in his Amsterdam edition published in 1707, and by Th. Kiessling (Leipzig 1815); Nauck (1884, 45, apparatus).

but it is Iamblichus that includes this aspect under the umbrella of catharsis. Apart from catharsis, Iamblichus *VP* 64-65 and 114 show the same effects of music on human attitudes and behaviours as those mentioned by Dio and Plutarch. In Dio's discourse *To the People of Alexandria*, the soothing and curative power of music is considered in the framework of a 'transformation' (μεταστρέφειν)—and not a 'purification'—, but this notion can be found also in Iamblichus' *De vita pythagorica*, since Pythagoras "changed into their opposites" the excessive passions of his disciples.⁴⁴ Moreover, Plutarch refers to the *epode* as a process that allows music to act on the irrational part of the soul (τὸ ἄλογον), and Iamblichus too refers to the *epode* in *VP* 114. The most interesting aspect concerning the effectiveness of the morning and evening musical rite in Iamblichus' *De vita pythagorica*, even more so than catharsis, is the author's focus on the manifold aspects of musical therapy. The process of healing by means of music is represented by Iamblichus according to different patterns, but each of them seems to be linked with the others.

Pythagoras and the Heavenly Music

Immediately after the first passage in which catharsis before and after sleep is discussed, Iamblichus introduces a eulogistic description of the superiority of Pythagoras not only over his disciples, but over all humankind, in terms that stress his exceptional status:⁴⁵ indeed, Iamblichus affirms that Pythagoras, being the only person able directly to perceive the harmony of the cosmos and to understand it, purified himself by himself, listening to it without the intervention of anyone, and drawing enormous benefit from it, since, produced by the orderly movements of the stars, it gives rise to music that is 'purer and fuller than human music' (*VP* 65, πληρέστερόν τι τῶν θνητῶν καὶ κατακορέστερον μέλος).⁴⁶ It is stressed that Pythagoras was fully aware of his own uniqueness, so much so that he explained (ἐνέφαινε) to those around him that he was the only one (μόνος) able to hear and understand the harmony of the spheres: on this basis, Pythagoras is presented, in Platonic terms, as ἡγεμῶν

44 Cf. Iamb. *VP* 64, εἰς τὰ ἐναντία περιέτρεπε καὶ περιῆγε τὰ τῆς ψυχῆς πάθη; 114, εἰς τὰ ἐναντία πάθη περιάγον χρησίμως τὰς τῆς ψυχῆς διαθέσεις.

45 Iamb. *VP* 65-66.

46 The source is probably Nicom. *Harm.* 3, p. 242, 15-7 Jan (already I. Lévy [1927, 42] highlights that Nicomachus is most probably the source for Iamb. *VP* 64-66, and also for Porphy. *VP* 30. Nicomachus in his turn depends on Aristoxenus).

παιδείας⁴⁷ and as an absolute reference point for those that live in his community. This concept is re-emphasised shortly afterwards, when it is affirmed that Pythagoras was convinced (ἐνόμιζε) that he was the only one able not only to perceive and understand the celestial realities, but also to assimilate himself to them through impulse and imitation (ἐξομοιοῦσθαι κατ' ἔφεσιν καὶ ἀπομίμησιν τοῖς οὐρανίοις), since his physical constitution was made by the divinity for this purpose (VP 66). Hence he deemed that he represented the best of model for other men, who, through his teachings, could draw close to the celestial realities, a source of harmony for all aspects of life.⁴⁸

The melodies used by Pythagoras therefore constituted imitative reproductions, through musical instruments and song, of the celestial harmonies, of the cosmic music that only he, as a wise man, was able to hear, purifying himself without resorting to the intervention of another musician, since he enjoyed this exclusive privilege, which made it possible to set going a process of 'self-therapy.' Striking, in this connection, is the repeated use of εἰκῶν ('model'): indeed, it recurs in connection with the participle ἐκμιμούμενος, which clearly refers to the sphere of imitation, speaking of the 'human' music to be enacted through musical instruments or even the voice alone (VP 66, διὰ τε ὀργάνων καὶ διὰ ψιλῆς τῆς ἀρτηρίας), in order to instruct his disciples and to instil in them a striving towards harmony. Shortly afterwards it returns as a synonym for ὑπόδειγμα ('example'), to indicate the paradigm offered by Pythagoras to other men to improve themselves (ὠφελεῖσθαι καὶ διορθοῦσθαι): the concept of *mimēsis*, once more, is strongly stressed as striving after the supreme good, harmony. *Mimēsis* itself therefore seems to have two different aspects, according to whether the reference is to Pythagoras or to other men: in the case of the former, it serves to ἐκμανθάνειν καὶ ἐξομοιοῦσθαι, that is to say to learn through and through, down to complete assimilation with the celestial realities, while in other men, *mimēsis* seems to configure striving for harmony. In virtue of imitation, therefore, human music is a reflection of heavenly music: the presence of Plato's thought and, in this case particularly, of his striving towards the superhuman world of perfect realities, seems to constitute the background against which the figure of Pythagoras is defined.⁴⁹

47 R. 600a9-b5.

48 Cf. also Iamb. VP 88, saying that even though the *akousmatikoi* (VP 30; 81; 82) learned Pythagoras' doctrines without really understanding them, they benefited from his teachings. Therefore Iamblichus compares the *akousmatikoi* with ill persons that succeed in recovering from the diseases afflicting them just because they follow the prescriptions of the physicians, even if they know nothing of them.

49 For what concerns *mimēsis*: R. 602c-605c; Lg. 655a-656b; 660a; 668a-669e; 670e; Ti. 80b5-7.

Iamblichus therefore proceeds to a reconstruction of the character of Pythagoras, inserting the astronomic element of the music of the cosmos, eminently Pythagorean, in a context dominated by the thaumaturgic aspects of *paideia*, a fully Neoplatonic element. From Iamblichus' narration it seems to emerge, accordingly, that if Pythagoras possessed some exceptional abilities of understanding and performance at a musical level, then they will necessarily have to turn into extraordinary powers in the case of ordinary people.

Musical Catharsis as Ethical Correction and Therapeutic Remedy

The passage referred to is inserted in a context in which catharsis and *paideia* are profoundly interwoven, bringing out Pythagoras' personality as an educator and thaumaturge. Iamblichus' intention also seems to be to highlight Pythagoras' devotion to the people who surround him; this aspect is inseparable from his connotation as an educator, and is extolled in the word ἐπιμέλεια ('care'), used with reference to the actions he devoted to the well-being of his disciples. In *VP* 59, for instance, after saying that for Pythagoras φιλοσοφία meant the search for contemplation of the truth that lies in the order of the cosmos, Iamblichus concludes by extolling the profound ethical value inherent in care over education, which aims at the correction of humankind with a view to its improvement (καλὴ μὲν οὖν καὶ αὕτη παιδείας ἦν ἐπιμέλεια ἢ συντείνουσα αὐτῷ πρὸς τὴν τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐπανόρθωσιν). Subsequently (*VP* 64) he explains that Pythagoras considered *aisthēsis* as the starting point in taking care of men. Regarding perception, the visual (εἴ τις καλὰ μὲν ὀρώη καὶ σχήματα καὶ εἶδη) and auditory aspects (καλῶν δὲ ἀκούοι ῥυθμῶν καὶ μελῶν) are considered. The formulation conferred by Iamblichus on the Pythagorean programme appears, indeed, very close to Plato's educational project: *paideia* takes on a central role in the Pythagorean *bios* presented by Iamblichus, as a guarantor of *ēthos*, which, as in Plato's *Republic*, becomes in turn a guarantor of the correct psycho-physical development of the individual and his appropriate relations with others.⁵⁰

In Iamb. *VP* 64, *aisthēsis* then provides the basis for the definition of musical *paideia*, founded 'on specific rhythms and melodies able to cure the temperament (τρόποι) and affections (πάθη) of men, as well as to bring the forces of the mind back to the original harmonic equilibrium.' Music, which this time is not defined according to the categories of catharsis, but of therapy, is therefore a cause of recovery (ἰασις), provided that the appropriate melodies (μέλη) and

50 Cf. for instance Pl. *R.* 400d10-401a; 401d4-402a6.

rhythms (ῥυθμοί) are used: the fact is that they not only exert a therapeutic action on the passions but, in a deeply ethical sense, restore the harmony of the 'faculties' (δυνάμεις) that lodge in the soul, and can even cure the body. The beneficial action of music is therefore perceived by the Pythagoreans in a holistic sense, but it is necessary to know how to use it, and to contrive (ἐπινοέω) compositions able to repress and heal both physical and psychic ills (σωματικῶν τε καὶ ψυχικῶν νοσημάτων καταστολαὶ καὶ ἀφυγισμοί). This concept is also subsequently re-emphasised with the affirmation that there are 'proper musical modes' (προσέχοντες τρόποι) whose use is at the basis of the benefits of music therapy.⁵¹

Iamb. *VP* 64 also proves interesting regarding the ways in which Pythagorean musical therapy was carried out and the forms it took: immediately after expounding the holistic action of music on the individual, Iamblichus speaks of musical 'arrangements' (ἐξαρτύσεις) and 'treatments' (ἐπαφαί)⁵² enacted for the purpose (συνέταπτε) and harmonically organized (συνηρμόζετο) by Pythagoras so that they acted on the passions (τὰ τῆς ψυχῆς πάθη). As Iamblichus afterwards explains, these treatments consisted in special combinations of diatonic, chromatic and enharmonic melodies (κεράσματά τινων μελῶν διατονικῶν τε καὶ χρωματικῶν καὶ ἐναρμονίων), contrived with prodigious ability (δαιμονίως μηχανώμενος) and used for the purpose of driving away from the disciples' minds impulses due to irrationality like fear, anger, jealousy, depression and excitement, and directing them towards virtue.

The concept of a mixture of melodies expressed here seems to hark back to a passage in Aristides Quintilianus' *De Musica* (2. 16, pp. 85, 21-86, 7) in which, speaking of musical activity and its parts, and according to the fundamental distinction between masculine and feminine rhythms and *systemata*, he affirms that sometimes, according to the *ēthos* of the person listening, it is appropriate to use melodies in which different qualities are mixed (ἐνίοτε δὲ μικτέον καὶ τῆς ἐτερότητας), since, if an extreme element is used, the effect obtained is to lead to the opposite condition to the existing one the character of the person listening to the melodies (εἰς τοῦναντίον ἀγαγόντες τὸ ὑποκείμενον ἦθος). In this connection, Aristides Quintilianus resorts to medicine as term

51 Iamb. *VP* 164, 'the Pythagoreans assumed that music greatly contributed to health, if the proper modes were used' ([οἱ Πυθαγόρειοι] ὑπελάμβανον δὲ καὶ τὴν μουσικὴν μεγάλην συμβάλλεσθαι πρὸς ὑγείαν, ἂν τις αὐτῇ χρῆται κατὰ τοὺς προσέχοντας τρόπους).

52 Cf. also Iamb. *VP* 114, 'and moreover the whole Pythagorean school practiced the so-called ἐξάρτυσις ('arrangement'), the συναρμογή ('combination') and ἐπαφή ('treatment'), using certain melodies suitable for conducting the dispositions of the soul to emotions contrary to those possessed before'.

of a comparison.⁵³ The example proposed concerns the *systemata* of masculine and feminine notes, which manifest different *ēthē*; once these are reciprocally harmonized, through the *mixis* between a type of *systema* (masculine or feminine) and the intermediate rhythm, or between a type of rhythm (again masculine or feminine) and an intermediate *systema*, a positive influence can be found on the *ēthos* of the person listening.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, in Aristides Quintilianus, the beneficial effects of musical performances are not considered in terms of catharsis; instead, a context is delineated in which music is seen as a guarantor of *ēthos*.

The reference to the *mixis* of *systemata* (and, therefore, of *harmoniai*) in this passage by Aristides Quintilianus harks back to the conception according to which in the soul there is not a single ethical disposition, but instead a mixture in which different elements prevail from one occasion to another; this disposition changes according to the circumstances and external promptings, that is to say also according to the *harmoniai* heard, which are the fruit, in turn, of multiform mixtures. Further, the *exartysēis*, the 'arrangements' to which Iamblichus refers in *VP* 64, are dictated by Pythagoras' experience but, more specifically, by the fact that the soul is not always inspired in the same way by the same stimuli, but presents a complexity that changes because of the events which it comes up against and, in general, because of external influences. Hence when he speaks of *exartysēis*, Iamblichus seems to hark back to the same philosophical climate as that evoked by Aristides Quintilianus; and in this interesting passage relating to *ēthos* and its construction in the mind of the disciples through Pythagoras' musical teaching, Neoplatonic psychology also seems to present itself against the background of its representation of the figure of Pythagoras.

A technical aspect also appears very important in Iamb. *VP* 64: this is the distinction between melodies depending on the three γένη, which, according to the testimony of Claudius Ptolemy, was formulated by Archytas,⁵⁵ and therefore only dates from the beginning of the 4th century BC. Regarding this aspect, nevertheless, we can observe that Pythagoras' skill in contriving musical remedies for his disciples is underlined by Iamblichus to stress that the

53 Arist. Quint. *De Mus.* 2. 16, p. 85, 30-1, 'a wise doctor does not always give the strongest drugs but will respect the weakness of the patient's constitution'.

54 2. 16, pp. 85, 31-86, 8.

55 Archyt. A16 Huffman = Ptol. *Harm.* 1. 13-4, pp. 30-2. In Iamblichus' account (*VP* 121), by contrast, Pythagoras 'discovered music, organized it and handed it down to his disciples so that they could reach everything that was most beautiful'; cf. also *VP* 115, ' (Pythagoras) discovered the science of harmonics and the harmonic ratios'; *VP* 119-20.

beneficial action of music was not due to mere chance, but instead was sought after according to a method that uses experience and concrete practice. In this passage, moreover, the effect of the appropriate melodies according to the passions to be cured is explicitly compared to that of medicines: thus music fully shows itself as the ‘medicine of passions’, the therapy best suited to curing the ills of the soul in their various manifestations, and it is chosen and dosed according to the particular cases that arise each time.⁵⁶

In this connection, *κεράσματα* seems to allude precisely to the versatility of the musical remedies used by the wise man, their multiform values in view of the equilibrium of those that are submitted to them. Further, while deep wisdom is required of the music therapist, seen as the sole person responsible for the therapy, the patient, instead, seems entirely unwitting, and confidently entrusts himself to him.

According to what is hinted at in this section, as well as in Iamb. *VP* 65-6, although deep understanding of music only concerns the wise, who can make it their own decisive instrument of action, listening to music is something easily accessible to everyone thanks to *aisthēsis*, which in a sense becomes the channel through which there passes the process of improvement of individuals. The use of the term *aisthēsis* on the subject of Pythagorean *paideia* recalls, on a different level, the harsh attack by Aristoxenus on those people who interpret musical facts as movement (*κίνησις*),⁵⁷ exclusively on the basis of mathematical relationships,⁵⁸ and reject *aisthēsis* altogether, considering it as ‘not precise’ (*οὐκ ἀκριβής*).⁵⁹ *Aisthēsis* has a most important role in

56 Iamblichus (*VP* 64-5) states that Pythagoras improved the souls of his disciples and cured their passions ‘using the melodies suitable for them as if they were mixtures of drugs that brought safety (διὰ τῶν προσήκοντων μελῶν ὡς διὰ τινων σωτηρίων συγκεκραμένων φαρμάκων)’. Προσῆκον might be an allusion to Plato’s musical *ēthos* (τὸ προσῆκον in *R.* 411e4-412a2 refers to the right point in the tension and relaxation of θυμοειδές and φιλόσοφον, attuned the one to the other (ὅπως ἂν ἀλλήλοιν συναρμοσθήτον) by music and gymnastics within the *paideia*). The notions of ‘tension’ and ‘relaxation’ in the therapy of the emotions can be found also in Iamb. *VP* 224 (cf. p. 112).

57 Archyt. Aiga Huffman = DK 19a (based on fr. 1); Aristox. *Harm.* 1. 12, p. 17, 2-6.

58 Aristox. *Harm.* 2. 32, pp. 41, 19-42, 7; Barker (1989, 149 n. 10); Aristid. Quint. *De Mus.* 3. 2, p. 97, 3-7. For Aristoxenus and *aisthēsis*: Barker (1978); Barker (2007, 168-75).

59 Behind these misguided theorists (ἀλλοτριολογούντες) we can recognise the Pythagoreans who were contemporaries of Aristoxenus, accused of exclusively basing their interpretation of music on mathematics: Barker (2007, 166-8). There is a passage in Plato’s *Republic* (529-530, especially 530d6-9) in which Socrates goes absolutely in the opposite direction to Aristoxenus’ polemic, agreeing with the Pythagorean assumption that harmony and astronomy constitute ‘sister sciences’ (ἀδελφαί ἐπιστήμαι) and criticising, among others,

Aristoxenus' speculation, and is also emphasized by both Plato⁶⁰ and his followers.⁶¹ According to Aristoxenus (fr. 73 Wehrli = Phld. *Mus.* 3. fr. 76 Kemke), sight and hearing represent 'the most important part of cognition and the most divine among the other senses' (Ἀρισ[τό]ξενος τὴν ὄ[ρα]σιν καὶ τὴν ἀκο[ή]ν λ[έ]γων [γεγεν]ήσθαι τὸ κύ[ρ]ιον τ[ῆς ἐννοί]ας καὶ θειοτέρας τ[ῶν ἄλλω]ν αἰσθήσεων), while Ptolemy (*Harm.* 3. 3, pp. 93, 11-94, 20) highlights their importance for μαθηματική—that is, rational knowledge—considering them as the highest and most wonderful senses (p. 93, 12, ταῖς ἀνωτάτω καὶ θαυμασιωτάταις τῶν αἰσθήσεων).⁶² Moreover, according to the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Problemata* (19. 919b26), only the sense of hearing has *ēthos*.

Because of *ēthos*, the main purpose of music, according to what is affirmed by Iamblichus, seems precisely to be ἐπανόρθωσις, the 'correction' of those people to whom it is addressed in view of the improvement of their minds: indeed, through his melodic combinations Pythagoras 'easily succeeded in inverting, changing into their opposites, the affections of the mind recently generated in a thoughtless way' (VP 64, ῥαδίως εἰς τὰ ἐναντία περιέτρεπε καὶ περιήγε τὰ τῆς ψυχῆς πάθη νέον ἐν αὐτοῖς ἀλόγως συνιστάμενα καὶ ὑποφύομενα). Subsequently, Iamblichus explains what the πάθη τῆς ψυχῆς are: 'manifestations of pain, anger and compassion, jealousies and absurd fears, drives of every type, appetites, states of excitement, elation, depression, aggressiveness' (λύπας καὶ ὀργὰς καὶ ἐλέους καὶ ζήλους ἀτόπους καὶ φόβους, ἐπιθυμίας τε παντοίας καὶ θυμούς καὶ ὀρέξεις καὶ χαυνώσεις καὶ ὑπτιότητας καὶ σφοδρότητας). Significantly, in this

the Pythagoreans of his time, for the priority given by them to hearing, rather than to mathematics (531b1, ὅσα τοῦ νοῦ προστησάμενοι), in the study and interpretation of music (530e5-531c4; Meriani [2003(b), 579-93]).

- 60 Cf. for instance *R.* 401e-402a, where *aisthēsis* is linked with a proper musical education (which allows us to acknowledge the differences between noble things and base ones before *logos* sets itself within the individuals); *Lg.* 654a2-3 (the gods have given human beings 'the perception, accompanied by pleasure, of rhythm and *harmonia* (τὴν ἑνρυθμόν τε καὶ ἑναρμόνιον αἰσθησιν μεθ' ἡδονῆς)'; 670b3 (fifty-year-old men who are required to sing must have a good perception and understanding of both rhythms and *harmoniai*, τῶν γὰρ ῥυθμῶν καὶ τῶν ἁρμονιῶν ἀναγκαῖον αὐτοῖς ἐστὶν εὐαίσθητως ἔχειν καὶ γινώσκειν). According to *Ti.* 47c7-d1, 'as much as is useful in the sound of music in relation to hearing was established for the sake of *harmonia*, ὅσον τ' αὐτὸ μουσικῆς φωνῆ χρησίμων πρὸς ἀκοήν ἕνεκα ἁρμονίας ἐστὶ δοθέν') (cf. Barker 2000(a); Pelosi 2010, 68-89).
- 61 Cf. for instance the notion of *epistēmōnikē aisthēsis* referred to Speusippus in *S.E. M.* 7. 145-6 = fr. 75 Tarán; for an interpretation of the passage, cf. Kaklamanou (2012). For a general survey on *aisthēsis* in Neoplatonism cf. Hadot 1997.
- 62 According to Ptolemy, sight and hearing cooperate with reason in order to 'penetrate progressively into what is beautiful and what is useful' (3. 3, p. 94, 12, ἐπὶ πλεον τοῦ τε καλοῦ καὶ τοῦ χρησίου διήκουσιν).

passage, among the harmful passions representing loss of equilibrium of the soul and giving rise to unbecoming behaviours, Iamblichus juxtaposes ἔλεος and φόβος, evoking the two fundamental elements to which Aristotelian tragic catharsis is addressed;⁶³ Plato too, in the *Laws* (790c5-791b1), advocates care over movement in small children to treat φόβοι, irrational fears that agitate them, analogously to what happens to people who resort to the therapeutic rites of the Corybants. Further, the passion considered by Iamblichus in the anecdotes relating to cases of music therapy effected by Pythagoras⁶⁴ will be precisely ὀργή, which in people affected by it induces violent and dangerous behaviours. Pythagoras, precisely, corrected such behaviours, orienting them towards virtue (VP 64, ἐπανορθούμενος πρὸς ἀρετήν),⁶⁵ by using music suitable for correcting the passion, which performed a function fully equivalent to that of health-giving medicines mixed on purpose according to the illness it was to cure (VP 64, διὰ τῶν προσηκόντων μελῶν ὡς διὰ τινων σωτηρίων συγκεκραμένων φαρμάκων). In this way, Iamblichus establishes a perfect equivalence between music therapy and therapy through medicines: even the preparation of the remedy is the same, involving, in both cases, a blending of therapeutic elements designed for the appropriate treatment of the particular ailment. This seems to mark the acme of the ethical importance of music in Iamblichus' interpretation of early Pythagoreanism: ethics becomes so predominant and decisive in the general constitution of the individual as to expand to the therapeutic level, causing music, as harmony mirroring the equilibrium in man, to also become therapeutic.⁶⁶

The aspect of 'correction' exerted by music on man also proves particularly evident in VP 111, in which, alongside musical therapy, there is mentioned the custom of reciting verses by Homer and Hesiod πρὸς ἐπανόρθωσιν ψυχῆς;⁶⁷ further, Iamblichus (VP 114) concludes his considerations on ethical improvement by means of music affirming that 'in this way, by means of music Pythagoras most usefully improved the character and life of men' (οὕτω μὲν οὖν

63 Arist. *Po.* 1449b24-28; *Pol.* 1342a4-11.

64 Iamb. VP 112-113.

65 Also Strabo (1.2.3) states that the Pythagoreans used music for the improvement of *ēthos*.

66 Iamb. VP 68, 'such was the training of souls that Pythagoras practised by means of music (αὕτη μὲν οὖν ἢ διὰ μουσικῆς ἐπετηδεύετο αὐτῷ κατάρτυσις τῶν ψυχῶν)'. G. Staab (2002, 302) highlights the correspondence between κατάρτυσις and κάθαρσις in Iamb. VP 68. Κατάρτυσις by means of music can be found also in Arist. *Quint. De Mus.* 2. 7, p. 65, 10-1 ('it is now time to explain what kinds of melody and rhythm will discipline (καταρτύσουσι) the natural emotions'), though without any reference to the κάθαρσις of παθήματα.

67 Cf. also VP 164.

πολυωφελεστάτην κατεστήσατο Πυθαγόρας τὴν διὰ τῆς μουσικῆς τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων ἡθῶν τε καὶ βίων ἐπανόρθωσιν).⁶⁸

An interesting parallel with Iamblichus' statements on the usefulness of musical correction is afforded, once more, by a passage in Aristides Quintilianus' *De Musica*, which affirms that the ancients used music for corrective purposes⁶⁹ and, moreover, taking advantage of children's love for song and dance, caused music, through its innate (κατὰ φύσιν) power,⁷⁰ to prove formative for them, and not merely a source of superficial enjoyment. This objective, so the musicologist asserts, was attained through care taken over the songs themselves: indeed, thanks to careful consideration and appraisal, the ones chosen were those most appropriate for educational action on children, so as also to obtain an advantage from what, by itself, seemed not to offer any.⁷¹ Once again, the utility of music is seen as its ethical goal, and the same concept seems to be expressed again on the subject of the *ēthē* that characterize musical modes, called by this name precisely because 'through them, in the first place, the faculties of the soul are diagnosed and corrected' (τὰ τῆς ψυχῆς καταστήματα διὰ τούτων πρώτων ἐθεωρεῖτό τε καὶ διορθοῦτο).⁷²

The objective at which the tempering of passions through melodies has to aim is represented by Iamblichus (*VP* 224) as ἀνδρεία, 'courage', pursued not through eradication of an unfavourable psychic state, but through reorganisation of it:⁷³ in the same passage, Iamblichus refers to μετρίότης, the 'correct measure' of states of mind. The consideration given to the starting conditions is particularly notable: a state is not eliminated to replace it with another one, but is worked on to transform it, according to a process of 'harmonization'—through tightening and loosening⁷⁴—in which the most suitable music for restoring equilibrium must be sought.

68 For music as an instrument for ἐπανόρθωσις, cf. also *VP* 195.

69 Aristid. Quint. *De Mus.* 2.4, p. 57, 2-13, 'why then are we surprised to find that it was mostly through music that people in ancient times produced moral correction (πλείστην ἐπανόρθωσιν πεποιήσθαι διὰ μουσικῆς)?'.

70 *De Mus.* 2. 4, p. 57, 13-4.

71 *De Mus.* 2. 4, p. 57, 22, κόσμιον καὶ χρήσιμον ἐξ ἀχρήστου πεποιήκασιν.

72 *De Mus.* 1. 12, p. 30, 14-5.

73 'The Pythagoreans also had melodies conceived for the passions of the soul—for instance, for lack of spirit and gnawing pain (πρὸς τε ἀθυμίας καὶ δηγμούς)—which were considered as most efficacious (βοηθητικώτατα) remedies. By means of other melodies, that were efficacious against anger and excitement (πρὸς τε τὰς ὀργὰς καὶ πρὸς τοὺς θυμούς), they tightened (ἐπιτείνοντες) and loosened (ἀνιέντες) such passions till they became moderate and suitable to manly courage (ἄχρι τοῦ μετρίου σύμμετρα πρὸς ἀνδρείαν)'; cf. also n. 56 above.

74 This notion appears in *Pl. R.* 411e-412a.

Although emphasis is given to catharsis, Iamblichus' *De vita pythagorica* then includes different notions and definitions concerning the effects of music: in particular, the reader can easily discover that the effectiveness of musical therapy is expressed through the notion of 'harmonization', including both 'correction' and 'transformation'.⁷⁵

The goal of medical-musical treatment therefore appears to be closely connected with the ethical dimension: once more, we see that *ēthos*, *paideia* and medicine are closely interwoven in the ancient Pythagoreanism revisited by Iamblichus.

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75 Cf. the references to συναρμογαί and ἐξάρτυσις in Iamb. *VP* 64.

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