

## Choral Constructions in Greek Culture

Why did the Greeks of the archaic and early classical periods join in choruses that sang and danced on public and private occasions? This book offers a wide-ranging exploration of representations of chorality in the poetry, art and material remains of early Greece in order to demonstrate the centrality of the activity in the social, religious and technological practices of individuals and communities. Moving from a consideration of choral archetypes, among them cauldrons, columns, Gorgons, ships and halcyons, the discussion then turns to an investigation of how participation in choral song and dance shaped communal experience and interacted with a variety of disparate spheres that included weaving, cataloguing, temple architecture and inscribing. The study ends with a treatment of the role of choral activity in generating epiphanies and allowing viewers and participants access to realms that typically lie beyond their perception.

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The Idea of the Chorus in the Poetry, Art and  
Social Practices of the Archaic and Early Classical  
Periods

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DEBORAH TARN STEINER  
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*In memory of my mother, Zara Steiner, and to my  
daughters, Rebecca and Miriam, with all my love and  
thanks*

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- 10.8 Attic red-figure hydria by the Pan Painter, 490–480 B.C.E. St. Petersburg, the State Hermitage Museum B 201 (St. 1538). Photograph courtesy of The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg. [685]

## Preface and Acknowledgements

This book had its origins in the idyllic landscape of Delphi where, in the early summer of 2009, I participated in a conference organized by Richard Martin and Natasha Peponi. It was on my return journey home on the airplane, after having exhausted my stock of novels, snacks and the films on offer, that the outlines of this study – a review of what I call ‘archetypal’ or ‘paradigmatic’ choruses, groups of singer-dancers on whom the historical choruses of archaic and early classical Greece modelled themselves and whose identities they took on during their performances – began to emerge. Since that now-long-ago transatlantic flight, the project has, rather hydra-like, grown and multiplied, turning into the undeniably bulky patchwork of topics and themes, many very far from the subject as originally conceived, that make up the finished book. It is my hope that what is presented here does not show too many signs of the oxygen-short atmosphere in which it was originally formulated and looks more to the glorious Delphic landscape than to the airport terminal.

Like any work that has taken far too long and that draws on heterogeneous sources and crosses many disciplinary boundaries, this book has gained immeasurably from the publications, help and observations of more friends and colleagues than I can name, and what follows is no more than a partial list. I owe particular thanks to those individuals who have generously read some of the chapters, and offered comments and, most importantly, corrections of sometimes glaring errors. Leslie Kurke has been a guiding presence from the first, repeatedly allowing me to draw on her insights, sharing yet to be published work and supplying detailed annotations of several parts of the book; deep thanks too to Mark Buchan, Susan Edmunds, Clemente Marconi, Sheila Murnaghan, Alexandra Pappas, Anna Uhlig and Ruth Webb, who have taken the time and trouble to read several of the chapters and whose expertise has filled out my often too sketchy knowledge of the sources and material treated here. The book has been enriched by many others, some originally strangers who have now become friends, who have willingly sent copies of their articles, some still unpublished or shortly to appear, supplied me with images and offered all sorts of

other types of guidance. Among them are Peter Agócs, Rosa Andújar, Natasha Binek, Ewen Bowie, Jesús Carruesco, Joseph Day, Gloria Ferrari, Renaud Gagné, Hanna Golab, Richard Gordon, Mark Griffith (who, among other things, set me right on the gender of a particular horse), Christina Gunth, Guy Hedreen, Alessandra Inglese, Barbara Kowalzig, Pauline LeVen, Sarah Morris, Richard Neer, Sarah Olsen, Ian Rutherford, Michael Squire, Vicky Vlachou and Naomi Weiss. For those numerous occasions when he sparked a new idea or prompted me to rethink what I thought I understood concerning choral lyric (and much else), I know that I owe particular thanks to Andrew Ford, whose work on ancient Greek song has been very much a touchstone from the first. Footnotes throughout the study will record the particular nature of the debts that I owe several of these individuals, and I offer apologies in advance to others whose names are not included on this list, but whose observations and responses to lectures and conferences where I have presented parts of this work have proved invaluable. Any errors, of course, remain very much my own, and I hope adequately to have documented my borrowings and not to have neglected too many kindnesses.

I have many other debts to record, chief among them to the Center for Ballet and the Arts in New York where, under the truly inspiring leadership of Jennifer Homans, I was among the fellows in the spring of 2017; earlier that academic year, a fellowship at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Princeton allowed me the necessary time and space to complete portions of the book, and Angelos Chaniotis made the community of classicists a particular vibrant one. The Lodge Fund in the Department of Classics at Columbia has also provided critical financial help at different stages of the project, and I could not imagine writing this book without the presence of my Columbia students and colleagues, with particular thanks to Francesco de Angelis, Marcus Folch, Helene Foley, Joe Howley and John Ma and to the graduates and undergraduates in my Greek Survey classes.

Michael Sharp has been an exemplary editor throughout, supplying a judicious mixture of guidance, tolerance, patience and an occasional dose of pragmatism and economic good sense, and I am also much indebted to my two anonymous readers for the Press, who first read the proposal that I submitted, and then the finished book, and whose suggestions and corrections have been a source of guidance during the revision process. Thanks too to Simone Oppen, who proofread an earlier version of the manuscript, and to Cecilia Mackay, my truly invaluable picture researcher, with whom I have worked over the last year; I could not have brought this project to completion without her.

Substantial portions of different chapters, in particular parts of Chapters 2, 5, 8 and 9, have appeared as pieces in other volumes or journals, and I have much benefitted from the editors and readers who have commented on and, most frequently, trimmed the various submissions. Chapter 2 draws on my 'From the Demonic to the Divine: Cauldrons, Choral Dancers and Encounters with Gods' in F. Lissarrague and F. Prost (eds.), *Construire le dieu en images* (Lille, 2015) and the final section of Chapter 5 as well as part of the discussion in Chapter 9 develop material from 'Lists in Performance: Maritime Catalogues, Naval Inventories and Choral Song and Dance in the Archaic and Classical Period', which appeared in *Mètis* 16 (2018). The early parts of Chapter 8 overlap with the discussion in 'Sleights of Hand: Epigraphic Capping and the Visual Enactment of *Eris* in Early Greek Epigrams', in C. Damon and C. H. Pieper (eds.), *Eris vs. Aemulatio: Competition in the Ancient World* (Leiden, 2018), and arguments and material in Chapter 9 had an earlier sounding in 'Choruses and Catalogues: The Performative and Generic Context of the Asopids in the Hesiodic Catalogue of Women', in C. Tsagalis (ed.), *Poetry in Fragments: Studies in the Hesiodic Corpus and Its Afterlife* (Berlin, 2017). Portions of this chapter also reappear in 'Girls in Lines: Generic Exchanges in Early Greek Hexameter Poetry and Choral Lyric', in M. Foster, L. Kurke and N. Weiss (eds.), *Genre in Archaic and Classical Greek Poetry: Theories and Models* (Leiden, 2020). None of this already published work is identical to the chapters as they now stand, and all have been revised, expanded or reshaped in various ways.

It only remains to record debts of a more personal kind. Of deep importance to the book have been the friendships that I have enjoyed throughout the decade of writing, and to Emily Gowers, Andrea Nightingale, Jackie Wullschläger and Froma Zeitlin, as well as to many in the lists above, special thanks. The dedication cannot reflect what I owe to my mother, who I very much hoped would see this book in print, and to my daughters, who have given me more than words can say; and apologies to them for having too frequently shut my study door. Finally, my husband Andrew Feldherr: although he has not read one word of this book, and may have only the vaguest sense of what I have been working on over these many years, he has been with me, perhaps unwittingly, at each and every moment of the project, anticipating where my thoughts were going, supplying books and articles I never thought I would need only to discover their centrality to my work and providing the multiple forms of companionship and support which make me feel that the book belongs to him.

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