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CHAPTER 12

RECEIVED INTO DANCE? PARTHENIUS' *ERŌTIKA PATHĒMATA* IN THE PANTOMIME IDIOM

ISMENE LADA-RICHARDS

The subject of this chapter is Parthenius of Nicaea, the Greek intellectual from the province of Bithynia who was captured during the Mithridatic wars and brought, as a luxury possession, to Italy by Cinna,[1] probably the neoteric C. Helvius Cinna, author of the mythological epyllion *Zmyrna*. Given the paucity of Parthenius' extant output, the 'celebrity' treatment lavished on him since Clausen's seminal piece[2] and the publication of two major studies around the turn of the millennium,[3] there are few surprises left. Unless . . . unless one takes a very Callimachean 'untrodden' path. I will place Parthenius where one would least expect him to be found: the dancing floor. In so doing, I will introduce a different reception pathway to the volume, namely reception into the non-verbal, kinaesthetic and thoroughly embodied medium that is the art of dance.

My primary Parthenian focus will be the bizarre mythological collection of racy stories entitled *Erōtika Pathēmata* (henceforth *EP*), that is to say *Sufferings in Love* or *Disastrous Love Stories*.[4] My unconventional handle on it is a passing comment in the *Hermeneumata Leidensia*, a bilingual schoolbook attributed to ps.-Dositheus, a shadowy teacher of the third century AD. Wishing to commend the mythological collection from which he is excerpting,[5] he singles out its value for three categories of professional users – painters, grammarians and pantomime dancers:

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[1] So the entry 'Parthenius' in the *Suda*: οὗτος ἐλήφθη ὑπὸ Κίννα λάφυρον, ὅτε Μιθριδάτην Ῥωμαῖοι κατεπολέμησαν (T1 Lightfoot).
[2] Clausen 1964.
[3] Lightfoot 1999; Francese 2001.
[4] So translate Lightfoot and Francese respectively.
[5] Ps.-Dositheus calls it the 'world famous' *Genealogies* of Hyginus, but it is a relative of Hyginus' *Fables*.

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ζωιγραφία τοιγαροῦν τούτου τοῦ κόπου πολλοῖς τόποις δίδωσι μαρτυρίαν ἀλλὰ καὶ οἱ γραμματικοὶ τέχνης ταύτης οὐ μόνον ἐπαινοῦσιν τὴν εὐφυΐαν ἀλλὰ καὶ χρῶνται. μῦθοι μὲν τῶν ὀρχηστῶν ἔνθεν λαμβάνουσιν ἔπαινον καὶ μαρτυροποιοῦνται ἐν τῆι ὀρχήσει ἀληθινὰ τὰ γεγραμμένα (fabulae quoque pantomimorum inde accipiunt laudem et testantur in saltatione vera esse quae scripta sunt).[6]

Painting, for example, testifies to the value of this labour in multiple places; but teachers too not only praise the cleverness of this art but also apply it to their own purposes (it is from this work that the stories danced by the pantomimes derive praise and, being danced, bear witness to the truth of what is written).

In the mind of this particular grammarian at least there is a strong correlation between what is presented on the stage and what is contained in mythographical compendia, so much so that the rhythmic and kinetic embodiment of such mythical plot lines is tantamount to validating their existence, proving their veracity. Given that myth was, throughout antiquity, the very lifeblood of *pantomimos orchēsis* as a genre, to the extent that a late first-century BC inscription designates the dancer as a μύθων ὀρχηστής *tout court*,[7] the proposition that a pantomime would profit from perusing an epitome of myths is easy to defend. With the aid of handbooks a pantomime can, with minimal trouble, enrich his general *paideia*; lay his hands on reliable, systematic gatherings of cognate narratives (e.g. local stories, *aetia*, catasterisms, love stories); refresh his memory regarding the main ingredients of various plots; achieve a more secure embedding of similarities and differences between typologically kindred myths;[8] and facilitate repertoire selection in response to a particular audience's tastes or in accordance with geographical location.[9] Lucian's stipulation that 'above all' (πρὸ πάντων) the pantomime dancer ought to know 'the loves of the gods, especially of Jupiter himself' (*Salt*. 59), brings to mind ready-made thematic lists as, for example, the conspectus of the mortal women who 'slept with Jupiter' and a series of other gods in the lost chapters 226–32 of Hyginus' *Fables*. Lucian's second 'must-have' item in a dancer's

6 Text in Goetz, *CGL* III 56.30–57.2, discussed in Cameron 2004: 229–30.
7 *IGR* I.975, commemorating the victorious performance of a Roman citizen in the theatre of Gortyn in Crete; cf. Crinagoras (*AP* 9.542.2), where *mythos* designates the pantomime libretto.
8 Cf. Luc. *Salt*. 80.
9 See Luc. *Salt*. 39–59, a geographical categorization.

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repertoire (*Salt.* 57), myths of transformation in four main subdivisions (trees, animals, birds and transgender), also recalls the proliferation of specialized mythographical works dealing with just that, metamorphosis.[10] The question this piece sets out to explore, however, will take us well beyond the comfort zone of an overall convergence between mythographical collections and the dancer as a repository of mythical tradition. Besides a putative afterlife in the poetry of 'neoterics', Augustans and beyond,[11] I would like to ask whether Parthenius' 'little notebook' (*hypomnēmation*), dedicated to Cornelius Gallus as raw material for epic or elegiac compositions (εἰς ἔπη καὶ ἐλεγείας ἀνάγειν, *Pref.* 2), might also have enjoyed an afterlife 'in the flesh', re-mediated into *fabulas* for pantomime dancing.

Unsurprisingly, a project of this kind is bedevilled by problems. The 'Cinderella' of reception studies across the disciplinary board, dance reception is still struggling to emancipate itself from performance or theatre history,[12] its closest generic siblings, who are themselves latecomers on the block. Despite the incontrovertible diachronic fascination exercised by the figure of the ancient dancer,[13] dance reception seldom makes more than a fleeting appearance in classical reception volumes; despite being championed by some of the reception giants in the field,[14] it has not yet earned a permanent and central place under the overall 'Classical reception' banner.[15] Considerably more complex is the meaningful inclusion of the dance in the remit of 'reception in antiquity',

[10] E.g. the poetic collections of Nicander and Boeus; Antoninus Liberalis' *Metamorphoses*; Theodorus' *Metamorphoses*, Antigonus' *Transformations*, Didymarchus' *Metamorphoses* (for these last texts we have titles only). Parthenius' own *Metamorphoses*, probably in hexameters, falls into the same category.

[11] On the difficulty of tracing vestiges of Parthenian influence, see Lightfoot 1999: 297.

[12] It was while standing on the turf of performance history that Macintosh (2008: 254–5) addressed to 'classical reception scholars' a 'reminder . . . of the necessity of including dance within their sphere of study'.

[13] As richly exemplified by all the contributions in Macintosh's pioneering edited volume *The Ancient Dancer in the Modern World* (2010); with a different focus, see Billings, Budelmann, and Macintosh 2013.

[14] Besides Macintosh, Naerebout 1997 and Foley (e.g. 2007, 2012: 76–121) are also among those pioneering the field.

[15] For example, dance reception did not even feature among the 'future paths' highlighted in Porter's overview (2008) of emergent lines of reception research in Classics; one of the most recent handbooks to the reception of Greek drama (van Zyl Smit 2016) does not include a reception into dance section.

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the present volume's overarching theme: even allowing for the fact that the very object of the quest, the danced event itself, would be completely irrecoverable (to match the total loss of *fabulae salticae*, dance libretti), there is lamentably scarce first-hand, definitive evidence for the fool-proof connection of particular texts with securely identifiable, specific choreographic reconfigurations. Is then this line of inquiry futile, teetering perilously close to the proverbial wild goose chase?

Working against the grain, I will use the example of the *EP* to argue that writing dance into the bigger narrative of 'reception in antiquity' is a valuable, indeed exciting undertaking, provided two simple caveats are met. In the first instance, dance (including cultural 'traffic' *in* and *out of* dance) must be a documented presence in the *Erwartungshorizont* (Jauss 1970) of a given time and place; secondly, the ultimate desideratum must be other than the creation of new archival knowledge in the form of lists of documented performances. When a text is involved in the reception chain the research objective should be more imaginative and less fact-driven. One could try, for example, to identify properties endemic to the verbal narrative itself, features that might be deemed entirely consonant with known modalities of the dance idioms prevalent at the posited time of reception (e.g. pantomime dancing between the first century BC and the sixth century AD). Although unlikely to trigger discipline-wide paradigm shifts, a dance reception lens judiciously applied can prove a versatile interpretative tool: eliciting new meanings, suggesting possibilities for further exploration or simply bringing to the fore aspects of a text that might have otherwise remained invisible, it will expand scholarly horizons and enrich our ways of reading. Most importantly, the study of 'reception into dance' should be considered enmeshed not only with mainstream literary reception but literary history itself. For intermedial reception is by no means a one-way road. It thrives on material that 'circulates' vigorously and freely across representational categories and borders, much like Jupiter's adulterous love life, a thematic cluster that Augustine perceived as weaving its way through the arts, feeding into the work of painters and founders, smiths and sculptors,

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writers, reciters, actors, singers, dancers.[16] What started life as a text may come to exercise its greatest impact on the textual tradition not in a linear fashion, without cross-media intermediaries, but having first cut off its moorings from the written word by means of mutating into one or more different forms. It was, for example, after having inspired Debussy's symphonic poem *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* (1894), choreographed in turn by Vaslav Nijinsky for Diaghilev's Ballets Russes (1912), that Mallarmé's poem *L'après-midi d'un faune* (1876) gained iconic status in the traditions of literary modernism. Our interpretative linking of the dots must be guided by an understanding of reception not as 'an achieved state' but as 'an ongoing process' – as Whitmarsh (2006: 115) puts it, 'not reception . . . but recipience'.

The charting of 'recipience' then, the unpredictable, meandering and fluid *process* of reception, is precisely what should be at stake in the case of dance-oriented readings of Parthenius' *EP* or similar 'high-end' literary products. If even a handful of Parthenius' stories (or scenes and characters from these stories) provided the backbone for the creation of narratives and songs to accompany mimetic dancing;[17] if, moreover, a likely period for such translations from the 'page' to the 'stage' was within Parthenius' lifetime, in the first century BC, all the while Greek-inflected, continuously evolving dance dialects were very much in search of an identity,[18] the entire way we appreciate the cultural landscape of late Republican/Augustan Rome is radically affected.

[16] August., *Ep*. 91.5: *tot locis pingitur, funditur, tunditur, sculpitur, scribitur, legitur, agitur, cantatur, saltatur Juppiter adulteria tanta committens*. Similarly protean in modern times has been the figure of Salome who, having started life as a couple of lines in the Bible, found herself on an incredible journey through painting and sculpture, music, literature, theatre and dance (for a classicist's take, see Webb 2010).

[17] The only secure link between an *EP* story and the pantomime repertoire concerns the specific version of Daphne in *EP* 15.4, which combines the maiden's flight with arboreal transformation. For Apollo/Daphne as pantomime, see Luc. *Salt*. 48; Lib. *Or*. 64.67; *AP* 11.255 (Palladas); Jacob of Sarugh, *Homily* 5.

[18] The explosive entrance of Pyladean and Bathyllean pantomime in the late twenties BC was the culmination of a gradual maturation process spanning several decades. See primarily Jory 1981; Wiseman 2008, 2014. For a historical sketch of pantomime's protracted period of gestation in both the east and west of the Mediterranean basin, see Garelli 2007: 147–208. Parthenius' collection itself can be placed at any time between c. 52 and 27/6 BC (Lightfoot 1999: 215).

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In the first place it would appear that an artistic synergy was in the process of developing between avant-garde literary production and dance, an art that clamours to be placed at the centre of the cultural and even literary history of the first century BC. Secondly, we may, at long last, have become more willing to concede that the afterlife of Hellenistic aesthetics is not to be sought exclusively in other texts, the written literary tradition of the canonical Augustan poets, but most intriguingly in flesh and blood, in the bodies of the pantomime dancers who enthralled the world until the end of pagan antiquity. I will return to this all-important notion of 'embodiment' in my conclusion. For the time being, let us read with an eye on the dance, hoping to understand what a heuristic focus on 'reception into dance' might contribute to our reading experience and interpretation of Parthenius' collection.

Eis pantomimon orkhēsin harmozein?

The strongest node of contact between Parthenius' *EP* and the world of pantomime dancing should be sought in their lusciously erotic subject matter: mythical love stories were, quite simply, the mainstay of ancient pantomime,[19] a fixation on libidinal narratives – its irreducible core.[20] Moreover, Parthenius' cauldron of molten love has a particular taste, namely the guilt – and fascination – of perverse, pathological passion: wallowing flagrantly in taboo sexuality, a sizeable proportion of the *EP* stories are fuelled by unbridled lust and replete with transgressive desire,[21] so much so that sexual nonconformity becomes the most important thematic key to the collection. Pantomime, too, however, brimming with 'lecherous females' (ἐρωτικὰ γύναια), 'the lewdest among women of old'

[19] See, e.g., Cyprian, *Don*. 8; August. *Ep*. 91.5; cf. Arn. *Adv. nat*. 4.35, 7.33; Sid. Apoll. *Carm*. 23.281–97. For Ovid, pantomime is where 'fictitious lovers are constantly portrayed in the dance' (*illic assidue ficti saltantur amantes*, *Rem.am.* 755).

[20] Novatianus, for example, speaks of 'ancient fabled lusts' (*fabulosae antiquitatum libidines*, *Spect*. 6.6).

[21] Examples of incest in the *EP*: 5 (Leucippus and his sister), 11 (Byblis and brother Caunus), 13 (Clymenus and daughter Harpalyce), 17 (Periander and his mother), 31 (Euopis and her brother), 33 (Assaon and daughter Niobe). Transgressive love for the enemy: *EP* 9 (Polycrite), 21 (Pisidice), 22 (Nanis).

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(τῶν πάλαι τὰς μαχλοτάτας, *Salt*. 2), thrives in sexual impropriety. The site where deviant desire is constantly under construction (ἐπιθυμίας ἀτόπου κατασκευή)[22] and illicit pleasure routinely glorified[23] seems an ideal destination for the sexually overt material of Parthenius, who 'titillates'[24] his reader with the consummation of erotic passion. Yet not all material, whether in verbal or aural form, is suitable for a recalibration into dance. Tchaikovsky's and Stravinsky's music attracts choreographers in droves, even when not originally composed with dance in mind;[25] Ravel's *La Danse*, conversely, composed specifically for Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, was rejected by Diaghilev himself as undanceable, 'a masterpiece . . . but . . . not a ballet'.[26] Lucian (*Salt*. 74) appears to understand the 'congeniality' criterion when stipulating that, in addition to a set of intellectual and physical attributes, the 'perfect dancer' (τὸν ἄριστον ὀρχηστήν) ought to be highly discerning (διαγνωστικόν), able to ferret out the best (τῶν ἀρίστων), that is to say the most stage-friendly, subject matter, from the mass of poems (ποιημάτων), songs (ᾀσμάτων) and tunes (μελῶν) vying for his attention. So how useful might the *EP* have seemed to those on the lookout for raw material for the composition of a pantomime libretto?

First and foremost, the vast majority of the *EP* stories are in perfect complicity with performance practices foregrounding the visceral language and expressive potential of the moving and gesturing human body. Even as mere synopses they do contain markedly gestural distillations of inner turmoil, from the tear-drenched, fetishistic clinging to poignant objects[27] to the stretching of hands (χεῖρας ἔτεινεν) into the air in amorous expectation (ἐελδομένη φιλότητος)[28] or the drawing of a sword (σπασάμενος τὴν μάχαιραν) while rushing to use it for the kill (ὥρμησε

[22] John Chrysost. *PG* 60.301; cf. John Chrysost. *PG* 62.428 on theatre spectacles brimming with ἔρωτας ἀτόπους.

[23] See, e.g., Novat. *Spect*. 6.6 (*amatur quicquid non licet*); Tert. *De spect.* 17.1.

[24] So Francese 2008: 166.

[25] So, e.g., Tchaikovsky's Serenade for Strings in C, *Op*. 48, choreographed by Balanchine in 1934.

[26] Poulenc's reminiscence, quoted in Nichols 1987: 118.

[27] *EP* 2.2, Polymele clinging to Odysseus' spoils from Troy and 'rolling about on them in floods of tears' (trans. Lightfoot).

[28] Pisidice, *EP* 21.3, from the embedded poetic extract from the *Foundation of Lesbos*.

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διεργάσασθαι τὴν κόρην).[29] Creating moments of heightened dynamism and supreme narrative intensity, they build their climaxes around bodies under physical or emotional duress, caught in the extremities of passion. Parthenius exploits a set of core passions (from love to anger and hate, from fear to hope, from sorrow to despair) for all their dramatic potential, and the resulting lush emotional landscape makes his stories supremely attractive not only to the stage in general, since the 'un-emotional' (τὸ ἀπαθές) is practically synonymous with the 'un-histrionic' (ἀνυπόκριτον),[30] but more specifically to the particular modalities of pantomime dancing, the genre predicated on the sensational display of 'character' (*ēthos*) and 'passion' (*pathos*, Luc. *Salt*. 67). Bringing on stage (εἰσάγουσα) 'now someone in love (ἐρῶντα) now someone in the grip of anger (ὀργιζόμενον) and another one deranged in his mind (μεμηνότα) and another one consumed by sorrow (λελυπημένον)' (*Salt*. 67), the pantomime mode would have provided an ideal site where Parthenius' exuberant emotional colours could have been appropriated by the subjectivity of a living human body. Besides, the emotional cocktail brewed in the *EP* is such that it could have thrived at the edges of articulate language, in that heterotopia where corporeal expressiveness, the dialects of 'gesture, nod, leg, knee, hand and spin' (Sid. Apoll. *Carm*. 23.269–70), can act as a substitute for words.

Yet ancient pantomime was not simply interested in the display of an accomplished state of passion – it was the progressive live *creation* of a passion, the 'getting in and out' of dispositions, the transition itself that mattered the most. Marked by a strong interest in narrative development, the clinical tracing of a *pathēma* from the first germ to the complete undoing of the experiencer's self, Parthenius' collection would have provided rich material to a dancer either eager to display the subtle, step-by-slow-step gradations of a passion or perform abrupt and startling emotional shifts. Take Periander, the object of his mother's incestuous love. Even in the lapidary form of *EP* 17, Periander's role would have required a dancer to navigate a bewildering array of emotions,

[29] Diognetes, *EP* 9.4.
[30] Demtr. *Eloc*. 194.

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moods and dispositions: moral steadfastness while facing the lure of immorality (17.3); the dissolution of moral scruples and progressive yielding to pressure (συγκατατίθεται, 17.3); sensual pleasure (17.4); the hesitant, first dawnings of incipient love mixed with mounting curiosity regarding the identity of his erotic partner (17.5); full-grown, overwhelming passion (εἰς πολὺν πόθον, 17.5); frustration (17.5) morphing into unrestrained, murderous anger (17.6) and finally a wholesale personality change, leading straight to the practising of brutish savagery (17.7). Or take Cleoboea in *EP* 14. A dancer would have been required to negotiate the exceptionally challenging transition from love (14.1) to anger, to love contaminated by thoughts of vengeance (14.2), to pretence of being cured of love (τοῦ μὲν ἔρωτος ἀπηλλάχθαι προσεποιήθη, 14.3). When vengefulness blossoms into a murderous disposition and culminates in slaughter (14.4), a second bout of strong desire leads to remorse (ἐννοηθεῖσα ὡς δεινὸν ἔργον δεδράκοι) and quenches itself in self-destruction (14.4). Not only would remorse, a recurrent state in the *EP*, have inspired a choreographer to think of an entire array of expressive gestures, from a profusion of tears to the sensational staging of a suicidal act; it would also have allowed a performing artist to spiral into ever greater depths of inwardness and suffering. Indeed, in the affective economy of pantomime dancing the audience is invited to peer directly into the performer's soul. As the *fabula*'s characters are spun into an emotional abyss, all manner of internal conflicts are laid bare, in particular the violent collision of lustful impulse and excessive, raw desire with a regulating, restraining power, be it reason or a sense of shame and moral duty (*aidōs*). Lucian (*Salt*. 70) has recourse to Plato in order to convey the interplay of passion, erotic desire and rational control (ideally acting throughout as a bridle) in the dancer's performance. But this supremely histrionic tug in diametrically opposite directions is a near ubiquitous building block in the *EP*, where the victim of erotic suffering is reported to have fought against the affliction before being finally obliged to surrender. The example of Clymenus, who fell in love with his stunningly beautiful daughter Harpalyce (*EP* 13.1), is typical of the anguished struggle at the heart of the collection: resisting valiantly at first (ἐκαρτέρει) and remaining in control of

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his passion (περιῆν τοῦ παθήματος), he ultimately gave in when the disease became impossible for him to handle (ὡς δὲ πολὺ μᾶλλον αὐτὸν ὑπέρρει τὸ νόσημα).[31] While the mythographer's restricted narrative economy suppresses duels of warring passions, a librettist would nevertheless have found in the *EP* no shortage of fertile cues for the creation of expansive *cantica* to accompany the dancer's predicament; taken inside that dancer's splintered heart, an audience would have been thrilled to experience, vicariously, the agony of characters hemmed in by irresistible forces and ultimately ruined.

And yet the energy of ancient pantomime is far from being expended within the dancer's own soul in connection with a single role, for pantomime's aesthetic pivots on a protean continuum of transformation, wherein the dancer 'will assume every role himself, one after another, and in his single person will represent a crowd' (*solusque per omnis* | *ibit personas et turbam reddet in uno*, Manilius, *Astron*. 5.480b–1). A mimetic dancer's change of mask from Paris to Oenone (*EP* 4), from Niobe to Assaon (*EP* 33), would have offered an audience a feast of affective versatility every bit the equal of the emotional journeys hailed as 'most incredible' (τὸ γοῦν παραδοξότατον, *Salt*. 67) in Lucian's treatise, where the pantomime lover extols the single body split into a multiplicity of souls (*Salt*. 66) so that

> Within the same day (τῆς αὐτῆς ἡμέρας) he displays himself (δείκνυται) now Athamas in the throes of madness (μεμηνώς) now a terrified (φοβουμένη) Ino; at other times he is Atreus himself, then, a little later (becomes) Thyestes, then Aegisthus or Aerope. (*Salt*. 67)

Travelling from Athamas to Ino and from Atreus to Thyestes ultimately becomes an exercise in empathic understanding and perspective taking, seeing from another's point of view, as the dancer merges with the 'I' and the body of his characters, sharing in their feelings and being affected alongside them.[32] Some of the stories in the *EP* could have formed the basis for pantomime's prime structural mode of a diptych design wherein the current of

[31] Further examples of resistance to the *pathos* and subsequent capitulation: *EP* 5.2, 13.1, 16.1, 17.1–2, 36.3.

[32] Cf. *IG* 14.2124, hailing a deceased pantomime as 'empathizing' (συμπάσχων) with the characters he danced.

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emotional energy bounces back and forth between two main characters per scene positioned by means of gender, age and social station at opposite extremes to one other.[33] Choosing to stage a 'Caunus and Byblis' pantomime, for example, the dancer would have needed to 'feel himself' just as much 'into' the despair of the incestuous girl, perishing of love for her own brother, as 'into' the disgust (ἀποστυγήσαντα) of that same brother shunning the illicit love (*EP* 11.3). Standing 'outside' his character was not an option for the dancer. Only by absorbing, 'draw[ing] over his limbs the aspect of fortune's every vicissitude' (Manilius, *Astron*. 5.483; trans. Goold) would he have had a chance of winning the audience's heart both in the guise of Byblis, consumed by guilt, hanging herself and ultimately melting away into 'an everlasting spring' (*EP* 11.4), and in the role of Caunus, obliged to roam the earth in flight. Whether 'Caunus and Byblis' were ever re-mediated into dance is of course impossible to establish, but a faint trace of the dynamic involved in the telling of a story from two conflicting subject positions with which the dancing soloist is called upon to identify has been preserved in the performance history of 'Apollo and Daphne', the only Parthenian myth verifiably recalibrated into dance in the distinctive version found in *EP* 15.4.[34]

The overall synergy and congeniality between the material contained in the *EP* and the aesthetic register of pantomime dancing should now be obvious. Parallel explorations of emotional landscapes, deep forays into subjectivity, especially into the darkest corners of the female psyche, pantomime and Parthenian plots seem cut from the same aesthetic cloth. The precise negotiations at the posited interface of literature and dance are irrecoverable, but the fireworks of delirious passion that could have punctuated the choreographies created for Parthenian heroines of the *EP* are easy to imagine. To paraphrase choreographer Roland Petit, the *EP* would have offered first-

[33] Cf. Cassiod. *Var*. 4.51.9.

[34] See Lib. *Or*. 64.67 on the dancer impersonating both 'Daphne fleeing' (τὴν Δάφνην φεύγουσαν) and 'Apollo pursuing' (τὸν Ἀπόλλω διώκοντα); in *Homily* 5 (fol. 22 recto a–b), Jacob of Sarugh taps freely into the affective structure of a 'Daphne and Apollo' pantomimic plot line as enacted in the Euphrates region at the turn of the sixth century AD.

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century BC dancers inspiration for some of the best plots pantomime could ever dream of.[35]

Parthenius' Collection: A Choreographer's and Dancer's Opportunity?

Arguing that some of the stories in Parthenius' collection would have thrived in their transition to the stage is not tantamount to arguing that they would have lived happily ever after as classical tragic plots. In fact, nothing would have been further from the truth, for the overall aesthetics underpinning the *EP* is distinctly 'non-Aristotelian' and even reminiscent of the extreme sensationalism of nineteenth-century European melodrama.[36] But the melodramatic mode is in itself exceptionally akin to the ancient pantomime idiom in several respects,[37] common ground consisting in emotional intensification and sensuous excess; the downgrading of articulate language as a medium of communication; a non-classical narrative structure that advances a stirring plot line by means of short, self-contained scenes moving from climax to thrilling climax and punctuated by pictorial still-frames held up for extended contemplation; situations of extreme suspense and a deep investment in visual display, turning 'showing', as opposed to 'telling', into the most privileged performative dialect. Indeed this last shared element brings us to the core of ancient pantomime, wherein all forms of astonishment, from horror (including death and violence) to marvel (including somatic transformation), are displaced from the realm of the 'heard' to the realm of the 'seen', the physically enacted, the performer's corporeal and gestural space. Libanius (*Or.* 64.110) could hardly have been more explicit when summing up pantomime as the place where you would take your fill not only of the world's greatest misfortunes unfolding as you watch (ὁρῶν) but also of death itself, enacted in flesh and blood on stage. In plots where excessive violence is involved, everything rests on the exhibitionist foregrounding of vigorous

[35] Quoted in Mannoni 1984: 43, 'les plus belles histoires de ballets dont on puisse rêver'.
[36] See primarily Sistakou 2016: 211–20.
[37] For a cursory comparative look, see Lada-Richards 2019a.

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action, death and carnage as they fall upon and ravage dancing bodies:

And if the dancer is required to show (δεῖξαι) Achilles as he behaves in Troy, you will see (ὄψει) the hero killing and brandishing his ashen spear and stirring up fear and confusion and butchering Hector and dragging his corpse and leaping farther than the pentathletes. (Lib. *Or*. 64.68)

It is precisely pantomime's signature way of converting the 'indirect' or 'virtual' seeing of 'Aristotelian' drama to 'direct', open, physical vision that would have been ideally suited to the artistic realization of the highly packed, episodic plots of the *EP*. Take *EP* 21, whose plot involves Achilles' sacking of islands and plundering of cities (21.1) and (in the embedded poem) an infatuated girl's cold-hearted gazing at the slaying of parents and the enslavement of women, dragged to the ships in chains (21.4). Distressingly palpable, this paroxysm of sensation would have been magnified if shown in 3D, its visceral eloquence fleshed out by a dancer skilled at evoking scenes of total disaster with his very body: 'he will compel you to see Troy falling here and now and Priam cut down before your very eyes' (*cogetque videre | praesentem Troiam Priamumque ante ora cadentem*), is Manilius' précis on the projected destiny of the man born under the sign of Cepheus (*Astron*. 5.484–5), and the prediction dovetails with Libanius' reference to 'the collapsing of ancient kingdoms' as part of the dancer's repertoire.[38] *EP* 13 is also a series of 'shockers' which, in the poetics of traditional, 'Aristotelian' drama, would have been merely reported in a Messenger speech. The most horrific sequence, Harpalyce's triple crime of dismembering, cooking and serving her younger brother's limbs to her father/lover,[39] is also a combination of attested pantomimic themes (*sparagmos* and tecnophagy), the stories of Procne and Tereus or Thyestes' cannibalistic banquet being the most infamous examples.[40] The heart-stopping plot culminates in Clymenus' suicide and Harpalyce's transformation

[38] See *Or*. 64.115: δεῖξον αὐτῶι (sc. the spectator) δι᾽ ὀρχηστοῦ παλαιὰς βασιλείας καθῃρημένας. Cf. Luc. *Salt*. 76 (Capaneus scaling the Theban walls).

[39] See *EP* 13. 3: κατακόπτει; σκευάσασα τὰ κρέα τοῦ παιδὸς παρατίθησι τῶι πατρί.

[40] Lucian mentions *sparagmos* explicitly for Iacchus (*Salt*. 39), Orpheus (51), Apsyrtus (53) and implicitly for Actaeon and Pentheus (41); for Actaeon, cf. Varro, *Sat. Men*. fr. 513 Astbury. Tecnophagy: Luc. *Salt*. 80 (Cronus and Thyestes); Sid. Apoll. *Carm*. 23.277 (Thyestes), 278–80 (Tereus); Jacob of Sarugh, *Homily* 5, fol. 21 verso b.

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into a bird (13.4), metamorphosis being one of the most beloved pantomime topics throughout antiquity.[41] No less histrionic would have been a climactic death by suffocation, stoning or the noose,[42] as in Parthenius' own versification of Byblis' fate in *EP* 11 or the suicide of Thymoetes' wife, hanging herself through fear (δέος) and shame (αἰσχύνην) when her incestuous liaison with her brother is revealed to their father (*EP* 31.1). Following her suicide, the narrative changes focus just as surely as the dancer would have changed his mask in a danced version of the story. Parthenius now closes up on Thymoetes himself, victim of a novel *pathēma* instigated by the sight of a corpse – a beautiful girl – spewed up by the sea. The explosive mix of pathos compressed in this story is only detonated when the necrophiliac slays himself (ἐπικατασφάξαι αὑτόν) over the great tomb built over the body of his beloved (*EP* 31.2), a climactic moment whose impact would have been immeasurably enhanced by pantomime-style choreography.[43]

Broadly speaking, then, in the aesthetic of extreme spectacularity that permeates pantomime just as much as the *EP*, no atrocity and no calamity is too appalling for on-stage imitation. Even what we would have thought impossible to stage without substantial technical support – for example, storms at sea and shipwrecks – seems to have been part of pantomime's stockpile of 'special effects' achieved through the performing body's virtuosity.[44] The range of verbal pictures that could have accompanied such bodily enactments can be gauged not only from Seneca's pantomime-inflected nautical imagery[45] but also, closer to Parthenius' aesthetic world, from Euphorion's *Philoctetes* (*poetic fr.* 48 Lightfoot) containing a quintessentially melodramatic, 'this is it' moment of drowning: clinging on to life (λιλαιόμενον βιότοιο) as

[41] See primarily Luc. *Salt*. 57. Cf. Arn. *Adv. nat*. 4.35, 7.33; August. *De civ. D.* 7.26; Sid. Apoll. *Carm*. 23.281–95; Prudent. *Perist*. 10.221–7; Jacob of Sarugh, *Homily* 5, fol. 22 recto a.

[42] Suffocation (*EP* 9, Polycrite); stoning (*EP* 21, Pisidice); hanging (*EP* 28, Cleite; 31 Euopis); beheading (*EP* 8, Herippe); *sparagmos* by dogs (*EP* 10, Leuconoe).

[43] For a similar moment in pantomime-inflected literature, see *Achill. Tat.* 3.16–17.

[44] Luc. *Salt*. 46 includes the entire Ὀδύσσειος πλάνη in his pantomimic catalogue as well as the famous wreck of the Greek fleet off the Euboean coast.

[45] See, e.g., the shipwreck of the returning Argive fleet, as described in Sen. *Ag*. 465–556, with Zanobi 2014: 193–9, highlighting the reference to a *mimicum naufragium* in Sen. *De ira* 2.2.5 as possibly meaning 'mimetically enacted' (199).

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the sea submerges him (fr. 48.1), gasping for air (3), Iphimachus stretches out his arms just visible above the surface (2), 'tossing his hands on high' (χεῖρας ὑπερπλάζων), mouth overflowing with brine (5). Such graphic, almost 'gestural' writing could have been perfectly at home in a *canticum* providing a running commentary to a 'death by water' scene and would have been equally applicable to a *fabula* based on, say, Alcinoe's experience in mid-ocean (*EP* 27.2): regretting her flight from home and family in the thrall of a stranger and weeping copiously, as she invokes now husband now children, she throws herself into the sea and drowns. The melodramatic economy of spectacularized shock, horror, fear and suffering seems to have been as much a part of pantomime as of the darker corners of the Parthenian and Euphorionic worlds.

The further we delve into the virtual universe of the *EP*, the deeper the equivalences with the pantomime mode. Adapted into dance, Parthenius' plots would have offered ample opportunity for the creation of dynamic, athletic choreographies, a distinctive feature of pantomime entertainment enabling the performer to showcase a stunning virtuosity, his brilliance off the floor, in eye-catching 'turns and twirls and jumps and back-flung poses' (Luc. *Salt*. 71). A frantic leap off a cliff, travels or madness or the two combined, as in Clymenus' deranged chase of his own married daughter in a morbid pursuit of sexual gratification (*EP* 13.3),[46] would be excellent vehicles for the dancer to display the kind of dazzling acrobatics mentioned by our sources.[47] But ancient pantomime was not bravura technical display only. Fast-paced, sensational plot lines notwithstanding, an aesthetic trademark of the genre was the creation of climactic moments of unbearable tension where everything would freeze, where story would melt into picture, where the accumulated surplus of emotion would channel itself into the dancer's motionless gestures and 'attitudes' (*skhēmata*, Plut. *Mor*. 747c). Both Plutarch and Libanius speak of bodily configurations arrested in space and time as in a picture, all the while the dancers 'retain their attitudes like figures in a painting' (ὅταν . . . γραφικῶς

[46] Travels: *EP* 1.1 (Lyrcus), 2.1 (Odysseus), 11.1 (Caunus), 36.1 (Rhesus). For μανιώδεις ὀρχήσεις, see Ath. 14.629d–e, including the *thermaustris*, which Pollux describes as a 'strenuous' form of dance 'full of great leaps' (πηδητικόν) (*Onom*. 4.102).

[47] See, e.g., Galen, *De sanitate tuenda* 2.11; cf. Lib. *Or*. 64.104.

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τοῖς εἴδεσι ἐπιμένωσι, Plut., *Mor.* 747c), their statue-like stillness culminating in a *tableau vivant* on stage (μετὰ δὲ τῆς στάσεως ἡ εἰκὼν ἀπαντᾷ, Lib. *Or.* 64.118). Opportunities for sophisticated interplay between the narrative and the pictorial abound in the *EP*. In a librettist's hands, Arganthone, who, after Rhesus' demise in battle, wanders (ἀλωμένη) around the place of their first union, calling vainly on the dead and abstaining from food and drink until she perishes of grief (διὰ λύπην, *EP* 36.5), could easily have been 'written' into a heart-rending tableau, the stillness of her dying body providing a strong 'visual summary of the emotional situation', as Brooks (1995: 48) writes on Victorian melodrama. Similarly, the *Liebestod* of broken-hearted Oenone (*EP* 4.7), shrieking and wailing copiously (ἀνώιμωξέ τε καὶ πολλὰ κατολοφυραμένη) at the sight of Paris' inanimate body on the ground, would have made a memorable climactic picture of total despair, perhaps deliberately contrasting with the opening scene of pastoral and marital bliss in Paris' mountain quarters (*EP* 4.2), before he was famous. By the fourth century AD it seems to have been a fixture of the dancer's art to evoke virtual pastoral landscapes appearing more real than reality itself to the admiring viewer's eye.[48] A pantomime dancing the 'shepherd' Paris[49] would not only have created corporeally his own tableau teeming with vegetable and animal life but would also have immersed the spectator straight into the middle of the action, inviting him now to amble vicariously through groves, now to savour the sights and sounds of a bucolic world.[50] This particular *EP* was, I submit, especially likely to have been earmarked for virtuosic modulation into dance, as pastoral themes constituted a distinct branch of pantomime entertainment favoured by Bathyllus himself,[51] the vanguard artist who, alongside Pylades, made of dance an

[48] Lib. *Or.* 64.116: 'For what painting (γραφή), what meadow (λειμών) offers a sight more pleasant than the dance and the dancer (ἥδιον ὀρχήσεως καὶ ὀρχηστοῦ θέαμα)'.

[49] A role better known from the 'Judgement of Paris', a pantomime hit throughout antiquity. See primarily Luc. *Salt.* 45; Tert. *Apol.* 15.2; August. *De civ. D.* 18.10 (drawing on Varro) on the story among those 'sung (*cantantur*) and danced (*saltantur*) in the midst of theatrical applause'. An entire performance in the pantomime mode is described in Apul. *Met.* 10.30–4.

[50] So in Lib. *Or.* 64.116.

[51] For Bathyllus' 'lighthearted', bucolic strand of dancing, see Plut. *Mor.* 711e–f; for pastoral characters implicated in first-century BC Roman references to dance, see Hor. *Sat.* 1.5.63, *Epist.* 2.2.124–5.

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ambitious commercial enterprise as well as a powerful artistic statement in the last decades of the first century BC.

Finally, the creation of absorbingly emotional pictorial scenes as part of pantomime's signifying practices was closely interwoven with recurrent shifts between movement and *stasis*. A whirl of acrobatic virtuosity would precede the freezing of the narrative flow into stillness, as the dancer would hold a 'suddenly crystallized posture' (τὴν ἐξαίφνης . . . πάγιον στάσιν) or 'a figure held fixed in position' (τὸν ἐν τῇ στάσει τηρούμενον τύπον, Lib. *Or*. 64.118). As Libanius further explains, dancers 'whirl around as if borne on wings, but conclude their movement in a static pose (εἰς ἀκίνητον στάσιν), as if glued to the spot (ὥσπερ κεκολλημένοι)' (*Or*. 64.118). One can imagine this very sequence underlying choreographies of chase and transformation, as in the securely 'received into dance' story of Apollo and Daphne, where 'at the point of being overtaken' (ὡς δὲ συνεδιώκετο), the girl finds herself all too literally rooted into the ground as a laurel tree (*EP* 15.4). In *EP* 17 the ending is perhaps more graphic still. Having lunged at his own mother with the intention of killing her (ἐπὶ τὸ διεργάσασθαι αὐτήν), Periander is suddenly kept in check (κατασχεθείς), 'glued to the spot' at the sight of some divine apparition (ὑπό τινος δαιμονίου φαντάσματος) intervening to avert the matricide (17.6–7). Libanius' conceptualization of the dancer as the sculptor of his own form, imitating characters not by means of stone (οὐκ ἐν λίθωι μιμούμενος) but *in* and *by* himself (ἀλλ' ἐν αὑτῶι παριστάς) and challenging 'even the best of sculptors' in a contest of statuary beauty (*Or*. 64.116), would seem all the more appropriate at such prolonged moments of repressed action on the stage, laden with *pathos*.

This section will end the way it started, with a caveat. 'Received into dance' should not be taken to imply 'translated' into dance word for word and scene by scene. A competent librettist would have been able to identify a plot's highlight moments (*apices rerum* in Cassiod. *Var*. 4.51.9) and most astonishingly visual scenes and would have chosen to give corporeal form to a character's inner torment at nodal narrative points of exquisite pathos. If the migration of monumental literary works such as Shakespeare's tragedies or even novels such as Marcel Proust's *À la recherche du*

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temps perdu involved wholesale adaptation,[52] we should envisage drastic remodelling when thinking of Parthenius' 'reception into dance'.

'Strange Stories' for Up-Market Dinner Guests

My discussion has so far eschewed a potential snag. The *EP* is not exactly the kind of manual ps.-Dositheus would have had in mind when flagging the value of mythological handbooks. With the supernatural playing a minimal role in the collection, Parthenius' compendium is far from the stories of divine love affairs prominent in pantomime's erotic repertoire. Some of its stories can only be called 'myths according to the broadest definition of myth as non-historical narrative' (Lightfoot 1999: 232) and border more on literary fiction than what Lucian (*Salt*. 61) considers the hard core of pantomime dancing, namely Hesiodic, Homeric, tragic mythology.[53] In addition, these stories cannot be considered mainstream – most are truly arcane or, as Artemidorus would put it, ἱστορίαι ξέναι καὶ ἄτριπτοι ('strange and untrodden stories').[54] Would pantomime, the preceptor of elementary mythical alphabets to the illiterate masses (*Or*. 64.112), have trafficked in similar subject matter?

Pantomime was a diverse, capacious genre. Original creations aside (and there must have been thousands of them), it seems to have been sustained by adaptations of tragedy (so much so that tragedy became integral to the definition of the pantomime genre and its artist),[55] epic[56] and a smattering of other genres, including

[52] See, e.g., José Limón's *The Moor's Pavane* (1949), a modern dance classic derived from *Othello*, and *Barren Sceptre* (1960), reducing *Macbeth* to a duet for Macbeth and Lady Macbeth; cf. Roland Petit's *Proust ou les intermittences du coeur* (1974, for the Ballets de Marseille).

[53] Episodes from Odysseus' travels (cf. *EP* 2, 3, 12) are specifically singled out as raw material for pantomime plots in Luc. *Salt*. 46.

[54] *Oneir*. 4.63 = T7 Lightfoot.

[55] For full references to sources, see Robert 1930; cf. Lada-Richards 2007: 181 n. 21. On the common ground shared by tragedy and pantomime, see Luc. *Salt*. 31 and Lib. *Or*. 64.112.

[56] Regarding Ovid, see primarily *Tr*. 2.519–20 and 5.7.25–6. For Virgil, see primarily Suet. *Ner*. 54; Luc. *Salt*. 46 and Macrob. *Sat*. 5.17.5 (Aeneas and Dido); August. *Serm*. 241.5 = *PL* 38.1135–6 (Aeneas in the Underworld).

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bucolic poetry and novels.[57] Regarding non-mythological salacious matter on the dancing floor, a close parallel would be the overwhelming, illicit passion of Antiochus, son of Seleucus, for his stepmother Stratonice, daughter of Demetrius Poliorcetes. Explicitly mentioned in Lucian's list of pantomime subjects as a Phoenician 'must-have' in a dancer's repertoire (*Salt*. 58), Antiochus' *pathēma* is also narrated in prose versions that encapsulate the essence of corporeal dramaturgy at its best. Lucian's, Plutarch's and Valerius Maximus' narratives,[58] similar in length and overall feel to several among Parthenius' stories, cannot be far from what a prose summary, a *hypomnēma*, of a *fabula saltica* on the *erōtikon pathēma* of Antiochus might have read like. As for the question of obscurity and the 'untrodden' path, it would seem that pantomime too could have a taste for the unhackneyed tale, if we believe Lycinus' assertion that erudite and *recherché*, intricate plots with countless vicissitudes (πολυμαθέστεραι καὶ μυρίας μεταβολὰς ἔχουσαι) are what differentiates pantomimic from tragic versions of the same myths (Luc. *Salt*. 31). An adult pantomime mask from Thessalonica (second century AD) bearing the inscription 'Astyanax' gives a glimpse of the lure of recondite mythical alternatives endemic to the genre.[59] A *fabula* following the bizarre, convoluted plot line of Parthenius' *EP* 33, entitled 'Assaon' but concerning the story of Niobe 'related differently from the majority version' (διαφόρως . . . τοῖς πολλοῖς ἱστορεῖται, *EP* 33.1), would have contained sufficient 'coups de théâtre' and deviations from the mainstream to fit the bill of Lucian's more varied (ποικιλώτεραι, *Salt*. 31) and learned plots.

The sociocultural milieu where the daringly new palette offered by Parthenius' *EP* would have been particularly welcome in a theatricalized form is the triclinium and/or grounds of the aristocrat's estate, which sometimes included designated performance spaces ranging from a simple stage (e.g. in the peristyle garden of

[57] On Virgil's *Eclogues* and pantomime dancing, see Lada-Richards 2019b; Chariton's *Callirhoe* was probably recalibrated as a *fabula saltica* by Persius' time in Rome (Pers. 1.134 with Tilg 2010); on pantomime and the novel, see Morales 2004: 67–77.

[58] Luc. *De Dea Syria* 17–18; Plut. *Dem*. 38; Val. Max. 5.7.ext.1.

[59] For the ancient sources of the 'adult' Astyanax tradition and a full discussion of the mask, see Jory 2012.

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the House of the Golden Cupids at Pompeii) to a real open-air theatre, as in the palatial villa of Vedius Pollio at Pausilypon (Posillipo) on the Bay of Naples. The presence of (mostly eastern) dancers as ὀρχηστοδιδάσκαλοι, hired entertainers or members of resident dancing troupes in a domestic context, is securely documented and inextricably interwoven with the private staging of mythological enactments.[60] A party guest will easily immerse himself in the heretic pleasures of incestuous lust embodied in the culturally familiar guise of, say, a Phaedra *saltata* (especially if in conjunction with a wall painting on the same myth), but the house or villa owner can defamiliarize incest and complicate his guest's vicarious role playing by having a dancer incarnate the incestuous Clymenus instead, in a *fabula* recasting Parthenius' *EP* 13. Similarly, while *sparagmos* would have been commonly associated with Pentheus or Actaeon, a danced Leuconoe torn apart by dogs (*EP* 10. 3) would not only have enabled the villa owner to 'cash in' on *doctrina* but also allowed the mythographical knowledge of his guests to be challenged to the extreme, as a series of first-rate 'puzzles' would have 'sharpened' their mind (cf. Lib. *Or.* 64.113) and tested their command of competing or arcane traditions.[61] The added 'fizz' that comes with the dancing of a famous myth with an unexpected twist (e.g. the Niobe of *EP* 33, who is *not* morphing into stone) or with plot lines providing variations on well-known mythical motifs (e.g. incest, adultery, betrayal, violent death) would have easily transformed the performance space of the wealthy into prime ground for the display of erudition and the experiencing of new sensations.

Who might have been responsible for adapting *EP* stories or even chosen parts of *EP* stories into danceable matter in the first century BC? My first suggestion, no matter how seemingly implausible, is Parthenius himself. The fact that we would never have known about Statius as a composer of *fabulae salticae* had it

[60] See Csapo 2014: 179–91; Wiseman 2016; cf. Sick 1999.

[61] The existence of further collections of recondite myths or weird versions of familiar myths in high circles indicates there was a widespread appetite for games of recognition based on intellectually demanding mythological matter. Roughly contemporary with the *EP* would be Conon's *Diēgēseis*, the *Collections of Mythical Stories* by grammarian and poet Sostratus of Nysa and a similarly recondite mythological handbook by Sostratus' brother, Aristodemus of Nysa.

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not been for Juvenal's passing comment (7.87) on his 'virgin' (*intactam*) *Agave* sold to (and perhaps commissioned by?) the illustrious pantomime Paris, ought to be acting as a sobering reminder throughout. Not only is Parthenius' 'Byblis' fragment[62] dramatic, visual and gestural *par excellence* (especially lines 4–6) – a perfect catch for an A-list performer in search of *arista poiēmata* – *but* some of our scarce indications concerning Parthenius' poetic output led to the heart of the pantomime repertoire. Myrrha, given celebrity status by Cinna in his *Zmyrna* but also treated by Parthenius,[63] was a pantomime heroine throughout antiquity[64] and so was Scylla Nisi, featuring in Parthenius' *Metamorphoses* (fr. 24 Lightfoot).[65] Indeed, the distinctive element of Parthenius' *Scylla*, the etymology of the Saronic Gulf from σύρεσθαι ('to be dragged'), commemorating Minos' binding of the traitorous girl to his ship and dragging her along over the sea,[66] evokes a visual sequence perfectly compatible with the modalities of pantomime performances. For here too dancers, moving so fast as if they were borne on wings (ὡς μὲν γὰρ ὑπόπτεροι, Lib. *Or*. 64.118), give the impression of being 'dragged' (ἐπισυρομένους) across the orchestra (John Chrysostom, *PG* 49.195) by means of their flowing, trailing garments, sweeping the floor 'like a broom' (καλλύντρου δίκην, Clement, *Paedagogus* 2.10.70–4).

Did Parthenius ever versify his own Daphne of *EP* 15.4,[67] the version that travelled into dance? Questions arise faster than they can be tackled. No historically verifiable conclusion is possible but, if Harrison (2007: 51) is right that the 'conjunction of metamorphosis and unhappy love can be seen as particularly Parthenian', Parthenius' artistic world is in full confluence with that of pantomime. And there is more. If Parthenius' elusive

[62] Fr. 33 Lightfoot, versifying his own version of the story in the *EP* (11.4).

[63] See Catull. 95; Cinna frr. 6 (a very 'Parthenian' glimpse of the heroine in anguish) and 7–8 Courtney; Parthenius fr. 29 Lightfoot. On the reason why Cinna's and Parthenius' versions can be considered related, see Clausen 1964: 191; Courtney 1993: 220; Lightfoot 1999: 183.

[64] Certainly by Lucian's time (*Salt*. 58) but also earlier (see Joseph. *AJ* 19.94 with reference to Rome in AD 41).

[65] Luc. *Salt*. 41 on Scylla Nisi and Minos.

[66] Fr. 24a Lightfoot: ἐπισύρεσθαι τῆι θαλάσσηι. ὅθεν Σαρωνικὸς . . . ἐκλήθη; 24b: ἀφῆκε σύρεσθαι διὰ θαλάσσης.

[67] So thinks Lightfoot 1999: 165, as part of the *Metamorphoses*.

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Crinagoras (*SH* 624) was dedicated to Crinagoras of Mytilene, 'court versifier',[68] friend of both Julius Caesar and Augustus and part of the circle of Augustus' sister Octavia, one further piece can be added to our puzzle. For Crinagoras appears fully immersed in Rome's emergent 'celebrity' culture, now conjuring up a fan's reaction to a singing star (*AP* 9.429),[69] now enjoining the singer/citharode *cum* librettist Philonides to compose a multirole libretto to elicit firework displays from Bathyllus, the trailblazer from Alexandria and grand passion of Maecenas himself (Tac. *Ann*. 1.54.2).[70] Like Crinagoras, Parthenius too was probably rubbing shoulders with the dancing stars who, moralizing prejudice aside, were, so to speak, the cult of fashionable Rome, basking in the aura of legitimation provided by supremely powerful arbiters of taste.[71] To paraphrase Virgil's *bon mot* regarding Gallus in *Ecl*. 10.3, *neget quis cantica Bathyllo?*

Beyond Parthenius himself, contemporary poets of modernist aesthetic predilections, courting the unconventional and the risqué, could have trifled with ephemera *cantica* serving as playful yet mannered fodder for private danced entertainment, whether to be provided by an amateur upper-class dancer or a professional male soloist or even a female artist, like the teenage Licinia Eucharis, whose dancing was said to have graced the 'games of the nobles' (*nobilium ludos*) in the 50s, some of which must have been private engagements.[72] Did the consul Munatius Plancus' pantomime-style dancing of the merman Glaucus at an eastern banquet[73] have anything to do with the literary *Glaucus* of the praetor Quintus Cornificius,[74] composer of 'light work'

68 Bowersock 1965: 124; cf. Bowie 2011: 186–95.

69 The subject of the song, the consequences of Nauplius' revenge on the returning Greeks, is also a pantomime topic (Luc. *Salt*. 46). As for Crinagoras' *AP* 9.545, it accompanies the gift of a copy of Callimachus' *Hecale* offered to Marcellus, Augustus' prematurely deceased nephew in whose memory were given the games hosting the official launch of pantomime as a 'grand spectacular' in Rome in 23/2 BC. See Jory 1981. Is the plot thickening sufficiently for us to take notice?

70 *AP* 9.542, with Garelli 2007: 149. Is Maecenas perhaps the true, albeit unnamed, recipient of this laudatory epigram?

71 See Bourdieu 1993: 51 on the importance of 'consecration bestowed by the dominant fractions of the dominant class'.

72 See Wiseman 1985a: 30–1, 45–7.

73 See Vell. Pat. 2.83.2: *Glaucum saltasset in convivio*; Wiseman 1985a: 47.

74 See Courtney 1993: 226; Hollis 2007: 150–4.

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(*leve . . . opus*, Ov. *Tr.* 2.436) and widely travelled in the pantomime strongholds of Syria and Cilicia? Or even with the evident vogue of 'Glaucus' poems in the Hellenistic tradition?[75] The open-ended possibility should act as a warning against any uncritical assumption that stylish Hellenistic/neoteric work and corporeal performance dialects could not have much in common. The net can be spread much wider still. Erudite trifling with Parthenian *arcana* would not have been out of character, so to speak, for an upper-class amateur versifier like P. Volumnius Eutrapelus,[76] patron of celebrity *mima* Volumnia Cytheris[77] as well as of Crassicius Pansa, the culturally amphibian *grammaticus* who achieved fame when he prised open the closely kept secrets of Cinna's *Zmyrna* but started off in the theatre, 'assisting the writers of mimes' (*mimographos adiuvat*) in their task (Suet. *Gramm.* 18.2).[78] Did Crassicius ever adapt the *Zmyrna* into a form that could be danced? Given Parthenius' closeness with Cinna, was he ever tempted to reconfigure a Parthenian plot as a *fabula saltica*? *Grammatici* like Crassicius, very often Greek and in various stages of dependence (e.g. slaves, freedmen) on noble households, would have been ideally placed for executing a patron's wish for the provision of refined entertainment fare, culled from less accessible corners of the literary tradition and destined not for a broad, indiscriminate circle of 'consumers' but for the upper crust, his peers and equals. Similarly ideal for reshaping and repurposing Parthenius into danceable forms would have been a whole roster of highly positioned Greek intellectuals[79] who, in the intimate entourage of powerful Romans, might have been invited, as opposed to pressured, to add an aura of privileged, sophisticated frivolity to the more mainstream hedonistic amusements of the triclinium.

In the absence of new evidence, we are unlikely to ever ascertain whether any sophisticated, hybrid, cross-genre performances

[75] For a list, see Knox 2011: 194. 'Glaucus' is also present in Parthenius' line Γλαύκωι καὶ Νηρῆι καὶ εἰναλίωι Μελικέρτηι (fr. 36 Lightfoot), famously imitated by Virgil in *G.* 1.437: *Glauco et Panopeae et Inoo Melicertae*.

[76] See Hollis 2007: 164; Courtney 1993: 234.

[77] See Servius on *Ecl.* 10.1: *Cytheridem meretricem, libertam Volumnii*.

[78] See Wiseman 1985b.

[79] See primarily Bowersock 1965: 30–41, 122–39; Rawson 1985: 66–83.

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wrought around the material assembled by Parthenius in his *EP* did actually materialize in the twilight of the Roman Republic. Frustrating though it is, however, this absence must not stifle further inquiry. Purposefully experimental, in a way that will hopefully encourage others to pursue further research and research to advance, this chapter has argued that Parthenius' *hypomnēmatium* was 'good to think with' in the context of the dance, especially in the period leading up to pantomime's grand, flamboyant entrance into Roman public life.

'Embodied' Reception, Reception into Dance: Closing Thoughts

The last word belongs to embodiment, the overarching conceptual framework and critical paradigm that places the body at the vital centre of our ability to create and communicate thought and meaning. What are the broader epistemic shifts involved in the process of a verbal artefact's reception into dance, the art form *par excellence* where the creative agent's 'lived bodiliness' lies at the very centre of the aesthetic experience? In the first place, the whole range of discursive knowledge (linguistic, literary, aesthetic, factual) residing in the verbal text will be repurposed, distilled into 'corporeal', 'bodily' knowledge, meaning not simply the dancer's technical 'know-how' but rather what Bourdieu (1990: 166) identifies as 'a way of understanding which is altogether particular, and often forgotten in theories of intelligence: that which consists of understanding with one's body'. While the textual, verbal register 'knows' the sentient beings that populate it by means of their linguistic, emotional and intellectual capacities, the dancer understands and feels them deeply in his flesh and bones, knows them by the way they shape his body, instruct his limbs and ligaments to move, and compel his heart to race and veins to throb. This is primordial, 'embodied' knowledge,[80] cultivated and handed down like a precious 'heirloom' (Roach 1996: 82) through the

[80] On embodied knowledge in ancient pantomime, see Lada-Richards 2007: 105–8, 130–4; Webb 2017.

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performance genealogies created by 'master-and-pupil' or 'family' ties. Marginalized in academic scholarship,[81] embodied knowledge sediments in the dancer's sensorium and neuromusculature, thereby becoming corporeal *habitus* and 'blood' or 'body' memory. As such, not only is it easily accessible, forever 'at hand' (πρόχειρα in Luc. *Salt*. 61); crucially, it transforms the dancer himself into a living, bodily archive,[82] a *milieu de mémoire* ('environment of memory')[83] for the experiencing and re-enactment of a community's traditions. By Lucian's time, the dancer could be hailed as the marvellous site where the entirety of Greek inheritance was made carnal, Greekness engraved on the flesh (Lada-Richards 2007: 98–103). Secondly, the change of register from the textual to the corporeal affects the mode of engagement with the end product of reception into dance. For among embodied performance practices it is the dance *par excellence* that forges a connection with its viewers kinaesthetically, bringing them in sympathetic alignment with the energy, emotion and corporeal disposition of the dancer himself.[84] Finally, the mediation of embodied practices in the reception of a literary artefact leaves an imprint even on the original receiver's reception of the original text – in our case, Parthenius' *Sufferings in Love*. Having placed the *EP* at the starting point of a journey into dance, I read it differently. Rather than registering words flat on the page, I allow the imaginary dancer to 'lead' me 'around', as Libanius would put it (*Or*. 64.116), so that I might enter his world as an embodied subject, proprioceptively, feeling the pull of gravity, the direction of movements, the pathways into space. In this immersive experience Parthenius' stories come alive in 3D and I begin to 'know' his characters not *in spite* of my body but *because* of the deep visceral continuity *enabled* by my body. Even as a heuristic, interpretative

[81] See, e.g., Klein 2007. On elite denigration of ancient pantomime's intellectual credentials, see Lada-Richards 2007: 104–11.
[82] See, e.g., Lepecki 2010. Famous examples of lost dance masterpieces revived partly through the original dancers' body memory are Nijinsky's *L'après-midi d'un faune* (1912) and *Rite of Spring* (1913).
[83] As in Nora 1989.
[84] For ancient sources on kinaesthetic response to pantomime dance, see Lada-Richards 2007: 131; on kinaesthesia and Greek *choreia* see Olsen 2017. Bibliography on kinaesthesia is voluminous and mounting. An excellent starting point is Foster 2011.

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tool, 'reception into dance' is neither inferior nor futile, but simply 'other' to the discursive practices legitimated by scholarly convention. As such, it is immensely liberating, empowering and potentially pathbreaking. At the very least, it stands poised to sound the clarion call for a move beyond the textual paradigm[85] in the way we classicists think of the vagaries of the reception of high-end literary works.

[85] On the importance of including an 'embodied' or 'proprioceptive' dimension in our interaction with Greco-Roman antiquity, see now Slaney 2017.

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