Plato's *Ion* and *poiēsis* as "music-dance and verse"

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Diotima is famously known as the wise woman who taught Socrates about the meaning of love, which is recounted by him in Plato's dialogue the *Symposium*. The title stems from a type of dinner party with wine, conversation and entertainment, and in the portrayed event the men renounce for the evening the entertainment to offer different theories of love. It is still debated whether Diotima was a real person or simply a fictional character, but in any event, her instruction of Socrates gets pride of place, after the other theories. What has been ignored for centuries, even by the female classicists who, we would naturally think, might wish to highlight her intellectual expertise, is how Diotima explains *poiēsis* in the dialogue and how that explanation forces a revision of previous Western artistic theory, especially as it pertains to literature and to performed drama with a chorus.[1]

In previous work, I provide the arguments and textual passages for Plato using *poiēsis* not as "poetry," which according to Noburu Notomi[2] is the meaning that Gorgias coins only about 415 BCE, when Plato was a teen, but as either (i) the broad sense of "making" or "creation" or (ii) the narrow sense of "'music' and verse (*mousikē kai metra*)," as Diotima explains at

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[1] To my knowledge, although I did not name Diotima and only cited the relevant passage in the *Symposium,* I was the first to bring to public attention the importance of her meanings in the context of literary or dramatic theory, in "The *Poetics* of Performance: The Necessity of Performance, Spectacle, Music, and Dance in Aristotelian Tragedy," *Performance and Authenticity in the Arts* (Cambridge Series on Philosophy and the Arts) eds. Salim Kemal and Ivan Gaskell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 1999, pp. 15-48, on p. 41, footnote 11. In 2016, though, I corrected her name's omission with a vengeance both in my 1st edition of *Aristotle on Dramatic Musical Composition: The Real Role of Literature, Catharsis, Music and Dance in the Poetics* (with the better 2nd edition cited below) and in a presentation on Sept. 12, 2016 to the Joint Program in Classics and Ancient Philosophy at the University of Texas Austin, entitled "Diotima and Aristotle's *Poetics*," as described at https://liberalarts.utexas.edu/classics/events/gregory-scott-nyu-diotima-and-aristotle-s-poetics-2

[2] Notomi, Noburu. "Image-Making in Republic X and the Sophist," in *Plato and the Poets*, ed. by P. Destrée and F. Herrmann, and Fritz-Gregor Herrmann (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2011), 299-326. Notomi was anticipated in at least some respects by Bruno Gentili, *Poetry and its Public in Ancient Greece*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1990. As stated in the book's synopsis, Gentili argues that "Greek poetry differs radically from modern forms in its mode of communication: it was designed not for reading but for performance, with musical accompaniment, before an audience," which is exactly the general thrust of the Diotiman meaning of *poiēsis* that I obviously favor and that itself reciprocally provides additional confirmation for Gentili's position. I am grateful to Reviewer #1 for bringing Gentili to my attention.

Symposium 205c.[3] Similarly with Aristotle, although I have argued that he adds "plot" to the Diotiman "narrow" sense, making *poiēsis* a technical term in the Lyceum in his *Dramatics aka Poetics*, all of which dissolves paradoxes never before settled.[4]

Some specialists of the *Dramatics* who are aware of my previous publications do not attempt to rebut my arguments and simply continue to use *poiēsis* as "poetry," and *poiētēs* as "poet," rather than, for the latter term, "maker" (in the broad sense) or "composer" (in the narrow sense), the seemingly authentic two Platonic translations given Diotima's explanation. Very recently, three are Malcolm Heath, Pierre Destrée and Dana Munteanu in *The Poetics in its Aristotelian Context* (2020), and another is Stephen Halliwell in a presentation focusing often on Plato's *Ion,* given in honor of his former colleague at St. Andrews University, Sarah Broadie, after her demise in August 2021.

There is no need to repeat what I have published previously with respect to Heath, Destrée and Munteanu, and I take up related issues in a review of their book (in *Ancient Philosophy* 42, 2022). However, Halliwell's case is different. Perhaps because Broadie had been his colleague and perhaps because during the tribute it became clear that she had sponsored my position as a Visiting Research Fellow at Princeton University in the mid-1990s, he graciously sent a copy of his presentation for Broadie's 2-day tribute, only some of which I could attend. He also very generously replied to my subsequent private queries and comments. Here I examine whether his use of "poetry" in the *Ion* is justified, especially given the discussion of Tynnichus the Chalcidean there. I should emphasize from the start, though, that his

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3 The most rigorous arguments for the importance of Diotima's explanation are given in Gregory L. Scott, *Aristotle on Dramatic Musical Composition: The Real Role of Literature, Catharsis, Music and Dance in the Poetics,* Ed. 2 (New York: ExistencePS Press, 2018), hereafter *ADMC*. *Mousikē* has three different meanings—(i) arts of the Muses, (ii) music or (iii) music-dance, and in my work I contend that often the best option in the Platonic and Aristotelian corpus is the way Plato uses *mousikē* in *Laws* II, 655a, and in *Alcibiades* 108c, as music and dance ("stepping rightly"), not just "music," which is too restricted in scope, and not "the arts of the Muses," which is too broad. Besides, if *poiēsis* is not "music-dance and verse" one will never solve the passage at Plato's *Gorgias* 502, which has confused and despaired renowned scholars (cf. *ADMC* pp. 125-129). Thus, a *poiētēs* is primarily one who, like dramatists, creates with music, dance and verse, unless the word is used in Diotima's broad sense as "maker" or "creator," in which case the context dictates what the person is creating. The "product" might one or more of these three practices, the so-called "means of mimesis" of *Dramatics* 1, or anything else "made." Aristotle uses *mousikē* as "music-dance" in both *Politics* VIII 6 & 7, 1341b15ff, and in *Dramatics* 26, 1462a16, although the passages in the *Politics* requires understanding that he follows Plato's usage of *rhuthmos* as "ordered (body) movement" or "dance" in *Laws* II 665a, and the latter requires an understanding of Aristotle's conception of drama as a fully performed art with a singing and dancing chorus, not the mistaken tradition of drama as mere literature.

For more on the importance of performance, cf. Angela Maria Andrisano (ed.), *Ritmo, parola, immagine: il teatro classico e la sua tradizione. Atti del Convegno Internazionale e Interdottorale (Ferrara, 17-18 dicembre 2009),* in the online journal *Dionysus ex machina*. Palermo: Palumbo Editore, 2011. However, as discussed by Alessandro Iannucci in his review (*Byrn Mawr Classical Review 2013.04.37*, available at https://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2013/2013.04.37/), although music or song is emphasized sometimes over merely spoken language in the drama, which is in line with my own work, the section on *ritmo* by three authors still takes *ritmo* to be a property of music or speech or even of dance (as something like "ordered temporality") rather than as *simply* "ordered body movement" or "dance," the meaning most often for Aristotle and for Plato *in the context of the performing arts* (the use of *rhuthmos* in the *Rhetoric* III 8, 1408b28ff, is different but that is in the context of legal and political speeches; cf. *ADMC*, Chs. 1-2, and especially p. 192). As "dance," *ritmo* cannot be considered, without absurdity, a "property" or "quality" of music or speech. Again, I am obliged to Reviewer #1 for Andrisano's reference.

4 *ADMC*, especially Ch. 2.

presentation "Inspiration and Interpretation: Two Problems in Platonic Poetics"[5] in my opinion is an admirable response to Joyce Carol Oates' criticism of Plato and hopefully will be published soon for the general academic readership.[6] I only address here his habit of continuing to perpetuate the modern conception of *poiēsis* that, at least for Aristotle, goes back to the Arabic scholars in the 9th century, because the *Dramatics* was unknown in both antiquity and the Byzantine era.[7] How long the rendering as "poetry" goes back for Platonic translators I leave to Platonists to determine.

In what follows, I show that the passage on Tynnichus confirms my previous claims, contrary to Halliwell holding that *poiēsis* and its cognates are best rendered "poetry," "poet" and the like, which in modern English indubitably have the Gorgian sense: language (and only language) in meter, that is, verse. That is, I start by providing a standard translation of one passage in the *Ion* that often employs the Gorgian sense of *poiēsis,* then the exchange between Halliwell and myself, and then a re-translation with the Diotiman meanings, leaving it to the reader to judge whether Halliwell or anyone else is justified in using the Gorgian sense. My conclusion will be that if we go through the passage in the *Ion* and the rest of the Platonic corpus, we can usually, if not always, make perfect sense of the texts in any particular instance by invoking one of the senses of Diotima, as determined by the context, without ever using the one by the sophist.

I use the translation by W.R.M. Lamb from the Perseus Project[8] not because it is most up to date, but because it has had, and still has, influence based on its availability to the world without cost and because of its use for decades. Moreover, all newer translations of the *Ion* to my knowledge use "poetry" for *poiēsis*, so choosing another will have no impact on the arguments here.

> [Plato, *Ion* 533e]...the Muse inspires men herself, and then by means of these inspired persons the inspiration spreads to others, and holds them in a connected chain. For all the good epic poets (*te tōn epōn poiētai*) utter all those fine poems (*poiēmata*) not from art (*technē*), but as inspired and possessed, and the good lyric poets (*melopoioi*) likewise; [534a] just as the Corybantian worshippers do not dance when in their senses, so the lyric poets (*melopoioi*) do not indite those fine songs (*melē*) in their senses, but when they have started on the melody (*harmonian*) and rhythm (*rhuthmon*) they begin to be frantic, and it is under possession—as the bacchants are possessed, and not in their senses, when they draw honey and milk from the rivers—that the soul of the lyric poets (*melopoiōn*) does the same thing, by their own report. For the poets (*poiētai*) tell us, I believe,

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5 Online Zoom session in honor of the memory of Sarah Broadie, Nov. 4, 2021, with my additional appreciation to the organizers of the event, Ursula Coope and Barbara Sattler.

6 Joyce Carol Oates, 'Is the Uninspired Life Worth Living?', in *Soul at the White Heat: Inspiration, Obsession and the Writing Life* (New York, 2016), 3-31.

7 Cf. the standard-setting work for the paleography and the manuscript traditions (*Aristotle Poetics: Editio Maior of the Greek Text with Historical Introduction and Philological Commentaries*, Brill: Leiden and Boston, 2012) of Leonardo Tarán and Dimitri Gutas on this point and related issues, although I take exception to a dozen of their claims in *ADMC* (pp. 377, 398, 409, 445-446, 448, 452-453, and 524ff).

8 http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0179

> that the songs (*melē*) they bring us are the sweets they cull from honey-dropping founts [534b] in certain gardens and glades of the Muses—like the bees, and winging the air as these do.
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> And what they tell is true. For a poet (*poiētēs*) is a light and winged and sacred thing, and is unable ever to indite until he has been inspired and put out of his senses, and his mind is no longer in him: every man, whilst he retains possession of that, is powerless to indite a verse or chant an oracle (*adunatos pas poiein anthrōpos estin kai chrēsmōidein*). Seeing then that it is not by art that they compose and utter so many fine things about the deeds of men—[534c] as you do about Homer—but by a divine dispensation, each is able only to compose that to which the Muse has stirred him, this man dithyrambs, another laudatory odes, another dance-songs, another epic or else iambic verse; but each is at fault in any other kind. For not by art do they utter these things, but by divine influence; since, if they had fully learnt by art to speak on one kind of theme, they would know how to speak on all. And for this reason God takes away the mind of these men and uses them as his ministers, just as he does soothsayers and godly seers, [534d] in order that we who hear them may know that it is not they who utter these words of great price, when they are out of their wits, but that it is God himself who speaks (*legōn*) and addresses us through them.
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> A convincing proof of what I say is the case of Tynnichus, the Chalcidian, who had never composed (*epoiēse*) a single poem poem (ποίημα) in his life that could deserve any mention, and then produced the paean which is in everyone's mouth, almost the finest song (*melōn*) we have, simply—as he says himself—"an invention of the Muses." For the god, as it seems to me, [534e] intended him to be a sign to us that we should not waver or doubt that these fine poems (*poiēmata*) are not human or the work of men, but divine and the work of gods; and that the poets (*poiētai*) are merely the interpreters of the gods, according as each is possessed by one of the heavenly powers. To show this forth, the god of set purpose sang (*ēisen*) the finest of songs (*melos*) through the meanest of poets (*poiētou*).

The question for us is not only whether in this whole passage *poiēsis* means "poetry" or rather "('musical') composition," "creation" or the like but whether, as Halliwell reads it, *Tynnichus is a "mere" poet who then creates a fabulous song*. That is, is *poiētēs* a "poet" or rather "creator" (or "maker"), Diotima's broad sense, or "'musical' creator with verse," her narrow sense? After writing to Halliwell that I thought the Diotiman senses were better, he replied (with my numbered brackets for subsequent analysis):

> We can agree that translation raises difficult issues and that [1] 'poet' may not be ideal in all relevant contexts, but [2] nor, to my way of thinking, is 'composer' (which would baffle/mislead modern readers in many places where *poiētēs* is used). And the historical questions are not easy either. [3] You seem to assume that (classical) rhapsodes always sang but this is far from certain: you probably know West's article 'The Singing of Homer'. [4] The *Ion* itself is inconclusive on the point: the verb *legein* ["to say," "to speak"] is used for Ion's recitations at e.g. 535b2 and c6, though [5] Socrates uses *adein* ["to sing"] at 532d8. [6] Certainly one can't simply assert that the gods 'sing' *tout court* when Socrates himself uses *legein* at 534d4. Anyway, it would be a big task to separate out all the relevant strands here and elsewhere. [7] We don't actually disagree that performance, including song, is very important in many places in Greek culture as well as in the text of Plato (though not to the Socrates of *Ion*: his only concern is with the

> semantic content of poetry), but [8] I see no feasible way of replacing 'poet' by 'composer' universally.[9]

[1]
Because a reader might think Plato via Socrates uses synecdoche with *poiētēs* to refer to a song-maker who uses verse along with music, it should be emphasized that the Athenian Stranger (who is reasonably also a stand-in for Plato) in *Laws* II 669d-3 denigrates artists who separate the words from the music, at least in the context of theatrical art.[10] Dropping "music" does an injustice to the sensibilities of the Greeks in general and to Plato in particular: It is one thing for philosophers and, say, epitaph *makers* for tombstones (*poiētēs* in Diotiman's broad sense, assuming that the context is engraving words on stone) to use mere prose or mere verse in their respective domains. It is another to suggest that the artistic Greeks at and before Plato's time preferred linguistic expression over fully musical expression that included language, whether or not in meter. In short, "poet" is never, or almost never, ideal for Plato in the context of ("musical") *performances*. One need only start by looking at the passage from the *Ion* above and notice how many times the so-called "poet" is producing music or song, which hardly accords with our sense of poet; a couple of passages are ambiguous, but more on those below.

[2]
Halliwell correctly writes that simply and mechanically translating *poiētēs* as "composer" in *any and all contexts* would equally mislead. However, Diotima does not require "composer." It is only one of her two senses of the term, and a translator always has the option of using her broad sense, "maker," "creator" or the like.

[3]
Rhapsodes seem to have sung always or often until the time of Plato and Aristotle, at which point sometimes they apparently sang and sometimes they merely declaimed, although whether they played an instrument while reciting is often an open question. Some evidence is given in, for instance, the *Ion*, as we will see below, and in the *Dramatics* 26, when the epic rhapsode for Aristotle is clearly performing with music, although Chapters 23-24 are unclear on whether some music is *necessarily* involved for epic.[11] West's article[12] that Halliwell notes discusses whether citharodes and rhapsodes sang or merely used some form of recitation that was not technically singing in our sense. However, there is no issue about citharodes for West: They "sang the poetry of Homer and others to melodies of their own, accompanying themselves on the cithara, and they looked back to Terpander as the famous exponent of this art (p. 113)."

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9 Private correspondence, November 5th and 29th, and December 6th, 2021.

10 For an in-depth examination of the passage, cf. *ADMC* pp. 119-125.

11 See *ADMC,* pp. 145, 164-167, 176-178, and 281. Shortly before submitting this article for publication, I discovered that Antonio Attisani, an Italian professor of drama and drama theory from the University of Turin, independently argued over 30 years ago, to the dismay of a mentor, that Ion sang and that music, dance, acting and at least dance *qua* gestures were very important to the related theatrical arts for the Greeks and for Plato (*Breve Storia del Teatro*, Milan: BCM Editrice, 1989, esp. pages 23, 28-29, 32-33, 37-39).

12 M.L. West, "The Singing of Homer and the Modes of Early Greek Music," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. 101 (1981), 113-129.

However, arguably West should have better said "they sang *the songs (or lyrics)* of Homer…," unless his implication is that the music *per se* was not preserved, given the lack of musical notation at that period in Greece, and that the citharodes had to devise their own with the preserved words. Moreover, regarding rhapsodes, West concludes: "…Homeric 'singing' was truly singing, in that it was based on definite notes and intervals, but…it was at the same time a stylized form of speech, the rise and fall of the voice being governed by the melodic accent of the words (p. 115)."

Whether Homeric "singing" was always the combination *"at the same time"* of the singing and stylized speech or whether the Homeric singer alternated singing with an ancient form of recitative, just as our own opera singers sometimes alternate the two, using either the dry (*secco*) style or the accompanied (*accompagnato*) or measured recitative (*recitative misurato* or *stromentato*) style, is hard to say. Nevertheless, it is clear that West considers the Homeric epic to be musical *song* and not just plain verse, that is, not just Gorgian "unadorned" speech in meter.

At any rate, whatever the early rhapsodes did, my claim given [1] above is that Plato himself in the context of the theater or performance preferred, and only really cared about, the performers who sang, even though the singing involved words. Those words naturally had interpretations, which was Halliwell's concern in his presentation (and naturally music even without words can always, usually or often have interpretations, too, but that was not Halliwell's concern and is also a topic I leave aside). All of our song-writers, opera composers and musical theater artists express meanings and ideas with their lyrics, but just because we focus at any moment on the words and ideas does not mean the composition came, or comes, in the context of (pure) poetry.

[4]
Is Halliwell right in claiming that the *Ion* is inconclusive on whether the rhapsodes sang? It appears not, or at least not for the reasons he provides. He says "the verb *legein* is used for Ion's recitations at e.g. 535b2 and c6," as if this rules out music being involved. Yet 535b3 has the rhapsode explicitly singing a lay (*haidēs*) of Odysseus and the "saying" of c6 can be synecdochal. That is, if song is the context and we focus on the "saying," that is, the words, as just discussed in [3], do we necessarily imply that music is *not* part of the whole experience? It seems not. Finally, even though Halliwell ignores 535b3, he (wisely) acknowledges another occurrence of the rhapsode explicitly singing at [5].

[6]
Halliwell next says: **"**Certainly one can't simply assert that the gods 'sing' *tout court* when Socrates himself uses *legein* at 534d4." However, Socrates here either refers to gods speaking to the *poiētai* or to the soothsayers (or both). Halliwell assumes the first or third options, but arguably Socrates refers only to the soothsayers, as I cover more below. Let us, however, grant for the moment that Halliwell is correct; nevertheless, the creators *then* address us. There is no necessity that the rhapsode at that point confines himself to speaking. The rhapsode can take the thought and put it to music, that is, can either play an instrument while saying what the god wants him to say or can sing the words. Correspondingly, directors nowadays give instructions to musical composers in plain words; they do not (at least usually) sing the instructions to the composers. The composers then take those instructions and create, not just more words, but music or song. Besides, in the sentences that immediately follow in the passage from the *Ion*, we have the discussion of Tynnichus, of which more shortly also.

[7]
To repeat what Halliwell writes: **"**We don't actually disagree that performance, including song, is very important in many places in Greek culture as well as in the text of Plato (though not to the Socrates of *Ion*: his only concern is with the semantic content of poetry)." I emphatically disagree, however, that Socrates's "only concern is with the semantic context," which the rhapsode seemingly expresses. It may be his primary concern, but in a passage that Halliwell had just cited, 535c, Ion stresses that his eyes are filled with tears and his hair stands on end because of the fear he feels when expressing (and whether the expression is sung or merely declaimed in this immediate context is therefore irrelevant). Indeed, Socrates goes on in 535d to emphasize the feelings the rhapsode has on the crowd, and although the primary source of the feelings may be the content, much may be from the musical element. That is, the *song* as a whole may, with words included, be creating the effects.

Moreover, Halliwell and I strongly disagree on the place of musical performance for Aristotelian "serious drama" (*tragōidia),* which I refuse to translate as "tragedy" because the Northern Greek from Stagira says three times in the *Dramatics* that the play can go from fortune to misfortune *or vice-versa*.[13] Besides, in Chapter 14 the best plays are explicitly those that end happily, like *Cresphontes*, and *not* those like *Oedipus*, which itself is only second-best and which itself obviously ends horribly (*our* notion of "tragedy").[14] In 2003,[15] Halliwell admirably tried to defend Aristotle's appreciation of performance against Sir Oliver Taplin and other classicists who denigrate the Stagirite because he has been read for almost 1000 years as considering only language crucial. Yet, sadly, Halliwell concludes that performance is merely optional for the Stagirite, especially in Chapter 6 in the definition and explanation of *tragōidia*, whereas I argue that performance (and music, dance and spectacle) are absolutely necessary for Aristotle, coming from or included in the essential conditions of the art, and I refute Halliwell's

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13 I am not the only one to recognize that "tragedy" need not be "tragic" for the Northern Greek. Others who explore this distinction are Susan Sauvé Meyer, whom I discuss in this regard but with respect to Plato in *ADMC*, p. 372, ft. 541 (originally presented by her in "Pessimism and Postponement: Comments on André Laks 'Postponing the Laws', unpublished conference presentation, Princeton University Colloquium, Dec. 1996), and Diego Lanza*, La tragedia e il tragico*, in S. Settis (ed.), *I Greci*: *storia, cultura, arte, società* (Torino: Einaudi, 1996) 469-505. Lanza was brought to my welcome attention by Reviewer #1 of this article. Richard Janko also acknowledges that so-called "tragedy" can finish non-tragically for the Stagirite when discussing the happily-ending *Lynceus* in Ch. 11 (*Aristotle: Poetics, with the Tractatus Coisilianus, Reconstruction of Poetics II, and the Fragments of the On Poets*, trans. Richard Janko, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1987) 95. Finally, almost all specialists think that *tragōidia* comes from "song of the goat" or something similar and, to this day, no one has demonstrated how *tragōidia* came to mean "tragedy." Thus, philologically, "serious drama" has as much justification as "tragedy" and arguably more, given just the basic reasons above.

14 Although the argument is summarized in *ADMC*, more of the details are given in my *Aristotle's Favorite Tragedy: Oedipus or Cresphontes?* (New York: ExistencePS Press, 2018, 2nd ed.). There, I reconcile Chapter 14 with Chapter 13, in which *Oedipus* is suggested to be the finest serious drama. For a summary of principles that arise from my publications over 17 years that focus on the *Dramatics*, see: https://epspress.com/ADMCupdates.html#GeneralRemark

15 Stephen Halliwell, "Aristotelianism and anti-Aristotelianism in Attitudes to Theatre," Attitudes to Theatre from Plato to Milton, ed. Elena Theodorakopoulos, Nottingham Classical Literature Studies, Vol. 7 (Bari: Levante Editori, 2003), 57-75.

various points on this issue.[16] One other who contradicts Halliwell on the necessity of spectacle (meaning masks, scenery and costumes) is G.M. Sifakis in "The Misunderstanding of *Opsis* in Aristotle's *Poetics*."[17] For my own generally praiseworthy review of this latter article, but with suggested corrections, see: https://epspress.com/ADMCupdates.html#Sifakis

[8]
Again, Halliwell writes: "I see no feasible way of replacing 'poet' by 'composer' universally." As was briefly noted in [2], this ignores the full Diotiman explanation at *Symposium* 205c: If "composer" (the narrow sense) does not work, use the broader sense of "maker" or "creator." I defy Halliwell or anyone else to find an occurrence in the whole Platonic (or Aristotelian) corpus where "poet" is required or better than one of the two senses of Diotima, *mutatis mutandis*, that is, assuming the words in the surrounding contexts are taken into account and correctly rendered. Hence, for example, "epic poets" (*te tōn epōn poiētai*) in the passage above from the *Ion* 533e could be really using *poiētai* in the Diotiman broad sense—"makers of epic"—although for those wanting to emphasize the musical aspect of epic it could equally well be suggesting the Diotiman narrow sense, "composers of epic." "Poets" is simply unneeded and deceptive.

I then replied to Halliwell with some final thoughts, but he responded by being unwilling (or not having the time) to address them, suggesting he wished to end the exchange by politely saying "We don't disagree about any of the musical facts or values of much Greek poetry (*sic*), but we'll have to agree to disagree about the implications for how to translate the *poein* word family in various contexts." Given the above, I clearly put much more emphasis on the "musical (and dance) facts and values" for the Greeks than Halliwell does.

I present those final thoughts now for the reader to evaluate. Of course, if Halliwell decides to re-engage, I would happily hear his thoughts, just as, to continue on the theme of disagreeing on the *Dramatics*, I was nevertheless very happy to read in *Between Ecstasy and Truth* (2011) his attempted rebuttal of the views of the "Petruševskians," those like myself and Claudio William Veloso who follow M.D. Petruševski in denying that Aristotle himself wrote the infamous word *katharsis* in the definition of serious drama.[18] Halliwell has been the only one of the "Old Guard," the specialists who continue to believe that *katharsis* in Chapter 6 is authentic, who has rigorously tried to rebut my and Veloso's articles in *Oxford Studies in Ancient*

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16 See *ADMC*, pp. 285-289, for the problems with Halliwell's otherwise laudatory attempt to credit the Stagirite with some appreciation of theater and performance.

17 G.M. Sifakis, "The Misunderstanding of *Opsis* in Aristotle's *Poetics*," *Performance in Greek and Roman Theatre,* edited by George W.M. Harrison and Vayos Liapis (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2013), 46-58. A "re-edition," with some corrections and additions (mainly in the endnotes), is available from *Academia.edu*. Another specialist writing on the importance of the visual elements for the Stagirite was introduced to me by Reviewer #1 (and yet again I am grateful to him): Benedetto Marzullo, "Die Visuelle Dimension des Theaters bei Aristoteles," *Philologus*, vol. 124, no. 1, 1980, pp. 189-200. I not recall ever coming across Marzullo's work in the Anglo-American and French secondary literature since I began working in 1986 on the similar topic for the PhD dissertation, and it would have been exactly the kind of article to cite importantly for my own interpretation.

18 Stephen Halliwell, *Between Ecstasy and Truth: Interpretations of Greek Poetics from Homer to Longinus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press) 2011.

Philosophy, respectively from 2003 and 2007.[19] The exchange with Halliwell, whoever is right, has in my view greatly enhanced our understanding of the Northern Greek's view of drama.[20]

My final thoughts to Halliwell were these:

> … look at the example of Tynnichus that immediately follows [your citation of 534d]. Is he a poet or a song-writer, given that he composes "almost the finest song we have"? Consider the anger and outrage when Bob Dylan won the Nobel Prize for Literature for his "poetry." Imagine that 1000 years from now, all his work is lost but a snippet of the Nobel Prize acknowledging him survives. Would those in the future be correct in calling him a poet or a song-writer? It seems to me the latter is what he is, even if the lyrics (a strange use of "lyre" as the source, unless words to the lyre were meant [as they usually are]) are worthy of praise, and one diminishes the extra work or restrictions Dylan had to accept by making sure the words were suitable to the music, something typical poets *per se* do not have to worry about. They only have the rules of poetry (and please don't take this to imply that I thought Dylan was deserving of the prize, considering all the wonderful [pure] poets we have had in the last 50 years).
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> *In other words, are you taking the discussion of Tynnichus to mean that he composed pure poems first and then out of the blue a marvelous song?* It seems to me the much better meaning of the whole passage is that Tynnichus composed many puerile, bland or mediocre songs [= Diotima's "musical compositions"] (*epoiēse poiēma*), proving his *lack* of talent, and then, all of a sudden, *because* the gods chose to inspire him at one point for whatever reason, he composed a marvelous paean (with music *and words*).

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[19] Gregory L. Scott, "Purging the Poetics," *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, Vol. 25, 2003 (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 233-264. Cláudio William Veloso, "Aristotle's *Poetics* without Katharsis, Fear, or Pity," *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, Vol. 33, 2007 (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 255-284.

[20] For those curious where the debate regarding catharsis in the definition of tragedy now stands, taking into account the exchanges between the Petruševskians and the Old Guard, especially Halliwell, see: Marwan Rashed, who denies that the Stagirite could have written the word ("Katharsis versus mimèsis: simulation des émotions et définition aristotélicienne de la tragédie," in *Littérature: Aristote, l'aventure par les concepts*, publ. Larousse, No. 182, June, 2016, 60-77; the additional arguments rebutting Halliwell's *Between Ecstasy and Truth*, by Veloso and Rashed (who wrote the Preface) in Veloso's *Pourquoi la Poétique d'Aristote? DIAGOGE* (Paris: Vrin) 2018; Chapter 6, and especially pp. 393ff, in *ADMC*; and, finally, a summary of the recent issues and history in my *Book Review* of *Pourquoi La Poétique d'Aristote?*, *Ancient Philosophy*, Volume 39, Issue 2, Fall 2019: 498-505. In short, the arguments of Halliwell have been systematically and fully refuted by myself, Veloso and Rashed, and anyone trying to defend the authenticity of catharsis in the definition of "tragedy," if they are concerned with rigor, needs to counter those rebuttals (and I should add that my own has some differences from those by Veloso and Rashed).

For those readers who are still not aware of the revolutionary developments stemming from Petruševski and myself, as seemed to be the case with Reviewer #2 of this article, and who might read the rest of these pages without allowing my arguments a fair hearing, see, e.g., the very favorable Book Review of *ADMC* by Gene Fendt in *Ancient Philosophy*, Volume 39, Issue 1, Spring 2019*:* 248-252. Also, the arguments in the pages now under the reader's gaze do not depend on my publications pertaining to Aristotle, which at last count are supported in various degrees on three continents in at least five languages: *The crux of the argument here is whether the poiētēs Tynnichus is, as Halliwell asserts, a "poet" or, as I contend, a "song-writer."* If the latter, then additional support is given for my previously published theses, since one of my crucial claims is that the Northern Greek inherited Plato-Diotima's meaning of the term *poiētēs* and, for the *Dramatics*, added (a maker also of) plot (*muthos*) to make *poiētēs* and its cognates technical terms in the Lyceum, thereby resolving dilemmas never before solved.

> Also, consider the examples right before Tynnichus, and I use Lamb's translation:
>
> > …by a divine dispensation, each is able only to compose that to which the Muse has stirred him, this man dithyrambs, another laudatory odes, another dance-songs, another epic or else iambic verse;
>
> The first three are clearly musical arts. You admit epic is questionable (and in my view it was transitioning at times, but only at times, to pure recitation or mixed recitation with singing during the late 5th century and 4th century, but I've given the evidence in my *ADMC* 2018 that Plato and Aristotle were predisposed to the musical style) and so the only question is iambic verse.
>
> For your view to hold, it would always have to be pure speech, never done in the context of song, no? Are you really going to champion that view? Or even if it could be argued, which I doubt, that iambs were *always* in pure speech, unmixed with music, why is "poetry" now more appropriate when 3 of the 5 examples are indubitably musical and the 4th debated?

In short, notwithstanding Halliwell's persuasive thoughts on inspiration and interpretation that counter Oates's criticism, there seems to be no good reason for keeping "poetry" for *poiēsis* and "poet" for *poiētēs*. To confirm this, amongst a few other changes, I substitute the Diotiman meanings for the translations of the *poi-* words in Lamb's rendition, and readers can judge for themselves whether the whole passage is more, or at least equally, sensible, preserving in addition the importance of music for the Greeks and for Plato:

> …the Muse inspires men herself, and then by means of these inspired persons the inspiration spreads to others, and holds them in a connected chain. For all the good epic creators (*te tōn epōn poiētai*) utter all those fine compositions (*poiēmata*) not from art, but as inspired and possessed, and the good [choral] musical composers (*melopoioi*) likewise; just as the Corybantian worshippers do not dance when in their senses, so the [choral] composers (*melopoioi*) do not indite those fine songs (*melē*) in their senses, but when they have started on the song (*harmonian*) and dance (*rhuthmon*)[21] they begin to be frantic, and it is under possession—as the bacchants are possessed, and not in their senses, when they draw honey and milk from the rivers—that the soul of the lyric composers does the same thing, by their own report. For the composers (*poiētai*) tell us, I believe, that the *songs* (*melē*) *they bring us* are the sweets they cull from honey-dropping founts in certain gardens and glades of the Muses—like the bees, and winging the air as these do.
>
> And what they tell is true. For a composer (*poiētēs*) is a light and winged and sacred thing, and is unable ever to indite until he has been inspired and put out of his senses, and his mind is no longer in him: every man, whilst he retains possession of that, is powerless to compose or to prophesize oracle (*adunatos pas poiein anthrōpos estin kai chrēsmōidein*). Seeing then that it is not by art that they compose [Lamb's translation] and utter so many fine things about the deeds of men—as you do about Homer—but by a divine dispensation, each is able only to compose [Lamb's translation] that to which the Muse has stirred him, this man dithyrambs, another laudatory odes, another dance-songs, another epic or else iambs (*iambous*); but each is at fault in any other kind. For not by art do they utter these things, but by divine influence; since, if they had fully learnt by art to

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[21] For why *harmonian* and *rhuthmon* are rendered "song and dance," see, e.g., Plato, *Laws* II 665a, and the arguments in *ADMC*, espec. pp. 28-100 and pp. 168ff.

> express on one kind of theme, they would know how to express on all. And for this reason God takes away the mind of these men [the composers] and uses them as his ministers, *just as he does soothsayers and godly seers*, in order that we who hear them [?the composers or soothsayers or both?] may know that it is not they who utter these words of great price, when they are out of their wits, but that it is God himself who speaks (*legōn*) and addresses us through them.
>
> A convincing proof of what I say is the case of Tynnichus, the Chalcidian, who had never composed (*epoiēse*) *a single musical composition* (*poiēma*) *in his life that could deserve any mention*, and then produced the paean which is in everyone's mouth, *almost the finest song* (*melōn*) *we have*, simply—as he says himself—"an invention of the Muses." For the god, as it seems to me, intended him to be a sign to us that we should not waver or doubt that these fine musical compositions (*poiēmata*) are not human or the work of men, but divine and the work of gods; and that the composers (*poiētai*) are merely the interpreters of the gods, according as each is possessed by one of the heavenly powers. *To show this forth, the god of set purpose sang* (*ēisen*) *the finest of songs* (*melos*) *through the meanest of composers* (*poiētou*).

Three final comments: One reason I believe that Halliwell and other translators have been thrown is that they have always assumed *melopoioi* means "musical composers," that *melē* means (only) "songs" and that *rhuthmon* means (only) "rhythm" in this context. Hence, by contrast, *poiētai* would be those who create only with words or verse. Yet, if *rhuthmon* means "ordered (body) movement" or "dance," as at *Laws* II 665a, and if *melē* means "songs (or music) and dances," as it can and as at *Dramatics* 6,[22] synonymous at times with "choral art," especially given that "limbs" is the primary meaning of the term in ancient Greece[23], then "mere" *poiētai* by implicit and understood contrast are those composing only with music and words, *without the dance*.

Second, Lamb is not really justified in translating *adunatos pas poiein anthrōpos estin kai chrēsmōidein* as "every man…is powerless to indite a verse or chant an oracle." "Indite (or start) a verse" seems too complex for the simple *poiein* and misleads because Socrates is not only speaking of the beginning of a creation but the whole creation. Finally, even though *chrēsmōidein* might indeed imply chanting, and might always have implied chanting early on, it at times came to mean simply prophesizing or uttering an oracle. The same phenomenon has occurred with the already mentioned "lyrics": Stemming from words to the lyre, "lyrics" now refers to words in a song, with no suggestion whatsoever that a lyre is still involved.

However, no matter which translation of *chrēsmōidein* we choose, Halliwell's position is undercut for the following reasons. If we grant Lamb's "chant an oracle," then my point from [6] is proven: The gods, as Halliwell has pointed out, at one moment speak (*legōn*) to the soothsayers; but, as Halliwell has ignored, the soothsayers then add a musical component to the human audience by chanting. Indeed, this is confirmed by the final statement in the whole passage: "*To show this forth, the god of set purpose sang* (*ēisen*) *the finest of songs* (*melos*)

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[22] See *ADMC*, pp. 152, ft. 229; 154-159; and 168ff, espec. 203-204. In short, if you try to render the instances of *melos* and the related *melopoiia* in *Dramatics* 6 (during the explanation of the definition of *tragōidia*) as mere "song" or "music," and "song-making" or "music-making," you will never resolve related dilemmas ongoing for hundreds of years. Only "music-dance" and "the making of music-dance" respectively dissolve the paradoxes.

[23] According to the LSJ, which, I note for non-classicists, is the acronym for one of the long-esteemed Greek-English lexicons by Liddell, Scott and Jones, with more recent editing by McKenzie.

through the meanest of composers (*poiētou*)." If we render *chrēsmōidein* instead merely as "prophesize" (or "utter an oracle"), then when Socrates says "for this reason God takes away the mind of these men [the *poiētai*] and uses them as his ministers, just as he does soothsayers and godly seers," it is even more obvious that his point is not one about the mode of the verbal expression, that is, whether the soothsayers speak or chant, but about them also being subject to divine mind-control with *poiētai*. In short, similar to the misunderstood contrast between *melopoioi* and *poiētai*, Lamb misunderstands the contrast between *chrēsmōidein* and *poiein*, the latter of which simply means "to compose" (the whole product here) and not just to *start* to compose.

The third and final comment returns us to the point made in [6] about whether the passage about the gods speaking (*legōn*) should be read as Halliwell reads it, as (i) the gods speaking through *only* the *poiētai*, however one translates the word—or (ii) through both the *poiētai* and the soothsayers—or whether, as Halliwell does not seem to consider, the gods are speaking (iii) through *only* the soothsayers, the closest antecedent. If we take this last option, my points are supported even more. Halliwell seems committed to the position that the soothsayer should be not chanting (an oracle) but merely speaking, because speaking is how the gods communicated with him in taking over his mind, at least in one sentence. The song-makers are not the ones being spoken to in (iii); rather it is only the soothsayers. When it comes to the *poiētai*, they are sung to by the divinities, as just noted in the final sentence in the whole passage: *the god of set purpose sang* (*ēisen*) *the finest of songs* (*melos*) *through the meanest of composers* (*poiētou*). All of this decisively reveals, it seems to me, that "saying" is merely elliptical or synecdochal. In any event, as I started explaining in [6], the gods may at times indeed speak (or convey thoughts through some kind of revelation, with "speak" being only metaphorical) rather than sing to their artistic human agents, but the latter then add music to the speech when they perform for an audience.

To conclude: Plainly, what is being made in the sentences discussing Tynnichus is not just verse but words with music, that is, song. There is not one instance in which "poet" needs to be used in this whole passage from the *Ion*. Similarly, one can go through the rest of the Platonic corpus and render the *poi-* words more correctly, using the Diotiman senses.[24]

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https://cultureteatrali.it/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/CT_31_32_intero.pdf

This document is available at: https://epspress.com/CT/Plato_Ion_English.pdf

[24] We might ask now how the Alterati, a Renaissance group in Florence that is almost unknown in Anglo-American circles and that for a number of decades apparently met mostly in secret and discussed or commented upon the *Dramatics aka Poetics*, interpreted *poiēsis* for Aristotle and perhaps for Plato. Déborah Blocker introduces, or re-introduces, the group in "Shedding light on the readings of Aristotle's *Poetics* developed within the Alterati of Florence (1569–c. 1630)," in *The Reception of Aristotle's Poetics in the Italian Renaissance and Beyond*, ed. Bryan Brazeau, London & New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020, 97-132; treated again in her new book from 2022:
https://www.lesbelleslettres.com/livre/9782251452746/le-principe-de-plaisir

To my knowledge, perhaps the primary reason that the Alterati have been unknown to recent Anglo-American and French commentators of the *Dramatics* of at least the last three generations is that one of the most prestigious specialists of the Italian scholars of the "Poetics" in the Cinquecento, Bernard Weinberg, whom I myself relied upon significantly for my history in *ADMC*, did not publish on them in his well-respected English texts that covered Robortello *et al.* However, as Blocker divulges, Weinberg did produce two articles on the Alterati for Italian journals: An English one in *Italica* 31, no. 4 (1954) and an Italian one in *Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana* 131 (1954), along with other *discorsi* by Alterati members in a 4-volume Italian work in 1970 (for the publication details, see 2020, p. 106, ft. 6).

She reveals how many of the Alterati relied on the translation and commentaries in 1560 and 1573 by Piero Vettori (1499-1585), who "taught Greek at the *Studio Fiorentino* for over forty years" (2020, p. 98). The extensive commentary unearthed by her discovery might illuminate (at least for someone with a stronger grasp of Latin than myself) whether Vettori or the Alterati construed *poiēsis* in the Diotiman or Gorgian-modern sense or in some other manner. For the commentary from 1573, see:
https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k54033940.r=Pietro%20vettori?rk=128756;0