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ON P. OXY. 3705: A CLARIFICATION

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In ZPE 72, 1988, 53-63, Annie Bélis offers a very welcome treatment of P.Oxy. 3705, one of the musical texts published in vol. 53. In my edition of the piece there is no transcription of the music into modern staff notation, and Bélis reasonably enough infers that I did not bother to provide one. In fact, I did, but it was excised by the General Editors at the very last stage of proof because of typographical problems.¹ Attending it, and naturally excised along with it, had been a warning that it was subject to the usual factors of approximation; I had noted in particular that it was "more than ordinarily inadequate in that it fails to distinguish [the two notes] M and Ξ" and had referred the reader to an earlier given diagram (p.48) for a more accurate representation of the pitch relations. The warning was no merely token one; conversion into modern notation can give rise to serious misapprehensions. Both M and Ξ are conventionally rendered as our *c*. And now Bélis, who gives a transcription in which they are so rendered, asserts that they are homophonous ("sont homophones" p.54, "sont homotones, mais notés par deux signes distincts" p.54-55). No doubt in any given instance they could be (at least, in the tonos in question, the hypolydian, where they are both "movable" notes), but they are not so in principle; just as Ξ is further along in the alphabet than M, so it is lower in pitch.² And in any event, since it is not in dispute that M (whether or not homophonous with Ξ) is an inner note of the conjunct tetrachord, while Z (the upper standing-note of the disjunct) is beyond the range of the conjunct, it is still the case, as I stated, that on exclusively hypolydian interpretation a progression such as ZM violates the integrity of the tetrachordal structure.³ The only question is whether we should postulate modulation between kindred tonoi, a musicologically approved phenomenon clearly exemplified by some of the documents, or should posit a practice looser than sanctioned in the treatises. In P.Oxy. 3704, for instance, as I commented there, one has to wonder whether tetrachordal principles are operative at all. In a "melographic" exercise, as Bélis attractively imagines 3705 to be, we might expect greater conformity to standard precepts, but along with ZM and MZ there is also the apparent

¹ It coincided note for note with that now offered by Bélis, p.57, except that I chose not to render the problematical note V (for the precise form of which see the plate in ed.pr.; I hold to my preemptive scepticism of identification as inverse labda, despite Bélis' untroubled acceptance of it).

² If they did have the same pitch, they would be represented the same note (grapheme, letter of the alphabet). That is the case in all tonoi with conjunct nete and disjunct paranete (cf. Nicomachus 11.5), and indeed in some tonoi (but not the (hyper/hypo) lydian) with the notes here in question, viz. conjunct paranete and disjunct trite.

³ If Z were indeed conjunct nete and disjunct paranete, as Bélis says it is (p.55), she would of course be right to comment, "ce 'double emploi' évite de soulever la question" (ibid.); but she is thinking of I, not Z, which is disjunct nete (a tone above conjunct nete). The theoretical objection to ZM in hypolydian is precisely that it does not pass through the common I.

sequence $M\bar{U}P$ to be reckoned with, which flits out of the tetrachord and back again with no standing-note mediation - and there is still that V remaining, at least to my mind, as problematic as ever.

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