Aristotle

On Music Education

from

Politics

1337b23—1338a37
&
1339a11—1342b35

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Introduction

Aristotle’s philosophy of music education as it appears at the end of the Politics is not only a surprisingly thorough conception of music education—which perhaps is not, after all, so surprising considering the author—it is arguably the finest ever formulated given its time and circumstances, which Aristotle tells us we should always consider when making evaluations. In addition to its general excellence, it also provides an argument that serves as the firmest foundation yet articulated for the advocacy of music education, especially in light of research in the fields of psychology and neuroscience. In modern terms, Aristotle argues that training in music produces emotional health and the development of good judgment; further these individuals prove to be better and more responsible members of society. In order fully to understand Aristotle’s thinking in this process, it is necessary to supplement the current text with concepts derived from his Nicomachean Ethics, which appear in the present text in the form of commentary notes and also as an appendix at the end. Considering the obvious need for greater emotional health and improved judgment throughout our society today, it is hoped that this translation and commentary may eventually find readers who will put it to good use, helping to realize the benefits for the individual and society that Aristotle envisioned.

I think that it is necessary for me to provide some justification for presenting a new translation of Aristotle’s passage on music education from the Politics when several already exist. I have two reasons for doing so. First, I want to present a different kind of translation, one by someone whose background also includes an extensive training in music. The other translations are all by classical scholars—though Barker has been extensively involved in the study of Greek music theory—whose “literary” perspective and the lack of a more general music one causes at least some degree of occasional “tone deafness” to the nature of music as a practicing musician knows and experiences it, not as a literary scholar supposes it to be, particularly in regard to the issue of music and emotion.

Anyone who has ever translated anything modern or ancient knows the absolute truth of those warnings like “the translator is a traitor,” and “much is lost in translation.” This is especially so with the ancient languages. Of those with which I have any familiarity—apart from relics like Linear B and the early Italic of the Twelve Tables of Iguvium—I believe that Greek is exceeded in this kind of untranslatability only by biblical Hebrew. Aristotle is a special case, for an understanding of which Barker’s introduction to Aristotle is excellent. It startles most people to learn that all of Aristotle’s polished literary works were lost in antiquity. What remains are only what we might call his lecture notes, and in some cases perhaps only students’ lecture notes of Aristotle. The text does not read like the beautiful, polished, superb and seemingly natural yet artificial prose of Plato. Aristotle wrote for himself as we might take notes for ourselves. Further, they are clearly works in progress—he is still thinking about things and willing to take in further evidence, which would make his teacher Plato proud. This situation, very commendable as an intellectual position does not make for lucid prose, for which reason any translator who wishes to produce a more coherent text, not to say a publishable one, must necessarily provide much intertextual interpretation. I have chosen otherwise.

My desire is the opposite; namely, to strip away from the translation as much interpretation as I possibly can in order to present Aristotle’s text in as nearly its original ambiguity as I can. This not only makes my translation unpublishable commercially but is intended to “force” the reader to come to grips with the text and try mentally to wrest some meaning from it. This is what in both classical and biblical
studies I was taught should be the attitude toward the text at a certain level, to “force” readers to think for themselves. This is not a moral judgment on other entirely legitimate approaches to translation, though I have read many a translation of Greek tragedy that I would not qualify as legitimate, to my own mind at least. I admit, even declare, that no such complete stripping away is entirely possible. I have made only a few notes of a possible many in the text as to how impossible it is not to introduce interpretation in translation even in my rather puritanical approach. Some, even many, things are so culturally embedded as to be impossible to translate, such as I try to exemplify in my note on aretē politikē.

My first reason, thus, is to produce a different (and hopefully more intellectually provocative if also more frustrating) type of translation. My second reason is that I had to. This all began five or six years ago when I began working on a book, still very incomplete, called Learning Music in the West. Shameful to say, it was my first contact with Aristotle’s thoughts on music education. I, like most musicians of my acquaintance in person or print, had basically dismissed Aristotle because of his adherence to the ethical modes. When I read what he actually said, in the form in which he said it, and in the position in which it appears in his argument, I realized that his was the best discussion of a philosophy of music education that I had ever read. Further, as I explored recent research in psychology and neuroscience I discovered that even in the ethical modes Aristotle was not so far “off target” as we have supposed. For this reason I determined someday to write an article “vindicating” his position on music education. I knew from experience in classical studies that I would never be able to undertake such a project without making my own translation—notthing else substitutes, not even my translation for the reader—it is necessary to read it in Aristotle’s own language. I can report that my conviction was fully substantiated and that this process of translation transformed my understanding of the philosopher’s thoughts.

Two concerns arise consistently in dealing with Aristotle’s text. First, it is necessary to be very clear in regard to his terminology. For this reason, when at all possible I have often provided a transliteration of specific Greek terms, almost always in the uninflected lexical form, in the text following the English translation. Since words in all languages possess multiple meanings (even simultaneously), it is not possible to be absolutely consistent in choosing the closest English translation for any given word. For instance, every single translation that I have consulted differs in its reading of the critical line 1139a21. I argue for my own as closest as based on the support of the Nicomachean Ethics (see the appendix). This is the reason for giving the transliteration, so that the reader can evaluate and disagree. For the majority of these critical translations I have provided a glossary at the end, which gives only a limited number of basic meanings.

Second, it is necessary to consider the structure of Aristotle’s argument. Unlike many of Plato’s dialogues, which were intended to wind along with false starts and dead ends for the sake of provoking thought, Aristotle is writing for himself and so constructs a fairly regular structure of inquiry, which is not to say that he does not confront the reader with some difficulties.

An instance of the importance of both semantics and structure involves his discussion of the ethical modes. Aristotle carefully uses two distinct words for music, mousikê, the general term, and melos, the word for song or melody. Translations and discussion of the text do not always observe the difference. Aristotle presents the ethical modes in the context of melos, song, one type of mousikê, but considers mousikê in general, including both instrumental and vocal, as possessing an ethical power.
There is no distinct term for instrumental music; Aristotle merely calls it “bare music.” Further, the whole discussion of the ethical modes is given as an example of their specific use in education, for which purpose Aristotle holds that song is appropriate but not instrumental music because the latter can too easily lead to inappropriate professional technique and bad influences. Thus, the exclusion of instrumental music is on moral and not psychological grounds. In effect, Aristotle might well argue that instrumental should be excluded from early music education for the very reason that it possesses too great a power on the emotions of the type he describes, not too little.

For the reader’s aid I provide as part of this introduction an abbreviated outline of the argument of Aristotle’s philosophy of music education. At the end is also a detailed outline of the text. Since I prepared this translation as preparation for a comparison of some key points of Aristotle’s thought in the light of modern advances in neuroscience and psychology, I also present a brief outline of his educational psychology as compared to modern research, placed after the abbreviated outline. After the text’s outline appears an appendix that is critically important for understanding the central concept of music and psychology as Aristotle proposes. At the very end I give some useful abbreviations and a bibliography.

I use the following signs, some of which are original to the OCT and some are my own.

- <conjectural emendation> This is fairly standard practice.
- [editorial comment or explanation] This is my practice, common practice varies.
- (encloses a transliteration) or (as present in the OCT)
- {an excision of text} This is my own innovation.

**Summary of Aristotle’s Philosophy of Music Education**

I. **Ontology**—Music, μουσική, is a pleasurable activity that exerts an ethical power on the soul, ψυχή, which through habituation is conducive to virtue when acted upon for good.
   a. This benefits the individual.
   b. It further benefits society through the individual as an ἀρετή πολιτική.
   c. Μουσική includes both vocal and instrumental forms.

II. **General psychology**—music alters the soul.
   a. Music produces affects, παθός, conditions in the soul of an ethical, ἦθος, nature.
   b. These mimetic, μίμησις, affects are so similar to real affects that they produce the same character qualities by sympathy, συμπαθής.
   c. Music’s effect can result in habituation, συνεθίζομαι, of these positive affects.
   d. This improves the character and develops good judgment.

III. **Educational psychology**—developmental.
   a. Boys are at an age to require education in music for their character development.
   b. Certain music is suitable and possible for certain ages.

IV. **Who should be educated and why**.
   a. Music education is for boys of the upper class who will become freemen.
   b. It will instill desirable qualities of character, ἦθος, good judgment, and help develop desired virtues.
c. This develops a proper freeman and so is a civic virtue.

d. Thus, music is taught as conducive to civic virtue, ἄρετή πολιτική, as well as to individual improvement.

V. Educational method

a. Boys must learn music through participation.

b. Adults should not perform professionally or for vulgar display, owing, implicitly, to later risks from bad music.

c. Early education is through song, μέλος, because it minimizes the risks of early exposure to bad music, too often associated with but not identical to instrumental music.

d. Professional techniques should not be taught

e. Education should proceed until the boy is able to distinguish good music.

f. Instrumental music is unsuitable for early education because it is associated with professional music, which is too frequently of a bad ethical character.

g. Thus, the aulos and most instruments are unsuitable for education.

VI. Curriculum

a. The materials of instruction should be both suitable as to ethical nature and possible as to level of difficulty.

b. Vocal music, μέλος, (presumably with simple lyre accompaniment) is the subject material of early instruction.

c. Specific modes only are to be taught.

i. The best is Dorian because it is steady and manly.

Aristotle’s Educational Psychology and Modern Analogs

I. General psychology—music alters the soul. [Re-expressed in modern terms—substantial evidence supports]

a. Music produces affects, παθός, conditions in the soul of an ethical, ἦθος, nature. [Ethical in that they improve judgment, promote emotional health and have a positive effect on behavior—substantial evidence supports]

b. These mimetic, μίμησις, affects are so similar to real affects that they produce the same character qualities by sympathy, συμπαθής. [With the correction that the emotions produced by music are not “similar to” but are true, real and valid—substantial evidence supports]

c. Music’s effect can result in habituation, συνεθίζομαι, of these positive affects. [Substantial evidence supports.]

d. This improves the character and develops good judgment. [Current research tends to support]
Then these established subjects of learning, as was said earlier, partake of two characters. There are, I believe, four that are customary in education (paideuô): literacy, gymnastics, music (mousikê) and some say drawing is a fourth: literacy and drawing because they are useful for a livelihood,¹ useful for many things indeed, gymnastics as pertaining to manliness,² but anyone would be quite at a loss as to music (mousikê). Most now surely participate in it for the sake of pleasure, but they originally established it in education (paideia) [30] for the reasons that, as many often say, nature itself seeks not only to be active³ (ascholeô) correctly but also to be able to be at leisure (scholazo) properly, for this [i.e., “properly”] is the one principle of all, and let us speak about it again. If both are necessary [leisure and activity], leisure (scholazo) is preferable to activity (ascholia) and an end, it is necessary to examine [35] the doing of what must constitute leisure (scholazô), it is certainly not playing (paizô), for the purpose of life for us necessarily [then] is play (paidiá). If this is impossible, rather must play (paidiá) be used in activities (ascholia) (for the one who is working requires relaxation (anapausis), and play (paidiá) is for the sake of relaxation (anapausis), but activity (ascoleô) happens [40] with toil and stress). For which reason it is necessary to introduce play (paidiá), taking care for its usefulness, like giving it for the sake of a medicine. This relaxing (anesis) is a kind of movement of the soul and [1338a1] relaxation (anapausis) by means of pleasure (hêdonê). The leisure (scholazô) seems itself to possess pleasure and good-spirits (eudaimonia)⁴ and a happy life. But this is not the case for those [who are] active but for those at leisure. The one who is active is active because of some [5] end that does not yet exist. Good-spirits (eudaimonia) is an end that all consider is not with pain but with pleasure. Certainly still they do not posit this pleasure as the same [for all], but each to his own inclination, and

¹ The sense of “make a living” or “livelihood” is attested as early as Hesiod. Pierre Chantraine, Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque, s.v. “bios,” (Paris: Editions Klincksieck, 1984).
² The Greek word here is andreia, manliness or courage. Kraut translates it as “virtue,” which has the very unfortunate effect of confusing the non-Greek reader’s mind with the critical word aretê, which is a central issue in the text. Music is the only subject of the curriculum that Aristotle connects specifically with developing aretê, though all learning contributes to political virtue.
³ The translation of the Greek word ascholeô gives me the opportunity to raise a general issue of translation that I adhere to throughout. Rackham, for example, translates this word as “to do business,” taking a specific sense of a word whose reference is really much broader, “engage, occupy, be busy” (LSJ s.v.). The active intransitive can be used with the same force as the middle voice and can mean “to be engaged in one’s own business” (Ibid., II, but the entry also says it is not so used in the best Attic), which does not necessarily mean a form of “livelihood.” Had Rackham spelled it “busy-ness” it would have been more nearly correct. I feel that Rackham’s translation cannot help but mislead an English reader to presume that Aristotle means exclusively livelihood. A more nearly correct translation would be something like “to be engaged in one of the various activities of life,” which is obviously an intolerable circumlocution. This is a fairly trivial example, and so a simple one, of the kind of problem that translation, and especially the translation of Greek, presents to the translator and for the reader of the translation. I prefer to leave the translation more general and to that degree less defined (or more ambiguous?) because I feel that it allows a proper freedom to readers to draw their own conclusions.
⁴ Aristotle argues in the Nicomachean Ethics that eudaimonia, happiness, is the ultimate goal of life. It is, though, a philosopher’s idea of happiness that is as far as possible from any kind of idle self-indulgence.
the best man has the best from the most noble causes.\(^5\) So it is apparent that \([10]\) it is necessary even for leisure (scholê) in the course of life (diagôgê) [that we] learn something and be educated (paideuomai), and those lessons (paideuma) and instructions are for the sake of themselves, but those as are necessary for activity are for other things.\(^6\) For this reason also the ancients assigned music (mousikê) in education (paideia), not on the grounds that it is necessary \([15]\) (for it has no such necessity), and not because it is useful (as is literacy for conduct of business\(^7\) (chrêmatismos) and household management and for learning and for many civic (politikos) activities (praxis), and drawing seems useful for good determination of technical matters), nor again as gymnastics for \([20]\) health and strength (for none of these do we see coming about from music (mousikê)). It remains, then, for leisure (scholê) in the course of life (diagôgê), for which very thing do they seem to introduce it, which way of life (diagôgê) they consider to be appropriate to free men (eleutheros), assigning it in this way.\(^8\) On this account Homer said thus:

\[25\] “But him alone it seems good to call to a sumptuous banquet”

Saying that before the others:

“they call the poet”

He says,

“who would give delight to all”

and in other places Odysseus says it is the best way of life (diagôgê), when men are making merry,

“feasting through the hall, \([30]\) sitting in order listening to the poet”

It is clear, then, that it is a type of education (paideia) that must be taught (paideuô) not as useful for sons\(^9\) nor as necessary but as appropriate to a free man (eleutherios) and noble. But is there one\(^10\) in number or more, and what are these and how [to be taught], the discussion of these must be later. For

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\(^5\) This means simply that the higher the character of the individual the higher will be that individual’s concept of pleasure. As an example, a person of lower character would pursue the pleasure of overeating, whereas a person of higher character would prefer to donate food to a food bank for the poor.

\(^6\) In other words, you learn pleasure for its own sake and as an end, but those things necessary for the activities of life are learned not for themselves but for other purposes and ends. Aristotle later takes up this subject of actions pursued for their own or other ends, telos, in a rather confusing passage (1339b25-40), which is explained at that point.

\(^7\) Rackham consistently translates ascholêô and derivatives as “business,” when the term is more general to activities of life (see the glossary). Chrématismos, however, is specifically business as in making money.

\(^8\) Note that Aristotle is explaining why earlier people introduced music into education, as illustrated below in the quotes from Homer. Aristotle does not himself advocate this reason but will propose a much more important one.

\(^9\) The word is huios, son. Education was a matter of individual men wishing to acquire it for their sons. It was a private decision and far, far from being any kind of generally accessible system. Earlier in the Politics Aristotle argues that education must be a public concern, not a matter of individual discretion left to the boys’ fathers, as was actually the case.

\(^10\) This appears to mean “one type of education or more.”
now, so much forward [35] on the path have we come, that we also have some evidence from the ancients [derived] from the established subjects-of-education (paideuma), music (mousikê) makes this clear.

Excerpt Number 2

[1339a11] Previously in our discussion of music11 (mousikê) we left some issues in doubt, but now it seems good to resume and address them in order to be a kind of prelude12 for whatever points anyone decides to state about it [music]. [15] It is not easy either to describe what power (dynamis)13 it has, nor on account of what is it necessary to participate in it, whether that is for amusement (paidiâ) and relaxation (anapausis), such as with sleep and drinking14 (for these in and of themselves are not benefits but pleasures (hédonê) and at the same time put an end to care, as Euripides says, for which reason they categorize it [music] [20] and treat all these the same: sleep, drinking and music (mousikê); and they also place dance among them). Or rather,15 is it necessary to think that music (mousikê) somehow is conducive to virtue (aretê),16 music (mousikê) being able—just like gymnastics develops a quality of the body—to produce some quality-of-character (êthos), accustoming (ethizo) the ability to take pleasure (chairein) [25] correctly, or does it contribute something to pastime (diagôgê),17

11 The original is mousikê, the generic term for music of all types. This becomes an important issue in the course of the argument because Aristotle later specifically and consistently distinguishes mousikê from melos, song or melody.
12 The word is endosimos and a pleasant metaphor for the context because it is the technical term for an introductory passage at the opening of a piece of music whose purpose is to orient the performer and listener to the mode of the music. There is a very similar surviving practice in Middle-eastern and Indian music.
13 To my mind the structure of the argument is not quite clear in the early stages. Here Aristotle considers the power, dynamis, of music, what can it do. Later he will discuss its three possible purposes in education. Since the powers overlap with the purposes in education somewhat, this seems to be the reason that translators and commentators have sometimes not fully succeeded in making these two parts of the argument distinctly clear in their different significances. The situation is somewhat further troubled toward the end of the text when Aristotle introduces another level of purpose for music in addition to education and proposes catharsis, which he then eschews discussing. The confusion has arguably induced a later, mistaken interpolation and reintroduction of “pastime” as a third possibility. This is clarified in the proper place below.
14 The word is methê and means wine or strong drink.
15 Owing to the vital importance of the passage in Aristotle’s philosophy of music education, I have added the highlighting for the ease of the reader in locating the passage. He will follow up on the subject at 1340a5 ff.
16 Music is the only subject of the curriculum that Aristotle connects with virtue, aretê. The translation of the Greek aretê as “virtue” can be very misleading in English because we tend to impute an absolute moral quality to the word and one unfortunately often associated in American culture with sexual conduct. Nothing could be more misleading for understanding the Greek. The Greek communicates a quality of excellence, often as in what makes something suitable for its proper function. For example, the aretê of a knife is sharpness, of a human it is intelligence, etc. The issue that music is conducive to virtue is so important to his philosophy of music education and yet so unclear from the text of the Politics alone that a special Appendix on the subject appears at the end, in which the connection is explained on the grounds of Aristotle’s analysis of virtue in the Nicomachean Ethics, which work is generally accepted as composed prior to the Politics. For Aristotle there are two categories of virtue: moral and intellectual.
17 The choice of the translation of this word, diagôgê, will shift the level of the discourse drastically because it can mean both something so casual as “pastime” or so important as “lifetime” or “way of life.” It appears that Aristotle may be considering the purpose of learning music to be in preparation for adult pastime and so the link to the more serious phronêsis. See the following note.
even to intellectual pursuits\(^{18}\) (\textit{phronēsis})\(^{19}\) (for this third must also be added to the things declared)? For this reason, now, it is necessary not to educate (\textit{paideō}) youths in regard to amusement (\textit{paidiā}), it is not seemly (for those learning do not play (\textit{paizō}), because learning is after pain):\(^{20}\) truly, it is not a suitable pastime (\textit{diagōgē}) for boys, to allow to them [30] at their time of life (for a state of completion does not befit one who is incomplete). But, perhaps it would seem that boys’ zeal for amusement (\textit{paidiā}) is for their sake when they have become adult men. But, if this is the case, for what reason would it be necessary for them to learn,\(^{21}\) but not like the kings of the Persians and [35] Medes who partake of the pleasure and learning by means of others doing it? For surely they must perform better who make this thing their own work (\textit{ergon}) and craft (\textit{technē}) than those who cultivate it for only such a time so long as to learn it. But if it is necessary for them to take the trouble with these things, [40] they would also have to prepare themselves for the business of cooking, but that is nonsense!\(^{22}\) The

\(^{18}\) The word here is \textit{phronēsis}, as mentioned in the previous note. Aristotle has made a very confusing choice in words. \textit{Phronēsis} is a vitally important intellectual virtue in its own right and important in the exercise of all moral virtues. Yet here Aristotle seems not to mean that usage but the simpler sense of intellectual pursuits or philosophy in general. Newman seems to prefer this latter sense but also recognizes that in Aristotle’s thinking music as conductive to virtue does play a part in developing \textit{phronēsis}, Newman, \textit{Politics}, 3, 529. Kraut prefers the simpler understanding, which is plausible, but introduces an interpretation that the process is involved with contemplation of the words, the literary aspect, of the song. I cannot agree with this additional interpretation on the grounds that Aristotle clearly attributes the power of music to all music, not exclusively to song with words, Kraut, \textit{Politics}, 178-179. To my mind this is an instance of the literary scholar’s predilection for non-musical, literary explanations.

\(^{19}\) \textit{Diagōže} and \textit{phronēsis} are to be taken together as the third alternative.

\(^{20}\) I read this passage differently than Kraut (\textit{Politics}, 188), who understands that music in education must be soul and so amusement cannot be the purpose. I read it that music as an amusement is not appropriate for education, which is painful tool. My reading conforms better to Aristotle’s many allusions to music as a pleasure and specifically as a “sweetener” for schoolboys (1340b15-17).

\(^{21}\) Kraut differs from my interpretation of this passage and offers a distinct alternative deserving of examination. He understands the point at issue to be whether music should be a course of instruction supported by the state; as he argues, “The proposal under consideration, then, is that the city should make no special effort to train children musically, but should simply allow their natural attraction to music (1340b16-17) to take its course.” His argument is extensive and must be read in entirety to do it justice. There seems to be, however, a simpler interpretation that is more supportable, that the passage discusses how children should learn music, through practical means or otherwise, presumably through aesthetic (aural) or intellectual appreciation, theoretical speculation on music being quite well advanced at his time. This latter interpretation as to the method of instruction seems supported by the analogies that Aristotle adduces, all of which in one way or another deal with the opposition of actual performance versus aesthetic appreciation: the Medes and Persians appreciate by listening; it is not necessary to cultivate a craft to enjoy it; the Spartans claim (Aristotle is clearly skeptical) to appreciate music without practical experience of it. Finally, Zeus does not perform music because it is low class—Aristotle conveniently forgets Apollo and his lyre! All of these examples deal with actual performance versus passive appreciation. Aristotle then drops the issue (1339b10) promising to return to it. By the present interpretation this does in fact happen (1340b20-35); indeed, Aristotle says that he is resuming the question as to whether boys must learn music by playing and singing, which he answers emphatically that they must. The only plausible earlier passage that Aristotle could be alluding to is this one under present discussion (1339a31-b10).

\(^{22}\) There is no apparent logical connection between music and cooking to the modern mind. Aristotle is probably making the point that there is no more need for a boy (and absolutely implicit is an aristocratic or upper-class boy) to learn to perform music, if it is only for amusement, than there is for him to learn how to cook for himself. Of course, Aristotle ultimately argues that there is a very good reason for boys to learn music and it is not for amusement.
same difficulty obtains also whether it is possible to make characters (êthos) better, for why is it necessary for them to learn these things?  [1339b1] Why not in hearing others correctly and taking pleasure and being able to judge (krinô), as do the Lacedaemonians [Spartans], for they don’t learn it but nevertheless are able to judge correctly, as they say, 23 what is good or not good in songs (melos). 24 The same reasoning also would hold if it [5] [music] is to be used with regard to pleasure and respectable (eleutherios) pastime (diagôgê). Why must they learn it instead of enjoying others practicing (chrômenôn) it? Further, it is possible to examine the assumption we have in regard to the gods, for Zeus himself does not sing and play the cithara according to the poets, 26 and do we not call those such as do this low-class and the activity (prassô) not [10] that of a man except when drunk or behaving childishly (paizô)?

But, perhaps these things must be investigated at a later time. 27 The present inquiry is whether music (mousikê) must not be approved for education (paideia) 28 or is to be, and of the three [possible purposes] in question, what is it able [to do], whether education (paideia) or amusement (paidiâ) or [adult] pastime (diagôgê). 29 It is plausibly assigned to all and seems [15] to participate in all. Now as to amusement (paidiâ), it is for the sake of relaxation (anapausis), and relaxation (anapausis) necessarily is a pleasure, (for it is a medicine for discomfort of labors), and an adult pastime (diagôgê) by a similar argument not only must have some good and also pleasure (hêdonê) (for the sense of well-being (eudaimoneô) is from both these two), [20] and we all say music (mousikê) is among the most pleasant, both instrumental 30 and with singing (melôidia) (at any rate they say Musaeus 31 was “the sweetest among mortals for singing.” For this reason they associate it [music] with gatherings and pastimes (diagôgê) with good reason because it produces good spirits (euphrainô)), so that for this reason would someone suppose it is necessary for the young to be taught (paideuomai). For as many of the pleasures as are harmless, [25] not only are they suitable to the ultimate end (telos) 32 but also are fit for relaxation

23 It is important to note that Aristotle is clearly skeptical of the Spartans’ assertion, particularly because he ultimately does not agree with this line of reasoning.
24 Here Aristotle specifically uses the word melos, song, not mousikê.
25 The word is eleutherion and is virtually cognate with the original sense of the Latin liberalis, “appropriate to a free man.” “Liberal” would be a preferable translation if the modern political senses of liberal could be eliminated, but I feel that they cannot.
26 Conveniently for the sake of argument Aristotle overlooks Apollo and his lyre.
27 This comes in 1340b20-35.
28 This introduces the three purposes of music. Aristotle asks, of the three possible purposes of music, to which does it belong: paideia (education), anapausis (amusement), or pastime for relaxation as adults (diagôgê). He tentatively answers that it appears viable for all three. It is necessary to remember that paideia is much broader than mere education or schooling in English, it refers to the entire upbringing of the child. He then goes about an inquiry leading to the justification of music in paideia on the grounds of ethics, 1340a15.
29 This can read somewhat confusingly. Aristotle is asking—of the uses of music in education, which is its purpose. Is it specifically for education, or for present amusement for the boys, or is it to provide training for the later adult pastime?
30 The word is psilos and means “bare.” As compared with the following “with singing” it can only mean instrumental music. This is a major point for the discussion, that Aristotle refers to both instrumental and vocal music within music, mousikê. It also supports the translation given here of 1340a12-14.
31 A mythical poet.
32 Telos is, of course, a very important term for Aristotle. Further, its possible meanings exceed two full columns in LSJ.
(anapausis). Since seldom does it happen for men that something results in the objective (telos), but very often do they relax (anapauomai) and make use of amusements (paidiá), not so much for something greater than [30] on account of the pleasure only, it would be useful to take a rest in the pleasures of this [music].

But, it turns out that men make amusements (paidiá) an end (telos). Perhaps the end holds a pleasure also, but not the intended one[33], and in seeking after the one they take the [different] other instead of it [the one they sought] because it has some similarity to the end (telos) of their actions (praxis). [35] In this case the end is not desirable on account of anything going to result, and such pleasures are not at all for the sake of what is going to result but for the sake of things that have already happened, such as [relief from] toils and pain. For which reason they seek to bring about the sense of happiness (eudaimonia) by means of these pleasures, [40] as would someone most likely suppose. But concerning participation in music (mousikê), it is not for this alone [i.e., happiness] but also because of its usefulness for relaxation (anapausis), as it would seem. But surely this [i.e., participation in music for relaxation] is to be inquired into, [1340a1] though it [use of music for relaxation] happens sometimes, for its [music’s] nature is more worthy than the use under discussion,34 and it is necessary not only to participate in the common pleasure (koinês hêdonês) from it, the perception of which all possess (for music (mousikê) possesses a pleasure by nature, on account of which [5] its use is beloved to all ages and characters (êthos)); but also35 [it is necessary] to see whether in some way it is conducive to the character (êthos) and on the soul,36 This would be clear if our characters (êthos) become some certain things because of it [music].37 But, surely that we do become some such things is clear by means of many different things, and not least by means of Olympus’ songs (melos),38 [10] for it is generally agreed that these make souls inspired (enthousiastikos), and the inspiration (enthousiasmos)39 of a character (êthos) concerning the soul is an experience (pathos).40 Further, those hearing the representation (mimêsis) all become affected by like

33 In 1339b31-40, a somewhat obscure passage, it appears that Aristotle is referring to happiness, eudaimonia, (cf. line 38) as the intended end that is not achieved, and the end that is achieved is pleasure (hêdonê) resulting from relief.
34 This confirms that Aristotle must be referring to “relaxation” because he considers eudaimonia, “happiness” to be the greatest good and would certainly not refer to it as unworthy.
35 This resumes the thought begun by “it is necessary not only to participate in the common pleasure from it . . . but also . . . . I have highlighted this passage in bold and a larger font to make it easier for the reader to identify for study.
36 The appendix deals extensively in explaining this passage in the light of the Nicomachean Ethics and is imperative for an understanding of Aristotle’s thinking.
37 As alluded to above, this is the point at which Aristotle justifies music in upbringing (paideia) because of its ethical nature, it influences character development
38 Another legendary poet.
39 Enthousiasmos. I have a slight quibble with Barker’s translation of the word as “ecstasy” (p.175). The English term “enthusiastic” would be closest etymologically, but it has become too weak in modern understanding. The difference between enthousiasmos and ekstasis is indicated by their prefixes. The former is an internal process and the latter outward, a distraction. This is clearly reflected in their Greek usages.
40 Pathos. I choose the word “affect” deliberately as a clue to understanding that Aristotle refers to a change of state as a psychological process. See also the Appendix.
experience (sympathês) <apart from the words by means of the rhythms and melodies (melos) themselves>. 41

Since music (mousikê) happens to be one of the pleasures, [15] and virtue (aretê) concerns properly enjoying and both loving and hating, it is obvious that nothing is so necessary to learn and to habituate (synethizomai) as judging correctly and enjoying appropriate characters (êthos) and noble actions (praxis). There exist the closest similarities in the rhythms and melodies (melos) to the true natures of passion and mildness, and further of courage and temperance and [20] all of those things opposite to them, and of the other characters (êthos) 42 (and this is clear from the results, for we change in the soul when we are listening to them). The habituation 43 (ethismos) in similar things of feeling pain and in enjoying is near to having the same manner as to the truth (such as someone who takes pleasure at the image of some visible likeness [25] for no other cause but because of the form itself, it is necessary for him that the sight of this thing itself, of which he sees the image, is pleasant). It happens that among the other senses no likeness produces qualities of character (êthos), for example touch or taste, but a little in visible things [30] (the figures 44 are such but only a little, and all do not share in such a perception alike; further, these are not likenesses of qualities of character (êthos), but rather the

41 Susemihl, prompted by a lacuna in several manuscript sources suggested the emendation that would yield the reading “apart from the words owing to the rhythms and melodies.” In other words, instrumental music produces the affects just as readily as vocal music does. This reinforces the idea that Aristotle has already presented at 1339b20-21. This emendation by Susemihl is not used by Newman, Ross, Rackham, Barker and Kraut, though known by at least all but the last. Newman addresses the passage at fair length without allusion to the emendation of Susemihl, whom he knew personally, and concludes that “Aristotle appears to imply here that the musical imitation of ethical states is possible without the use of rhythm and melody”; and “he now adds this remark in order to guard against the supposition that the effect produced by music . . . is due not to its power of imitating ethical states, but to its accompaniments of melody and rhythm” Newman, Politics, 3, 537. The comment is perspicacious and somewhat similar to my own interpretation, that Aristotle could still have been considering a form of music without melody or rhythm and apart from words, namely the mode (harmonia). Kraut translates the OCT passage as “. . . even apart from the rhythms and melodies of those representations.” The dispute is, however, irrelevant to a degree, for Susemihl’s emendation is consistent with Aristotle’s overall conception of the power of music. Aristides Quintilianus, who seems clearly influenced by Aristotle or his tradition, emphasizes that both instrumental and vocal music have the same effect, Aristides Quintilianus, On Music, ed. and trans. Thomas J. Mathiesen (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 149; Aristides Quintilianus, De Musica, ed. R. P. Winnington-Ingram (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1963), 84 (= section 16, 100, 20).

42 Rackham’s Greek text has a slight difference here that does not substantially alter the sense.

43 Recent neuropsychology has confirmed the validity of habituation, imitation of a desired response alters neural pathways and modifies them so that the response becomes real and natural. A brief account of the phenomenon along with some citations to literature appears in Goleman’s Primal Leadership, 157-158. A massive amount of supporting research and bibliography appears in Juslin and Sloboda, Handbook. The more common term now is “brain plasticity.”

44 Barker takes schêmata here in the possible sense of “dance figures,” (p.175), not a particularly common sense but possible, LSJ s.v. “schêma, 7.” I would be more persuaded did the phrase not occur so clearly in the context of the visual arts and its characteristics described as “figure” and “color,” which on the whole seem far more consistent with visual arts like painting and sculpting than with dance figures. Kraut follows the usual translation of visual “figures” and his commentary depends on it.
figures and colors being generated are symbols (sêmeion)⁴⁵ of qualities of characters (êthos) and these are [35] a superficial impression for the affects.⁴⁶ To be sure, not but it differs to a degree concerning the observation of these [images], for youths are not to look at those of Pauson, but those of Polygnotus and even others among the moral (êthikos) painters and sculptors. Also among melodies (melos) themselves are there imitations (mimêma) of qualities of character (êthos) (and this is clear, for immediately the nature of mode (harmonia) distinguishes so that the listeners [40] differentiate that they do not have the same manner in regard to each of them,⁴⁷ but [they hear] some more plaintively [1340b1] and seriously rather, such as the one called Mixolydian, and to others more mildly contemplative, such as to ones relaxed [i.e., lower], and in between quite calmly to another, such as the Dorian seems to do alone of the modes (harmonia), [5] and the Phrygian inspiring (enthousiastikos).

They state these things well, those who have philosophized about this education (paideia), for they take the evidence of their arguments from the facts themselves).⁴⁸ The same custom holds also in regard to rhythms (for some have a quality of character (êthos) more steady, but others more lively, and of the latter some have more vulgar [10] movements and others more noble). Now, from this it is clear that music (mousikê) is able to produce some such quality of character (êthos) of the soul, and if it can do this, it is clear that it must be introduced and taught (paideuô) to youths.⁴⁹ Instruction in music (mousikê) is fitting [15] for the nature of such an age, for the young willingly tolerate nothing unpleasant because of the time of life, and music (mousikê) is in the nature of a delicacy, and there seems to be a kinship with its modes (harmonia) and rhythms, because of which many of the wise say either that the soul is a harmony (harmonia) or that it has harmony (harmonia).⁵⁰

[20] Whether they must learn singing and playing or not, as earlier the question stood:⁵¹ it must now be said that it [whether it is necessary actually to learn music] is not unknown, indeed, that there is a great difference with respect to becoming certain things, if anyone himself takes part in the activity

⁴⁵ Kraut argues that Aristotle’s meaning is that an artist can depict a person who is in a certain emotional state or suggest it, but that this is not the same as depicting the emotional state itself as is the power of music, Kraut, Politics, 196-197. The argument is persuasive, and Aristotle makes music’s power explicit in 1340b11-12.
⁴⁶ Rackham uses a different reading of the text than that of Ross’s OCT and Sussemihl’s Teubner. I take Aristotle’s use of episêma as an indication of a yet more superficial type of state. This is consistent with Kraut’s understanding.
⁴⁷ In this passage Rackham supplies a more emphatic interpretation of the ethical influence on the listener that Aristotle leaves largely implicit.
⁴⁸ Aristotle’s acceptance of the ethical character of the modes has inappropriately discredited his philosophy of music education in modern times but is being vindicated by recent neuroscience and fMRI [functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging] scanning, in that it is proving that different types of music do, in fact, produce different emotional states or affects.
⁴⁹ In Aristotle’s mind may be his understanding of the intellectual virtue of phronêsis, the ability to make good decisions appropriate to the circumstances and occasion, which is dependent upon long years of accumulated experience. He discusses this in EN1143b11-14; 1142a11-20. By means of music, then, boys can receive some degree of accelerated experience in a controlled environment, thus improving their judgment, as Aristotle says. See also the appendix.
⁵⁰ While “harmony” is the usual English translation of the Greek, a translation closer to the actual Greek meaning would be something like the awkward circumlocution “an integrated set of tuned pitches.”
⁵¹ This seems to be a clear reference back to the subject introduced at 1339a31.
ergon), for it is an impossible or difficult thing to become excellent judges unless taking part in the activity (ergon). At the same time boys must have something to keep them busy, and one must think Archytus’ rattle turns out well, which they give to children, so that in using it they break none of the household furnishings, for it isn’t possible for a boy to be idle. Now, this is fitting for infants of young ages, but the rattle for older youths is education (paideia). Now then, that it is necessary to teach music (mousikê) so as to participate in the activity (ergon) is clear from such evidence, and what is proper and what not proper to the age is not difficult to determine, and to refute those who say that the pursuit is base. In the first place, since for judging a pleasure it is necessary to participate in the activity (ergon), because of which while they are young they ought to participate in the activity (ergon), and when they have become older to discontinue the activity (ergon), in order to be able to judge what is good and enjoy correctly by means of the learning that took place in youth. But, concerning the blame that some level how music (mousikê) makes people base, it is not difficult to refute those by investigating to what extent it is necessary to participate in the activity (ergon) for those being educated (paideuomai) as a civic virtue (aretê politikê), and what kind of melodies (melos) and what kind of rhythms must be practiced, and further, on what kind of instruments the study is to be made, for surely this is likely to differ. In these issues lies the refutation of blame: for nothing prevents that some manners of music (mousikê) fulfill the complaint. It is clear, then, that instruction in it must neither impede later activities (praxis) nor render the body degraded and useless for training for war and civic duty, in regard both to present learning and later usefulness.

This might happen in education (mathêsis) if they were not to work at those things pertaining to competitions, or the extraordinary marvels of performance, which have now come into the competitions and from the contests into education (paideia), and further no such things as those until they would be quite able to enjoy good melodies (melos) and rhythms, and not only the common (type of) music (mousikê), as even some other animals and most slaves and children enjoy. From this it is clear also what kind of

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52 Aristotle switches from the term praxis to ergon, apparently to emphasize a specific kind of activity. Perhaps this is also to avoid the use of the word praxis, which has a special connotation in his concept of virtue, see the appendix. Kraut points out that praxis is used by Aristotle often to allude to activities that reveal character. Kraut, Politics, 207.

53 Aristotle’s consciousness of a developmental aspect of educational philosophy appears several times.

54 This is an important qualification that can slip by the reader’s attention too easily. Aristotle’s position is that one must learn by participation but only up to a point. That point is reached with music of a professional level.

55 Aretê politikê. It is significant that Aristotle’s first purpose in music education is to improve the individual’s character. Like all other education it also takes place in the context of and leads to a civic virtue by benefiting society. In EN all virtues are embraced within political virtue.

56 The following is a kind of non sequitur in sense. What Aristotle means is that the good results would happen so long as the boys do not do the following things. The first impression on the reader might well erroneously be the opposite. He is saying that boys should not practice the virtuous type of professional music, and further, not even cultivate proper music beyond the ability to determine good melodies and rhythms. Commentators have generally felt the need to explain the passage: Newman, Politics, 3, 550-551; Kraut, Politics, 201.

57 Aristotle seems to be drawing a contrast between the simple process of learning (mathêsis) as at the beginning of the sentence and the more culturally embedded paideia.

58 Barker rejects the emendation of mê from OCT and offers a plausible reading. In this case, however, I believe Rackham offers a slightly better reading with mê, with which Kraut concurs. At its best, I believe the intention of the passage suffers from Aristotle’s sketchy style.
instruments are to be used. The aulos must not be introduced into education (paideia), nor any other professional-level instrument, such as the cithara and any other such, [20] but as many as will make good listeners of them, either of music education (mousikê paideia) or another [kind].59 Further still, the aulos is not ethical (êthikos) but rather is passionate,60 so that it must be used for such circumstances suitable for it, among which its service more enables catharsis than for learning.61 Let us add that the opposite happens with it as regards [25] education (paideia), that aulos playing even is an obstacle to using speech. For this reason, those earlier ones did well who rejected its use by boys and respectable (eleutheros) men, even if they made use of it earlier. Having62 achieved greater leisure for learning because of abundance and being more open-minded63 in regard to virtue (aretê), and both before and [30] after the Persians, having become presumptuous because of their achievements, they grasped, making no distinction, but strove after all learning. For this reason, they introduced aulos playing into learning. To be sure, among the Spartans the choregos himself plays the aulos for the chorus, and in Athens it was so the fashion that almost [35] the majority of free citizens (eleutheros) played it, which is clear from the monument that Thrasippus set up when he provided the chorus for Ekphantides, but later came under censure because of the experience with it, being better able to distinguish what tended to be consistent with virtue (aretê) and what was not, likewise also many of the older instruments [40] such as the pektis64 and barbitos65 and those tending toward the pleasure for those hearing them being played, the heptagonon66 and trigonon and [1341b1] sambyke and all those requiring a knowledge of using the hands. Reasonable is the legend told by the ancients concerning the aulos. For it says, indeed, that Athene having discovered the aulos threw it away. Nor was it wrong in saying that because of the disfiguring of the face did the disgusted [5] goddess do it. It is surely more likely because education (paideia) in aulos playing is nothing in regard to intelligence, but we attribute knowledge and skill to Athene. But, since we censure technical education of both instruments and performance [10] (and we state technical skills as regards competitions, for in it the one performing does not pursue the virtue (aretê) for itself, but for the pleasure of the listeners, and that a lowly one. For which reason we determine that performance is not proper to free citizens (eleutheros), but happens to be servile, so they turn out to be base, [15] for bad is the goal toward which they make their purpose. Surely when the auditor is lowly he is wont to alter the music (mousikê) so that the performers who are attending to

59 This is an interesting anticipation of the modern argument that music study improves performance in other subject areas of education.

60 Aristotle’s apparent intention is to distinguish that the aulos produces extreme passion rather than the kind of affects that enhance ethical character traits. Later he introduces catharsis as a purpose of music but does not pursue it, clearly, judging from the present passage, because he finds it inconsistent with learning.

61 Again mathêsis rather than paideia, so the aulos apparently does not even rise to the level of a suitable instructional tool, much less being proper for upbringing.

62 The first of a succession of dangling participles dependent on the following “they grasped.”

63 The word megalopsychos can have positive or negative implications—high-souled or generous versus arrogant. I have chosen an ambiguous term, but I conclude from context that Aristotle is criticizing the attitude, for it is clear that he feels those earlier ones went too far and were presumptuous. What he describes seems analogous to criticism often leveled today at several fields such as science and law—they do something because they can do it without considering whether they should do it.

64 A type of harp.

65 A lyre-like instrument.

66 All three are unidentified.
him does he also make such [bad] and their bodies by means of the movements). 67 There must be further inquiry concerning the modes (harmonia) and rhythms and (in regard to education (paideia) whether all the modes (harmonia) must be used [20] and all the rhythms or must they be distinguished. Then next, for those involved with education (paideia), whether do we set the same distinction, or is some other third [area of relevance] necessary [for inquiry]. Surely since we perceive music (mousikê) by means of the composition of melodies and rhythms, ought not each of these [25] be addressed as to what power it has for education (paideia), and whether music (mousikê) with good melody or good rhythm is to be preferred? Considering, then, all the good things to discuss concerning these, both from some present musicians and those from philosophy, as many as happen to have experience in the education (paideia) of music (mousikê), we will defer the full statement [30] according to each for examination by those wishing [it] from those [authors themselves], but now let us determine in a regular way, stating only their general ideas. 70

Since we accept the distinction of melodies (melos) as some of those in philosophy accept, positing that some are ethical (êthikos), some appropriate for activity (praktikos), and some inspiring (enthousiastikos), 71 [35] and the nature of the mode (harmonia) with respect to each of them is proper to it, they attribute one melody (melos) to one mode and another to another, and we say it is necessary to use music (mousikê) not for one benefit but on account of many (both on account of education (paideia) and catharsis, and what we say catharsis is, for now unexplained, but later we will say more precisely in the subject concerning [40] poetry, 72 and third, both for respite (anesis) in the way-of-life (diagôgê) and relaxation (anapausis) from stress). 73 [1342a1] It is clear that it is necessary to make use of all the modes (harmonia), but the same manner must not be used with all, but [to use] the ethical (êthikos) ones for education (paideia), and those appropriate for activities (praktikos) and those

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67 This implies that performers danced while playing, which is consistent with iconography.
68 Kraut (Politics, 203-206) gives a lengthy discussion of the textual problems of this passage. The effect of Kraut’s thorough discussion effectively leads to two conclusions for the present purpose. First, any decision on the passage is going to depend much upon the individual translator’s interpretation. Second, the issue is not really central to the present purpose, which is concerned solely with education, the coverage of which is satisfied sufficiently by the subsequent text. Aristotle ultimately dismisses other issues to the private study of those who wish to pursue them in other authors.
69 This is a striking change of expression in the word melopoiia.
70 Aristotle in the preceding passage refers to several subjects of study that he considers worthwhile but does not intend to pursue himself. Among the works by other authors to which he alludes may have been the lost work on music education by Aristoxenus, a loss all the more bitter because Aristoxenus was the son of a professional musician and had been trained in music by his father.
71 This is a rather problematic passage on the three types of melodes, which Kraut discusses at length without coming to full conclusions as to the meaning, Kraut, Politics, 206-208.
72 This appears to be a reference to his Poetics, but no discussion of catharsis appears or at least survives in that incomplete work.
73 As alluded to above at 1339b13, Aristotle makes a new distinction here. The previous discussion dealt with three purposes of music—education (proper), play, pastime—but dismissed the latter two as unworthy of consideration. Now he distinguishes three different purposes of music—education, catharsis and pastime (cf. 1341a21-24 and note). Nonetheless, the present text deals only with the purpose of education because he defers discussion of catharsis (probably because he found it unsuitable for education) and does not consider pastime. Newman comments on the problem of this passage surrounding “pastime,” and Kraut considers it to be a later and inappropriate intrusion. The argument is persuasive, and the term adds nothing to the text, apart from further confusion. Newman, Politics, 3, 561-562. Kraut, Politics, 208.
inspiring (enthusiastikos) for listening to others performing. [5] For the affect (pathos) that happens strongly for some souls, this takes place in all, but it differs less in one and more in another, 74 such as pity and fear, and further inspiration (enthusiasmos), for some are capable of being affected by this same movement [i.e., affect of inspiration], and we see them [so moved] by holy song (melos), whenever they use melodies (melos) that [10] empassion (exorgiazousi) the soul, just like undergoing medical treatment and taking a purge. This same thing indeed must those experience when feeling pity and fear and wholly feeling an emotion, and others according to the degree that it befalls each of them, and a catharsis comes for all and a relief [15] together with pleasure. Similarly, melodies (melos) that are appropriate to activity 75 (praktikos) provide a harmless delight for people, because of which those engaging as competitors in spectator music (mousikê) must be allowed to use both such modes (harmonia) and such melodies (melos). Since the spectator is of two kinds, the one is a freeman (eleutheros) and educated (paideuô), but the other is [20] common and composed of the low-class and servants and others such; they must be allowed contests and spectacles and such things for relaxation (anapausis). But, just as their souls are distorted from a natural state, so also are there violations of the modes (harmonia) and [25] and of the melodies (melos) those that are raised and <colored> 76, and it makes the pleasure a thing idiosyncratic in nature for each, on which account to professional contestants must be given the right, in regard to such a listener, to make use of some such type of music (mousikê). But, in respect to education (paideia), as has been said, the ethical (êthikos) [type] of melodies (melos) must be used and the same kind of modes (harmonia). Such is the [30] Dorian, as we said earlier, and it is necessary to accept any other that our colleagues in philosophical pursuits and in education (paideia) of music (mousikê) might think good. Socrates in The Republic does not rightly allow only the Phrygian to remain with the Dorian, especially considering that he rejected [1342b1] the aulos from among the instruments. 77 The Phrygian surely has the same power among the modes (harmonia), which power the aulos has among the instruments, for both produce strong passion and provoke emotions {as composition indicates}. 78 Everything Bacchic and every such movement is in the aulos [5] particularly among the instruments, of the modes (harmonia) it is fitting that these things [instruments] take Phrygian melodies (melos) <as composition indicates>. Such as the dithyramb seems generally agreed to be Phrygian. Those who have knowledge say there are many examples of this, on the other hand, [they say] that Phyloxenus, undertook to make [one] [10] in the Dorian, “The Mysians,” but was not able, but by its nature it fell out and returned again into the Phrygian mode (harmonia). 79 Concerning the Dorian all agree that it is the most steady and especially possesses a manly character

74 In other words, the effect is greater or lesser varying according to the specific individual.
75 Rackham has a different reading of the text here. OCT seems preferable in sense.
76 Both Rackham and Barker accept this variant reading here, which does make more sense in the context than that in OCT, which Kraut follows.
77 The argument is that if Socrates rejected the aulos he should also have rejected the Phrygian mode, being of the same nature as the aulos.
78 Ross in OCT deletes the phrase and replaces it farther down at the end of line 6. Kraut’s translation leaves it in place. I indicate the original position {original} and the replacement <replacement>.
79 It is worth noting, as another of the simpler and more casual instances of interpretation introduced by a translation, that Rackham fairly consistently translates the Greek harmonia (mode) as harmony, which would entirely mislead most English readers of anything but a fairly sophisticated musical background. Though there is some evidence of simultaneous lines in Greek music, there was nothing like modern western harmony.
(êthos). Since we still approve the mean rather than the extreme\textsuperscript{80} \cite{15} and say it ought to be pursued, and that the Dorian has this nature with respect to the other modes (harmonia), it is obvious that Dorian melodies (melos) are more suitable for educating young boys.

Further, \textsuperscript{81} there are two objectives, both the possible and the suitable, and surely each of us must preferably pursue those things that are both possible as well as suitable. \textsuperscript{20} These things are defined for those of certain ages, such as those who become weak over time do not easily sing the high (tense) modes (harmonia), but nature submits the relaxed (low) [modes] to those of that age. On this account some of those concerned with music (mousikê) do well by blaming Socrates for this, namely that he rejected the relaxed modes (harmonia) \textsuperscript{25} for education (paideia) not on account of the power of inebriation, as accepting that they are intoxicating, (for inebriation rather produces Bacchic frenzy) but [because they are] enervated. So one who is reaching the age of an older person must cling to such modes (harmonia) and such melodies (melos). But further still, if there is any such of the modes (harmonia) that is suitable for the age of boys for the sake of being able to possess attractiveness and education (paideia) at the same time, such seems especially of the modes (harmonia) to be the case of the Lydian. It seems clear, then, that these three rules are to be made for education (paideia): the mean, the possible, the suitable.

\textsuperscript{80} A basic tenet of Aristotelian philosophy.
\textsuperscript{81} 1342b17-34, from here to the end is generally considered a later interpolation that is inconsistent with the rest of Aristotle’s text. Newman, Politics, 3, 571-572; Kraut, Politics, 212-213.
Outline

1. The subjects of learning are four (1337b23)
   a. Literacy, gymnastics, music, drawing
   b. Literacy and drawing are useful in life
   c. Gymnastics is for courage
   d. The purpose of music is debatable (b27)

2. The purpose of Music as related to pleasure (b28)
   a. Most participate for pleasure
   b. It is in education because nature says it is necessary (b29)
      i. To be active correctly (b30)
      ii. To be at leisure correctly
   c. If both are necessary, leisure is preferable because it is an end (b33)
   d. Leisure is not play, because that would make play the purpose of life (b35)
   e. Rather, play is for relaxation from activity (b37)
   f. It is like a medicine when properly used (b41)
   g. Relaxation is a movement of the soul by means of pleasure (b42)
   h. Relaxation possesses pleasure, good spirits and happiness, which activity does not produce. [1338a1]
      i. The one who is active is active for some other end (a4)
      j. Each prefers his own pleasure (a7)

3. Why music is in Education (a9)
   a. It is necessary to learn something even for leisure
      i. Such lessons are for their own sake (a12)
      ii. Those for activities are for other ends (a13)
   b. Music is not a necessity (a14)
   c. Music is not useful like other subjects (a15)
   d. Analogy from Homer (a24)
   e. Its purpose is for leisure in life such as is appropriate to free men and noble (a30)
   f. This much is what the ancients held concerning music in education
   g. Whether there is one subject area like this or more is to be studied later (a32)

4. It is difficult to determine: (1339a15)
   a. The 3 powers (dynamis) of music
   b. Why one ought to participate in it
      i. (1) Is it for play and relaxation (paidia, anapausis) (a16)
      ii. (2) Or is it conducive to virtue (aretê) and develops a quality of character, (a21)
          to take pleasure correctly (a24)
      iii. (3) Judgment of music contributes to pastime as adults (diagôgê) (a25) or also
          intellectual pursuits (phronêsis) (a26)

5. Why educate boys in music? (a27)
   a. Not in regard to amusement (paidiá) because learning is painful (a28)
b. For the sake of the amusement it provides later as men (a32)
   i. Then why learn it when it can be obtained from other sources (a33)
c. For the sake of character (a41)
   i. Likewise why necessary to learn instead of obtaining from some other source (a42)
      1. Spartans judge music well without learning it—they say (1339b1)
      2. Same holds true if a pastime (diagôgê) (b5)
         a. Further, the practice of it is low-class for adults (b6)
      3. Aristotle omits a consideration of phronêsís

6. The 3 purposes of music in education (paideia) (b11)
   a. For which of the 3 purposes (b12)
      i. Education in itself (paideia) (b13)
      ii. Amusement (paidiá)
      iii. Pastime (diagôgê) as adults
      iv. Or for all 3, as is plausible and seems correct (b14)

7. Consideration of amusement (paidiâ (b15)
   a. It is for relaxation and relaxation is a pleasure

8. Consideration of pastime (diagôgê), it is also a pleasure—both instrumental and vocal (b17-20)
   a. It produces good spirits—a possible justification for teaching to young (b19)
   b. It is a harmless pleasure that produces relaxation (b25)
   c. It not only fulfills its objective of pleasure but also produces relaxation (b26)
      i. Most often amusement only produces pleasure (b27)
   d. Man makes pleasures an end in themselves (b31)
      i. There is not always a conformity between the intended pleasure and the end intended (b32). He aims at happiness (eudaimonia) but achieves only hêdonê.
   e. People may pursue it for pleasure and relaxation only (b40)

9. Music is valued for more than these two: amusement and pastime (1340a1)

10. The inquiry must examine whether music influences the character and soul (a5). [See the appendix for a detailed discussion of this passage.]

11. Music does influence character, as evidence from: (a7)
   a. Songs of Olympus inspire the soul (a8)
   b. Inspiration of the soul with a character is an affect (a10)
   c. All listening are similarly affected (a12)
   d. This is true of music without words because of the rhythm and melody (a13)

12. Music is a pleasure and is conducive to virtue concerning taking pleasure correctly and loving and hating, etc. (a14)
   a. So it is necessary to learn music to habituate this correct judgment (a16)
   b. The similarity in the nature of rhythm and melody in passion and mildness is close to the true nature of these things (a18)
   c. The habituation in such imitations is close to the true qualities of character (a23)
d. Analogy: someone who takes pleasure in a representation must also take pleasure in the actual thing the representation imitates. (a24)

13. No other sense produces likenesses of qualities of character (a28)
   a. Only the visible but to a small degree (a31)
   b. These are not qualities of character that visible things produce but superficial likenesses (a33)
   c. There are degrees even in this (a35)
      i. Comparison of unethical art by Pauson vs. ethical by Polygnotus (a36)
   d. There are qualities of character among melodies (a38)
      i. Listeners differentiate these (a40)
   e. Those who have written of this are correct, for they take their arguments from facts
      (1340b5)
   f. Rhythm exhibits the same custom of qualities of character (b7)
      i. Presentation of various examples (b8)
   g. Conclusion (b11)
      i. If music is capable of producing qualities of character (b12)
      ii. Then it must be taught to the young (b13)

14. Music is very suitable as instruction for the young (b14)
   a. They tolerate nothing unpleasant (b15)
   b. Music is most pleasant (b16)
   c. There seems to be a kinship with its rhythms and modes (b17)
   d. Allusion to theories of harmony and soul [Pythagoras and Plato] (b18)

15. Further: is it necessary to learn how to sing and play? (b20)
   a. Taking part in the activity makes a great difference (b23)
   b. You cannot be a good critic without taking part in an activity (b24)
   c. Further, boys need something to keep them busy (b25)
   d. Education is the appropriate activity for them at their age (b30)

16. Teaching music by participating in the activity is necessary (b31)
   a. It is not difficult: (b33)
      i. To determine what is appropriate for the age
      ii. To refute those who say it is a base pursuit (b34)
   b. In youth they should participate (b36)
   c. When older they should discontinue participation (b37)
      i. Because they are able to determine what is good (b38)
      ii. And are able to enjoy correctly (b39)
   d. Because they learned the activity when young

17. Refutation of charge that participation in music-making is base (b40)
   a. Depends on extent of participation [NB: This effectively ameliorates 1340b37]
   b. For those studying music as a civic virtue (b42)
   c. And the study of what melodies and rhythms (1341a1)
   d. And on what instruments (a2)
These conditions determine an effective refutation (a3)

18. Conditions placed on music education
   a. Some types of music are deserving of criticism (a4)
   b. Music study must not produce bad effects either present or future (a5)
   c. Must not impede later activities (a5)
   d. Must not make the individual unfit (a6)
      i. For military training (a7)
      ii. For civic responsibilities

19. Restrictions on type of music education (a9)
   a. Students must not study difficult professional technique (a10)
   b. They must study only enough to enjoy good melody and rhythm (a14)
   c. Only certain instruments are suitable (a15)
   d. The aulos is not suitable
   e. The cithara and other professional instruments are not suitable (a19)
   f. The aulos is not an ethical but a passionate instrument for catharsis (a21)
   g. Any instrument may be introduced that makes good pupils (a20)
      i. For music education (a21)
      ii. For any other kind of education
   h. Another reason against the aulos is that playing it prevents speech (a25)

20. Excursus against the aulos (a28)
   a. The aulos was introduced because of undiscriminating desire for knowledge (a28)
   b. Legend of Athene (1341b3)
      i. Indicates it is not suitable for education (b6)
   c. It requires manual skill (b8)
   d. Those who play do not pursue it as a virtue but to please others (b11)
   e. Thus it is servile and base and not proper to free citizens (b12)
   f. Thus performers who emphasize technical skill are lowly (b14)
   g. The auditor who is lowly draws professionals down to low purpose (b16)
   h. Such players then make their music low and base (b17)

21. Examination of modes and rhythms, possible areas of inquiry (b19)
   a. Must all be used or only select ones? (b20)
   b. Should there be distinctions?
   c. The same question pertains to music education (b23)
   d. Since music consists of melody and rhythm, should these also be evaluated for their respective powers?
   e. Which music is better: good melody or good rhythm? (b25)
   f. A full discussion of other authors on the subject is referred to reader’s discretion (b27)

22. Distinction of melodies, different types (b32)
   a. (1) Ethical (b32)
   b. (2) Appropriate for activities (b34)
   c. (3) Inspiriting
23. General purposes of music are:
   i. Education
   ii. Catharsis—discussion deferred
   iii. Respite and pastime

b. These uses together require all the modes

c. All must not be used for education, only the ethical

d. Activity and inspiring use are for listening to performance

e. The affect of each mode has greater or lesser power according to the individual on whom it acts

24. Auditors of performance are of 2 types
   a. Free and educated men
   b. Lower classes

   c. The lower class demand distortions of modes for their pleasure because their souls are distorted
   d. Performance must yield to and provide for this

25. Ethical melodies and modes are for education
   a. Dorian—manly
   b. Not Phrygian—intoxicating effect
   c. Dorian is steady and manly

   d. The Dorian is a mean among the modes
      i. The mean is always desirable
      ii. Dorian melodies are suitable for educating the young

26. Later interpolated passage
   a. Two objectives are
      i. What is possible
      ii. What is suitable
   b. It is best to pursue what is both possible and suitable
      i. These are defined by the age of the individual
      ii. The elderly find tense (high) modes difficult and should use those that are relaxed (low)
      iii. The most suitable for educating boys is he Lydian because it is both attractive and educational
   c. There are 3 rules for education
      i. The Mean
      ii. The Possible
      iii. The Suitable
Appendix: Music & Virtue

It will greatly facilitate the reader’s understanding of Aristotle’s philosophy of music education to provide in advance an explanation of that central connection between virtue, ἀρετή, and music, μουσική, which appears in the Politics in the line “is it necessary to think that music, μουσική, is conducive to virtue, ἀρετή”\(^{82}\) (1339a21-22).\(^{83}\) Aristotle is, at best, allusive on the point, and in fact no real explanation of the issue appears in the Politics. Rather, it is necessary to refer to Aristotle’s major work on ethics and virtue, the Nicomachean Ethics (EN), for an explanation of virtue and then to endeavor as best one can to infer from the discussion of music in the Politics how exactly Aristotle may have viewed their relationship. The problem that EN presents for this process is that it is, like Aristotle’s other works, not a discursive exposition but an ongoing investigation in the form of his own personal notes, so that his ideas on virtue evolve and are refined and reshaped over time, requiring the reader to refer to multiple locations in the text in order to obtain a unified understanding.

The main passages in EN relevant to the present purpose are found in Books 1, 2, 3 and 6. In the former three Aristotle sets out that there are two types of virtue, intellectual and moral, ἠθική, and then pursues an inquiry into moral virtue. Book 6 presents the inquiry into the intellectual characteristics, ἕξις, or virtues, of which prudence, φρόνησις, is most directly relevant to the present purpose. In Book 2, chapter 6 (EN1106b36-1107a2) Aristotle sets out a relatively brief definition of moral virtue, ἀρετή, but it is one laden with other terms that themselves represent complex concepts that render the definition fairly opaque until the reader gradually compiles a greater understanding over the course of subsequent reading. The following paragraph is based on Aristotle’s text (EN1106b36-1107a2) and presents his definition of moral virtue with all relevant complex terms expanded within the original text.\(^{84}\)

“A [moral] virtue, ἀρετή, is a characteristic, ἕξις, [a good and stable state of the soul with respect to passions/experiences, πάθη, that is not present in the soul by nature but is habituated by actions similar to the virtue and that are voluntary\(^{85}\)] characterized by choice, προαίρεσις, [a deliberated, βουλευτός, longing, ὄρεξις, concerning actions, πρᾶξις, and passions, πάθη, that are within our power, of which the reasoning, λόγος, is true and the longing, ὄρεξις, is correct, and both of these pursue the same thing, and which choice, προαίρεσις, is the origin, ἀρχή, of action, πρᾶξις\(^{86}\)] in regard to a mean, μέσοτης [between deficiency and excess\(^{87}\)] with reference to the individual particulars defined by reason, λόγος, such as a prudent person, φρόνιμος, [one who is able to deliberate,

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\(^{82}\) Author’s translation.

\(^{83}\) Newman argues unpersuasively that virtue here refers to education, παιδεία, but none of his citations supports that identification. Further, παιδεία itself stands more in a position analogous to music as an activity that habituates certain characteristics, ἕξις, of virtue, rather than being a virtue itself, which Newman’s own remark in the same passage supports, “... education is commonly connected by Aristotle with the production of moral virtue...” Newman, Politics, 3, 529.

\(^{84}\) All references in the following paragraph are to EN. Expansions are placed within brackets and are all based on other passages of the EN as cited. No expansion represents the present author’s independent interpretation. The text is so encumbered with expansions that I have chosen to give references for the expansions in footnotes rather than internally.

\(^{85}\) EN 1105a32-3; 1103a18-19; 1114b32-1115a3; 1103b21-22.

\(^{86}\) EN 1113a9-11; 1139a23-26; 31-32.

\(^{87}\) EN 1107a6-8, 20-22; 1106b14-17.
βουλευτικός, nobly concerning what is good and advantageous in general in regard to things in his
power that are good and bad and achievable by actions, πράξις, as regards living well with reference to
particular situations\(^{88}\) would determine.

Aristotle provides a brief passage in the *Politics* (1340a5-25) on music and its connection to
virtue, which contains all of the critical factors for understanding that connection in the light of this
expanded definition of virtue from *EN*.

(1340a5)\(^{89}\). . . but also [it is necessary] (6) to see whether in some way it is conducive to the
character (ἡθος) and to the soul. (7) This would be clear if our characters (ἡθος) become some certain
things because of (8) it [music]. But, surely that we do become some such things is clear by means of (9)
many different things, and not least by means of Olympos’ (10) songs (μέλος); for it is generally agreed
that these make souls (11) inspired (ἐνθουσιαστικός), and the inspiration (ἐνθουσιασμός) of a character
(ἡθος), concerning the soul (12) is an experience (πάθος). Further, those hearing the representations
(μίμησις) all become (13) affected by like experience (συμπαθής) <apart from the words by means of
the rhythms and melodies (μέλος) (14) themselves.>\(^{90}\) Since music (μουσική) happens to be one of the
pleasures, (15) and virtue concerns properly enjoying and both loving and hating (16), it is obvious that
nothing is so necessary to learn and to habituate (συνεθίζεσθαι) as (17) judging (κρίνω) correctly and
enjoying appropriate characters (ἡθος), and (18) noble actions. There exist the closest similarities (19)
in the rhythms and melodies (μέλος) to the true natures of passion (ὄργη) (20) and mildness, and further
of courage and temperance and all of (21) those things opposite to them and of the other characters
(ἡθος), (and this is clear from (22) the results (ἔργον), for we change in the soul when we are listening
(23) to them). The habituation (ἐθισμός) in similar things of feeling pain and (24) in enjoying is near to
having the same manner as to the truth (25).

The connection that Aristotle sees between moral virtue and music is through both the concept
of a characteristic, ἕξις, and its development in the soul by habituation and more specifically with the
intellectual virtue of prudence, ψυχὴ, that is gained by experience. One further component, the
intellectual virtue of comprehension, σύνεσις, also seems to contribute, but this is not mentioned in the
above definition of moral virtue. Moral virtue, ἀρετή ἡπειρία, is a characteristic, ἕξις, that is a stable state
of the soul with regard to experiences, πάθος, and actions, πράξις, that is developed by habituation
through performing actions that are like virtuous actions until the virtue is habituated. This is precisely
what Aristotle says of music, it presents the soul with representations of experiences, πάθος, toward
habituation of certain moral characters, ἡθος.

Prudence, ψυχὴ, with reference to the definition in *EN* is a deliberative ability dependent on
experience as regards what is good and advantageous with reference to good and bad actions toward
the end of living well, “toward properly enjoying and loving and hating,” as Aristotle says in the *Politics*

\(^{88}\) *EN* 1140a24-30; 1140b4-6; 1141a24-27; 1141b14-16, 21.

\(^{89}\) Author’s translation.

\(^{90}\) This is a conjectured emendation by Susemihl that is not used by Newman, Ross, Rackham, Barker and Kraut,
though known by at least all but the last. Newman’s comment on the passage is perspicacious and similar to my
own interpretation that Aristotle could still have been considering a form of music without melody or rhythm and
apart from words. Kraut understands the passage much differently. The dispute is, however, irrelevant, for
Susemihl’s emendation is consistent with Aristotle’s overall conception of the power of music. Newman, *Politics*,
3, 537.
Music provides the soul with a mimetic “repertoire” of experiences, πάθος, good and bad, “passion and mildness, courage and temperance,” and their opposites (1340a20-21) toward the development and proper functioning of prudence, ϕρόνησις, that is dependent on long such experience (EN 1142a11-20). Music supplies a kind of accelerated surrogate experience both controlled and safe for young and impressionable boys. Finally, another related intellectual virtue may also play a distinct role, comprehension, σύνεσις, which is the intellectual virtue of decision making. It is concerned with the same things as prudence (EN1143a507), but its function is separate. Prudence is deliberative and directive toward possible actions as to what one must or must not do in regard to an ultimate goal, τέλος, whereas comprehension, σύνεσις, decides, κρίνω, what action to pursue (EN1143a5-12).

In sum, music is conducive to virtue because it supports the habituation in an individual of experiences, πάθος, toward the accumulation of critical experience for deliberating and correctly judging, κρίνω, and so correctly enjoying appropriate moral characters, ἦθος, as developed through its mimetically and sympathetically received experiences, which activity is a virtue, ἄρετή. As Aristotle suggested, music is “conducive to virtue” by means of participating in at least two and probably three of the important underlying foundational factors of moral virtue: the habituation of characteristics, ἕξις; the experience-formed deliberative power of prudence, ϕρόνησις, and the decision-making power of comprehension, σύνεσις. Aristotle’s conception of the power of music in human psychology is precisely what recent advances in neuroscience and psychology are tending to support.
Glossary

Anapauô—make to cease, stop; mid. & pass.—take rest

Anapausis—repose, rest, relaxation, recreation

Anesis—loosening, relaxing, remission, relaxation

Aretê—goodness or excellence of any kind; [that quality that makes something suitable to perform its intended purpose]

Ascholeô—engage, occupy

Ascholia—occupation, business, engagement; want of time or leisure

Chrêmatismos—doing business for one’s own gain, money-making

Diagôgê—passing of life or time, way of life, pastime

Dynamis—in EN Aristotle says it is a capacity for a pathos. In the Politics it seems to be used in the simple meaning of power or ability

Eleutherios—acting like a freeman; free-spirited; fit for a freeman [= Latin, liberalis]

Eleutheros—free, fit for a freeman

Enthousiasmos—inspiration, enthusiasm, frenzy

Enthousiastikos—inspired

Ergon—works, deeds

Êthikos—moral; showing moral character

Ethismos—accustoming, habituation; pl. habits, usages

Ethizô—accustom; pass. be or become accustomed; be used to

Êthos—custom, usage; disposition, character, esp. moral character

Eudaimeô—be prosperous; to be truly happy

Eudaimonìa—prosperity, good fortune, true happiness

Euphrainô—cheer, gladden; pass., enjoy oneself
Harmonia—method of stringing, musical scale, mode

Melôidia—singing, chant; choral song

Melos—song, phrase, strain; music to which a song is set, melody

Mimêma—anything imitated; artistic representation

Mimêsis—imitation, reproduction, representation

Mousikê—any art over which the Muses presided, esp. poetry sung to music. [Aristotle makes clear that his use of the term means both instrumental and vocal music.]

Paideia—rearing of a child, training and teaching, education [This is probably the most difficult of all the terms in this text for English translation. The English word “education” as indicating only formal schooling is wholly inadequate, whereas “upbringing” is closer. German Erziehung is closer to the Greek. The word really means all three elements together “the rearing, training and formal teaching” of a child. The word has also been productive of textual confusion because of its great similarity to another common word in the text, paidia, of such different meaning—play, amusement.]

Paideuma—the subject of instruction

Paideuomai—Mid. & Pass. of paideuô

Paideuô—to bring up or rear a child; train and teach; Pass. part. Educated, trained; Mid. cause to be taught

Paidia—childhood

Paidiá—childish play, pastime, amusement, game

Paizô—play like a child; play an instrument

Pathos—what happens to a person, what one experiences; in regard to the soul and emotion or passion; state, condition

Phronêsis—purpose; thought; judgment; practical wisdom
Politikos—of or relating to citizens; befitting a citizen; civic, civil

Praktikos—fit for or concerned with action, practical

Prassô—to be busy with

Praxis—doing, transaction, business, action, practice. In Aristotle it often is used with the implication of a virtue.

Scholazô—to have or be at leisure; have leisure to do something; have leisure or opportunity for something; devote oneself to someone or thing

Scholê—leisure, rest, time for something; that in which leisure is employed

Sympathês—affected by like feelings, sympathetic; exerting mutual influence

Synethizo—accustom, make customary

Telos—degree of completion, attainment, achievement, end

Abbreviations

LSJ—Liddell, Scott, Jones, A Greek-English Lexicon

OCT—Oxford Classical Texts
Bibliography


