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In broaching the topic of music and torture, one generally has in mind how music or sound has been and continues to be used as a nefarious instrument for inflicting pain. What is rarely considered, however, is the converse case, namely the idea that torture can be used as an instrument of music. Classical antiquity provides what is perhaps the most notorious—and indeed, repulsive—example. It concerns the court of Phalaris, the tyrant who ruled the Sicilian colony of Akragas in the mid-6th century B.C. Diodorus Siculus, who compiled his history around 44 B.C., tells how the sculptor Perilaos presented Phalaris with a peculiar torture device formed in the shape of a large, hollow bull, fashioned out of bronze. According to Diodorus, the beast's nostrils were fitted with "small sounding pipes or reeds" (*Library* 9.19). Perilaos proudly explained to his master that a man could be locked inside the bull and, with a strong fire lit beneath, the victim could be slowly roasted, while the king would derive "pleasure by the groans that pass through the pipes." Thus, the tortured noise of suffering would be transformed into the musical pleasure of a reed concert. Agony would become melodious. The screams of a long, violent death would become the sweet sounds of an improvised air, however sadistic, however perverse. Phalaris, whose reputation for cruelty was legendary, wasted no time in enjoying his new gift: The tyrant immediately had the sculptor locked within the bull, ordered the fire to be kindled, and listened to the extemporaneous performance on the hellish nose-flutes.

Phalaris is frequently accredited with being the first dictator of the ancient world. From his official position in the colonial treasury, he extorted funds to raise a fierce army among the enslaved workers and usurped the throne. Cicero would invent the neologism, *phalarismus*, in order to denote malicious minds motivated by dictatorial plans. According to the *Suda*, Phalaris continued to use the brazen bull to execute suspicious foreigners and personal enemies, until his reign was overthrown by the general Telemachus, who promptly locked the cruel tyrant into the deadly resounding bronze monster. Imitations of Perilaos's musical oven proliferated across the Greek world and served as the preferred method of punishment within the colonies. The basic model would receive some elaborations: more tubing and reeds were fitted to the animal, in order to create a far more complex soundtrack. Later, throughout the Roman Empire, there are reports of such death by roasting, including a few instances in Christian martyrology. St. Eustace is said to have been killed in the bull, under the orders of Hadrian; and St. Antipas, the Bishop of Pergamum, is said to have suffered the same fate under the rule of Domitian.

Should the horrific story of Phalaris and the brazen bull provide anything further than a demonstration of decadent brutality? Does it exemplify anything other than an instructive moral, namely that those who have evil designs often fall prey to their own devices? Lucian, whose fictional account allows Phalaris to exonerate himself in the first-person, emphasizes rather the connection between music and torture. In one tightly coordinated sentence, Perilaos gleefully boasts: "Thus, on the one hand, as [the victim] is being tortured, you will, on the other hand, enjoy the strains of the pipes in the midst of it all." How far should we press this collation of torture and musical performance? How does it relate to Phalaris' dictatorial designs?

Lucian's description of the taurine threnody alludes to an idea prevalent across ancient Greek culture, namely that music must be purchased with great pain and suffering. The opening passage of Hesiod's *Theogony* suggests as much, when "sorrow and grief" is given as the occasion for all song (98 – 103). Scholars of ancient poetics have long recognized how sacrifice motivates the origin of song, an etiology that is maintained by myths concerning the invention of musical instruments from the *kithara* to the *aulos*.

The idea of torture as an instrument of music, exemplified by the brazen bull, seems to open onto notions of sublimation and the creation of new worlds. Innovative sounds create disorientation and reveal that familiar ground has dematerialized. The dictatorial imposition of this deranging acoustic sphere constitutes a threat: individuals who stand before the likes of Phalaris find themselves at the mercy of a world where the cessation of pain may be promised, but only on precise conditions. The torment will end, in other words, only when the prisoner begins to sing.