The Culture of Kitharôidia, now available online for free at the link http://chs.harvard.edu/ wa/pageR?tn=ArticleWrapper&bdc=12&mn=4400, aims at restoring kitharôidia to the pre-eminent cultural place which it enjoyed in ancient times, from the archaic period well into the late imperial age, but which has often been overlooked in modern scholarship as a consequence of the almost complete loss of citharodic texts.

Such an ambitious task, welcome inasmuch as it fills in a major void in Classical studies, is developed through a concise preface (xi-xiv) and four main exegetical parts, followed by plates (555-69), bibliography (571-615) and two indexes, locorum (617-25) and general (627-38), which—although not always as detailed as one would wish, especially when faced with such a rich and long volume—still help the reader to navigate the book.

Part I (Princeps Citharoedus, 3-181) takes Nero's (in)famous citharodic passion as the starting point to illustrate various aspects of kitharôidia, from its glamorous appeal to its professional demands, and from its technicalities to the wide-spread popular favor it enjoyed, which was usefully exploited in the service of political control, strategy and persuasion. Ranging as it does from ancient Greece to the late Roman empire, and considering an unprecedented number of different sources, this section provides the reader with a vivid, learned picture of kitharôidia which accounts for both its performative practice and its socio-cultural implications.

Part II (Anabolê, Prooimion, Nomos, 185-314) is designed to reconstruct the form and content of the citharodic songs: the internal partitions and rules of the nomos and its possible development from a citharistic accompaniment to a given choral song are described, followed by a hypothetical series of subjects which the lost citharodic sagas may have addressed. In this connection, Power pays constant attention to the relationship between kitharôdia and other contemporary ways of performing heroic themes, especially epic rhapsôidia and the Stesichorean tradition, which were already singled out by Burkert as the citharodes' main rivals.

1 For example the footnotes, although rich in detail and textual quotations, are not always accounted for in the Index locorum, while the General index on the one hand features the likes of jazz—undoubtedly a brilliant comparandum for the citharodic habit of inserting extemporaneous, personal elements within the performance of a fixed nomos—but on the other hand omits e.g. triadic structure, although it is mentioned in the book as a clue for choral performance.

2 See Burkert, W. 1987. The Making of Homer in the Sixth Century B.C.: Rhapsodes versus...
Part III (Inventions of Terpander, 317–422) revolves around the figure of Terpander, subjected to an analysis which is presented as different from the one in the still fundamental work by Antonietta Gostoli. Power purports to extract from each source not the truth about a given detail of Terpander’s life and works, but rather “the refractions of deeper and broader ‘cultural truths’ about the performance genre of kitharoidia as a whole” (322), thus relating his survey to analogous research on the diachronic, multi-layered and polysemic reception of ancient poets, their biographic traditions and their poetical fortune. Placed against this background, the double meaning and double goal conveyed by the title attributed to Part III become clearer: the “Inventions of Terpander” taken into account are both the technical, poetic and performative improvements of which Terpander is traditionally deemed πρῶτος εὑρετής—suffice it to mention here the seven-stringed professional kithara—and also the ever-changing perception of these improvements by different ages, peoples and cultural agendas.

The last part (Panathenaic Kitharoidia, 425–554) discusses the Athenian exploitation of the citharodic medium in all its different agonistic displays, both for professional musicians and for aristocrats turned into competitors, and in its complex interlacing with the political upheavals from Peisistratid tyranny to Periclean democracy, the defeat in the Peloponnesian War and the ‘classical renaissance’ promoted by Lycurgus. This chapter ends with a detailed survey of Timotheus’ Persians in relation to an Athenian and a panhellenic performance arena, and of the changing perceptions of Timotheus, from the ultimate rule-breaker to the classic citharode par excellence.

Such a brief summary hardly does justice to the number of issues successfully addressed throughout the book, accurate both in its content and in its editing. Two elements of the argument are particularly persuasive: the methodological angle from which Terpander’s poetic persona is approached (part III) and the exploration of the different perceptions of Timotheus’ works through the ages (part IV sections 11 and 12). Here Power applies to two key figures in the history of kitharôidia a recently established exegetical trend: that is, explaining the reasons behind the differences in the reception of a given poet (or poetic persona) over time. Until now, Terpander and Timotheus have not been subjected to such an analysis, and it is all the more welcome inasmuch as—scantiness of their surviving texts notwithstanding—it successfully enhances our appreciation of the pivotal and long-lasting importance of their work. Both poets (and the poetic traditions associated with their


4 Power uses Homer as his main comparandum (see West, M. 1999. The Invention of Homer, CQ 49, 43–65, and Graziosi, B. 2002. Inventing Homer, (Cambridge)); possibly also worth mentioning would have been the lyrical case of Sappho, see e.g. Yatromanolakis, D. 2007. Sappho in the Making: The Early Reception (Cambridge, Mass.).

5 Only one significant typo stands out, which is the misspelling of Part IV’s title on p. 423 and in the running headers throughout Part IV.