Dear Walter,

We would first like to thank you for the Classics Department’s generous grant to the lyric poets’ mapping project that we have been working on since last spring. We would now like to tell you a little about what we have been working on before asking for your advice.

As Professor Peponi, who is supervising the project, mentioned to you some months ago, the ultimate goal is to create an interactive cartographic and network visualization tool for the Network for the Study of Archaic and Classical Greek Song (<http://greeksong.ruhosting.nl>) that will allow users to understand how travel, communication, and politics create interesting patterns in the history of archaic lyric poetry and performance. These things, as you might imagine, have never been approached this way in the past.

Towards that end, over the summer we worked hard. We gathered our dataset from various sources including two prosopographies of ancient Greek musicians: Stefanis’ *Dionysiakoi technitai* (1988) and Aspiotes’ *Prosopographia musica Graeca* (2006) and created a preliminary version of our imagined tool with CartoDB. This beta version is accessible at <http://polyphemus.stanford.edu>. This fall, we have been working with CESTA through the Humanities+Design Fellows program to consider using their new software, Palladio, for the final product.

Palladio offers several advantages over our beta version: it contains as an integral feature a network visualization mode, it allows users to view timelines and “arctime” plots of poetic travel, and it displays movement in a more attractive manner. It, however, is not a simple solution to our problems: its interface is cryptic for a non-expert, and several features of the visualization are not ideal for our data (e.g. cities are not labeled, and the links between cities, which represent poetic movement, do not have the poets’ names).

We have spoken to Nicole Coleman about some of these issues. She seemed reluctant (or even unwilling—an attitude that other Classics students have experienced as well) to customize Palladio for an individual project, and she suggested that we seek an external source of funding if we did wish to tweak Palladio for our work. Toward that end we are turning to you now for help. Could your intervention help us convince Ms. Coleman of the value of a customized Palladio?

Sincerely,

David Driscoll (head)

Nolan Epstein

Israel McMullin

Stephen Sansom