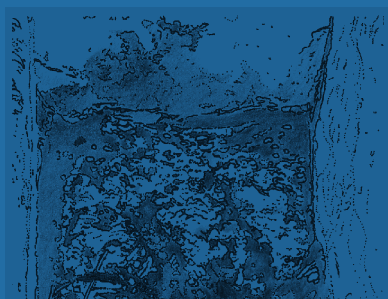


# Music and Politics in the Ancient World

EXPLORING IDENTITY, AGENCY, STABILITY  
AND CHANGE THROUGH THE RECORDS OF  
MUSIC ARCHAEOLOGY



Ricardo Eichmann  
Mark Howell  
Graeme Lawson  
(eds.)



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BERLIN STUDIES OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

MUSIC AND POLITICS is the outcome of an international workshop held in Berlin in June 2011, under the title *Sound, Political Space and Political Condition: Exploring Sounds of Societies under Change*. Focusing on the poetics of emerging music-archaeological narratives, it seeks to test assertions made by writers of the 5th to 3rd centuries BCE that political change is reflected in music. It asks whether politics' footprint might be discerned in surviving records of music and sound – thereby serving as a marker for social and political change. Taking advantage of several distinct yet complementary traditions of criticism which, where they overlap, make up the young and expanding fields of music archaeology and archaeoacoustics, the chapters seek, in a constructive way, to disrupt old ways of visualising the archaeological past. Along the way ancient music is revealed as much more than just a form of entertainment. From a traditional preoccupation with systematics, music archaeology aims to forge a broader theoretical engagement between music studies and the remote past, and to establish music's place within the wider arena of Ancient Studies.





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## Editors' Preface

This book is the outcome of an international workshop held in Berlin in June 2011, under the title *Sound, Political Space and Political Condition: Exploring Sounds of Societies under Change*. One of a series of musicological and music-archaeological contributions to the work of Topoi Area C-III 'Acts', the event took its unusual starting point from a combination of several distinct yet complementary traditions of research which, where they overlap, make up the archaeology of music and its closely allied field, archaeoacoustics. In doing so it found inspiration in recent conversations of an interdisciplinary nature involving colleagues from across the humanities, the natural and life sciences, whilst at the same time drawing strength from a deepening sense of community and shared purpose in this young and expanding field of scientific-artistic endeavour.

The decision to hold a workshop on such an ambitious theme arose partly in response to a perceived need to situate music archaeology more firmly within Ancient Studies as it moves forward from traditional descriptive and systematic preoccupations (the concerns of the historical musicologist and culture historian) to forge a broader theoretical engagement with the remote past. In this gradual transformation from introspection to scientific discipline, music archaeology finds fruitful resonances within the etiologies of our biological and cultural origins as humans, with the epistemology of ancient knowledge and with the neurological and psychological bases of human senses and behaviour as they change or persist through archaeological time.

Part of our purpose in convening the meeting was to explore the poetics of emerging music-archaeological narratives, not only in a metaphorical sense but in some cases literally so. Its advertised theme was to be 'acoustical preferences, soundscapes and public expressions of music in past and present societies', with special reference to the ways in which musical tastes might be subject to change in changing social, economic and political circumstances. Our stated aim was to explore and test the proposition that such

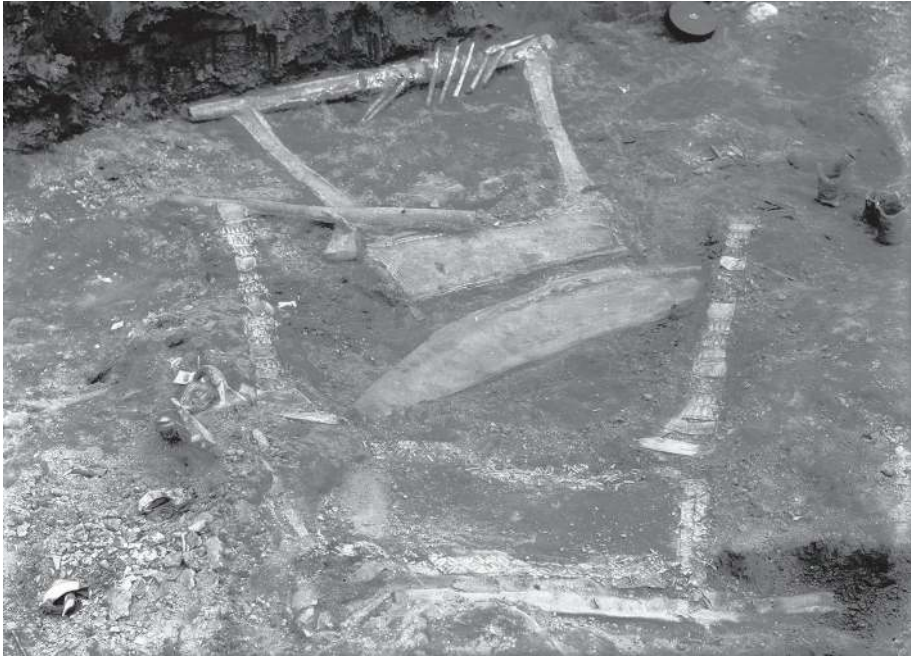


Fig. 1 Music and political power in the third millennium BCE: remains of lyres *in situ* within the 'Great Death Pit' PG1237 of the Royal Cemetery of Ur (modern Tell el-Muqayyar, southern Iraq). Upper – the 'Silver Lyre'; middle – body of a harp; lower – the 'Golden Lyre.' Excavated by Leonard Woolley in 1929. Early Dynastic, ca. 2500 BCE. Scale: the yoke (or cross-bar) of the smaller 'Silver Lyre' is ca. 1 m in length.

change might be identified in past records of music and sound, including those of archaeology, art and literature, and that the acoustical transformations which they embody could in turn serve as markers for a society's political condition.

Such correlation was first mooted by philosophers writing in Greece during the 5th and 4th centuries BC, most notably by Damon and Plato, and by Lü Buwei in China in the 3rd. As we shall see in the pages that follow, Lü asserts that the musical preferences which states exhibit can betray their political health and, by implication, may foretell their political fate. Today the evidence with which to test and explore such curious notions is to be found in portrayals of musics in ancient art and literature, as well as in archaeological relics of musical instruments and in ancient acoustical spaces which together form the life-blood of music archaeology and archaeoacoustics.

For those familiar with this series, Exzellenzcluster 264 Topoi needs little introduction. Nevertheless, a brief resumé may be in order for the general reader, insofar as Topoi has inspired and helped shape the present volume. The principal function of the Cluster has been to bring together scholars in Berlin in a new and profoundly interdisciplinary approach to considerations of knowledge in the ancient past, with particular emphasis



Fig. 2 Emblems of power and tradition in times of political change: the site and environs of the Tintignac (Limousin) deposit of trumpets and regalia, with the excavation in progress. Central France, Gallo-Roman: between the beginning of La Tène D2 (ca. 80 BCE) and the accession of Augustus (Roman emperor 27 BCE to 14 CE).

on spatial issues in archaeology, ancient history and ancient geography. Divided into a number of Research Areas, in 2011 the principal objective of Area C was to explore the perception and representation of spaces of all kinds in ancient cultures, with a view to better understanding ‘how spaces, spatial relations, movements and directions are perceived and imagined, how they are represented in various media, and to what extent spatial perception, experience and representation affect the knowledge of spaces.’ Both across Topoi and within the specific sub-framework of Area C-III ‘Acts’, the Research Group ‘Musikarchäologie’ has played a significant part, contributing a number of published reports and articles, a seminar series ‘Listening to the Past’, and culminating in the content and interactive design of ‘Klangräume’: three galleries on ancient sound and music within the public exhibition *Jenseits des Horizonts* which opened at the Pergamon Museum, Berlin, on 21st June 2012.<sup>1</sup> There it was possible to present not only reconstructed ancient musical instruments but also early music notations, two resources which together provide us with an idea of how ancient music may have sounded in a

<sup>1</sup> Lawson 2012; Kubatzki 2016; Martin and Eichmann 2012.



Fig. 3 The Tintignac (Limousin) deposit of trumpets and regalia in situ, showing sections of conical bronze tubing and the characteristic curved forms of the animal-headed trumpet 'bells'. Scale: 20 cm.

range of cultural, political and environmental settings. The workshop and the exhibition went on to exert a strong influence on the programme of the 9th Symposium of the International Study Group on Music Archaeology, which was held in Berlin in 2014<sup>2</sup> and on a volume about the various functions of music in antiquity.<sup>3</sup>

The design of the present volume, in particular the ordering of the chapters, is meant to give an impression of randomness that we feel is apropos, given our subject. We have chosen to avoid sorting by geographical, temporal, or otherwise standard, categories, preferring to randomize our sequence as far as possible, much as debris appears randomly scattered after a storm. This has not been an accidental or casual decision. The aftermath of change is often chaotic and made to appear inevitable, and becomes ordered only later when its shapes are accepted as the norm, a notion Walter Benjamin refers to as the *dialectic image*: “the historical object reveals itself to a present day uniquely capable of recognizing it”<sup>4</sup> We would say that just as historical objects viewed as montage provided Benjamin with his evidence for the ‘dialectic image,’ our random process summons dialectic sounds: those created in the past but divined now. Above all, with our focus firmly on sonic histories, we wish to take this opportunity to upend and, in a

2 Eichmann, Koch and Fang 2016.

4 Eiland and Jennings 2014, 289.

3 Eichmann and Koch 2015.

constructive way, disrupt old ways of archaeological thinking, particularly those epitomized by a Euro-centric reliance on the visual.

Our editorial policy throughout has been to foster and serve the interests of interdisciplinarity, in this most interdisciplinary of fields. This has meant that from time to time we have judged it necessary to include rubrics and explanations which may appear gratuitous, even irksome, to readers from the discipline whose viewpoint an individual contribution particularly represents. We make no apology for this. Expressions whose meanings may seem self-evident within one scientific literature may still mystify the expert reader from another, and several disciplinary boundaries criss-cross our subject. Nevertheless we ask the contributor and reader alike to kindly indulge us, or at least to ignore us, if at any time we seem to be stating the obvious. Our watch-word has at all times been *clarity*.

As the organizers of the original workshop, it is our pleasure to record our grateful thanks to Topoi for funding the meeting; to the German Archaeological Institute for hosting it; to Claudia Niel and colleagues in the Orientabteilung, DAI, for their help in its development and execution; and to Jana Kubatzki and Olga Sutkowska for their time and invaluable support during the meeting itself. It is much appreciated. In our editorial capacity we also wish to express our particular thanks to Gisela Eberhardt for her encouragement and advice in the final phases and express our gratitude to Nina Kraus and Joselin Düsenberg for their tireless work in steering the script towards the printed page. Then there are the individual contributors, to whom we are indebted both for attending the meeting and for their patience and good humour as we endeavoured to bring the volume together; and to Marc van der Linden for his work in translation for the meeting. During the course of development we benefitted more generally from the advice and support of Ortwin Dally, Friederike Fless, Mark and Florentina Geller, Klaus Geus, Elke Kaiser, Lars-Christian Koch, Hauke Ziemssen: to these we send our warmest thanks. Indeed we are indebted to all the friends and colleagues who have made Topoi, DAI and Freie Universität Berlin such a hospitable and supportive environment for this study.<sup>5</sup> Distinguished guests who attended and took part in discussions both during the meeting and afterwards included Ellen Hickmann and Lars Koch, Thomas Götzelt and Susanna Rühling. Graeme Lawson and Mark Howell wish to extend their particular thanks to TOPOI for the Senior Fellowships which they held between 2009 and 2012, and to the German Archaeological Institute for the Visiting Scholarships awarded during the same period.

Publication of this volume will by no means mark the first time that music and poetry and politics have been explored together under the same banner: political pa-

<sup>5</sup> Of particular relevance here are the programmes of Areas B-I-2 ('Fuzzy Borders'), B-II ('The Penetration

and Organization of Spaces') and B-II-1 ('Political Governance and Governed Spaces').

tronage and engagement amongst poets and musicians are themes that are as familiar to the literary critic<sup>6</sup> as they are to the ethnomusicologist.<sup>7</sup> But it is we believe the first time that anyone has ventured to draw music, archaeology and political behaviours together in this way;<sup>8</sup> and we hope that in doing so we will have helped open a door to new perspectives in archaeology and ancient studies: in particular, through an awareness of music archaeology's unique potential for communing with a neglected but important component of both written and unwritten history, its sonic environment. We must leave it to others to judge how successful we have been. But we hope that the outcome will prove as thought-provoking to the general reader as it has been fascinating – and challenging – for us.

Graeme Lawson, McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, Cambridge

Mark Howell, Winterville Mounds, Greenville, Mississippi

Ricardo Eichmann, Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Orient-Abteilung, Berlin

6 Of examples cited in the following chapters see especially Godman 1987 and George 1992, amongst many commentators on panegyrist; also Lawson, this volume.

7 See Monson 1999; Gerstin 1998; also Both, this vol-

ume; Howell, this volume.

8 For archaeological studies of the politics of identity see variously Kane 2003; Díaz-Andreu et al. 2005; Pohl and Mehofer 2010.

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archéologique de Tintignac (Naves, Corrèze, France). Fouille: Christophe Maniquet, Inrap; photo: Patrick Ernaux, Inrap.



Ricardo Eichmann, Mark Howell, Graeme Lawson

# Introduction: Music, Social Identity, Political Cohesion

## Summary

Between the 5th and 1st centuries BCE political theorists in China and Europe saw in music a useful gauge of the political character and condition of peoples and their rulers. Although their ideas lacked a scientific basis, written and archaeological records today place music and its allied forms in frequent proximity to power and its projection, informing identity, self-image, reputation and status: from household to state, in conquest and control, in resistance and rebellion, in jurisprudence, diplomacy and mediation. A *prima facie* case thus emerges for the notion that they have indeed something fresh to tell us about power relationships, ideology and political change in the ancient world, and may usefully serve as proxies for political agency in milieux that fall 'beyond the texts'.

Keywords: music archaeology; politics; status; agency; change; multidisciplinary; methodology; new approaches

Zwischen dem 5. und 1. Jhd. v. Chr. betrachteten politische Theoretiker in China und Europa Musik als nützlichen Maßstab für den politischen Charakter und Zustand von Gesellschaften und ihren Machthabern. Auch wenn ihre Ansichten keiner wissenschaftlichen Basis entsprangen, können schriftliche Überlieferungen und archäologische Quellen heute herangezogen werden, um Musik und damit zusammenhängende kulturelle Äußerungen im Umfeld der Macht und ihren unmittelbaren Einflussbereichen zu verorten. Sie können so über Identität, Selbstverständnis, Ansehen und Status informieren: vom Haushalt über den Staat, bei Eroberungen und Machtausübung, im Fall von Widerständen und Rebellionen sowie in der Rechtsprechung, Diplomatie und Schlichtung. Allem Anschein nach können diese Quellen in der Tat etwas Neues über Machtbeziehungen, Ideologie und politischen Wandel in der antiken Welt vermitteln. Sie dienen zudem als indirekter Indikator für politische *agency* in schriftlosem Umfeld.

Keywords: Musikarchäologie; Politik; Status; *agency*; Wandel; multidisziplinär; Methodologie; neue Ansätze

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It is a general rule that music is affected both by government and by custom. As regimes and customs establish themselves, music adapts to serve them. Consequently, in any state which follows the Dao, if we can but observe its musical customs we can appreciate the manner of its government and thus the character of its ruler.

Lü Buwei (merchant, minister, political philosopher)  
*Lüshi chunqiu* 吕氏春秋 Book V, Chapter 4, 4  
 Qin China, 2nd half of the 3rd century BCE

With this passage, and others like it, from his political manual *Spring and Autumn*, written in the second half of the 3rd century BCE, Chinese writer Lü Buwei provides the challenge which this volume sets out to address and which framed the terms of the conference on which it is largely based.<sup>1</sup> As the archaeological record of music continues its almost exponential growth today, not least in China,<sup>2</sup> its increasing diversity naturally adds to the intrinsic interest of ancient musical phenomena, revealing much that we did not already know about music's mechanisms, its contexts and functions, as well as correcting some long-held beliefs and assumptions about its origins and development.<sup>3</sup> Modern multi-disciplinary approaches, combining the skills of the anthropologist, the musicologist, the philologist and the art historian, permit developments in theory and interpretation as well as the continuation of more traditional endeavours, such as the practical exploration of ancient sounds, musics and their milieux. But the tantalizing question also arises: might the new evidence that emerges here also have a wider application? Might it raise the prospect of fresh ways of approaching some of the broader concerns of Ancient Studies? Might its wealth of technical detail offer us additional tools with which to probe and interrogate cultural behaviours of different kinds, in which music is closely implicated? Already music's archaeology has begun to contribute to conversations about the nature of ancient language and communication, knowledge and tradition, intention and design, religious belief and practice. Today, taking our cue from Lü Buwei, we ask with no less ambition: might they not also inform our understanding of the governance, political condition and economic character of ancient polities and institutions?

- 1 *Lüshi Chunqiu* (or *Lu-shih ch'un ch'iu*, 吕氏春秋), V, 4.4; VI, 3.5. For an alternative and fuller translation see Knoblock and Riegel 2000, 144–145, 162–163.
- 2 See for example Falkenhausen 1993; Falkenhausen 2000; Fang 2010; Fang 2014; Fang 2016; Lawergren 2004; Lawergren 2006; Wang 2014; Yang 2014; Yang 2016.
- 3 See most recently Eichmann, Fang and Koch 2012;

Eichmann, Fang and Koch 2014; Eichmann, Koch and Fang 2016; Eichmann and Koch 2015; Emerit 2016; Jiménez, Till and Howell 2013; Stöckli and Both 2012; Stöckli and Howell 2014 and Gjermund Kolltveit and Riitta Rainio, eds. *The Archaeology of Sound, Acoustics and Music. Proceedings of a Symposium in Honour of Cajsa S. Lund, held at Linnaeus University, Växjö (Sweden), 18–19 February 2016*. Forthcoming.

At first sight, Lü's assertion seems unexceptionable, embodying as it does some familiar notions – familiar, that is, to students of musicology and anthropology: notions of music's perceived value as a signal of social worth and aesthetic sensibility, as a badge of national and tribal identity, as a medium of control and as a channel through which to express resistance. A moment's reflection, however, is enough to expose the weakness of his philosophy when confronted with the complexities that so affect hermeneutical approaches to signs of this sort. The musics of states, regimes and institutions whose machinery we can observe around us today rarely seem to correspond to such a straightforward view. Often indeed they are contradictory. Instead of reflecting accurately a regime's underlying condition, its ceremonials may merely signal its preferred self-image: its propaganda, in effect; and at all times its reception may be susceptible of more than one reading, according to the viewpoint, experience and judgement of each witness. It can be especially perplexing therefore, peering into the remote past, to judge how far a particular sonic display may be taken at its face value. Still, even self-image might have a contribution to make, revealing ways in which institutions and individuals perceived themselves, or wished to be perceived by others; and it may, whether by vehemence or omission or some other clue, betray aspects of character which the propagandist has not meant to reveal. Moreover the sources for ancient musics – text, image and artefact – often take us into the very heart of political élites of the kind to which Lü refers, alongside other sensory matters, such as feasting culture and commensality, that are already becoming part of the mainstream of archaeological theory. So, even if there is no more than hearsay or myth behind what Lü writes, might not his viewpoint still prove useful? For even as we question the cogency of his rationale, it cannot be denied that his words represent an authentic, ancient opinion. Might he prove right in a more general sense: that musical traces may have something interesting – and different – to say to us about ancient peoples and their institutions, and about how they functioned at a social and political level?

From the chapters that follow, certain encouraging themes begin to emerge. Music's recurrent proximity to the exercise and projection of political power is perhaps the most suggestive and certainly one of the most pervasive: whether it is the hard power of military might or the softer power of cultural diplomacy. We read how instruments, with their palettes of contrasting sounds, appear to show a particular aptness to employment as defining traits in people's projection and interpretation of image, including the self-image of states but also of individuals, families, institutions and cities (Fig. 1). Written sources frequently isolate particular forms of instruments and musical performance as markers of educational attainment and social class, while musical genre too finds a role as a marker of virtues and vices of various kinds: kingly, ancestral, civilized, barbarian. We hear how connexions are to be found between musical change and political crisis, including (but not limited to) changes in regime, while in various epochs we see



Fig. 1 The embodiment of kingly power, virtue and accomplishment: the biblical king David enthroned, performing Psalm 27 to the accompaniment of his lyre in the presence of his fellow Old Testament psalmists. The actions of the subsidiary figures symbolize (upper, standing) transcription, (middle, standing) the music of horns and (lower, crouching) dance. Anglo-Saxon England, perhaps Canterbury, mid-8th century. The 'Vespasian' Psalter: British Library, London, MS Vespasian A. I, folio 30 verso, facsimile.

new and insecure regimes adopting older musical styles as proofs of their legitimacy and their right to rule. As we follow each case study it becomes hard not to be impressed by the many milieux and ways in which ancient music could be applied: on the one hand by its repeated use as a weapon in warfare and on manoeuvre, and on the other by the capacity of musical style and repertoire (in skilled hands) to mediate and transcend political conflict and change. We notice the way in which the origins and functionalities of different instruments could embody and carry old meanings as they entered and adapted to new cultural and political settings. In all walks of life music's inherent ambiguity and flexibility may have brought considerable benefit, especially in the avoidance and mediation of conflict. But it is also evident that people often chose to define their musics in terms of difference, and of the strangeness and 'otherness' of foreign musics. In consequence of these and other observations we should not be altogether surprised to discover a corresponding tendency for regimes in whatever age, whatever their colour

and condition, to attempt to regulate and control musicians and their repertoires, seeing in them sources of political challenge and resistance as well as of support; and it is difficult to believe that musicians themselves did not also appreciate these benefits and dangers, or that they were not tempted to exploit them in their own political interest. There are repeated examples too of music's aptness to the politics of religious conversion. In all these ways, and more, ontogenies of ancient instruments, their contexts and their repertoires emerge as a new and potentially fruitful avenue for future study.

In our first two chapters Ingrid Furniss and Véronique Alexandre Journeau rehearse the textual background to Lü's thoughts on music and political conditions of states, and explore its archaeological reflections within the material culture of China during the period known as the Warring States, between 475 and 221 BCE. After its triumph over the Shang dynasty at the end of the 2nd millennium BCE, the Zhou had established a system of governance in which music seems to have occupied an especially important place, according to the account given in the 周礼 *Zhouli*, the 'Rites of Zhou'.

Véronique Alexandre Journeau reveals how the cultural and political rôles performed by ritual and by music develop through the first part of the 1st millennium, and are evidenced also in the 诗经 *Shijing* or 'Book of Odes'. During the second half of the millennium, and above all during the Warring States, the era in which Lü Buwei lived and wrote, various writers emphasize one or another aspect: the power and virtues of music as a means of regulation are emphasized in the Confucian canons, especially in the 乐记 *Yueji* 'Book of Music' of the 礼记 *Liji* 'Book of Rites'; whilst a cosmogony in which music is involved is envisioned in accounts of scholars and people of letters, most notably in the 吕氏春秋 *Lüshi chunqiu*, the 'Spring and Autumn' of Lü himself. This is continued in the 2nd-century 淮南子 *Huainanzi* of prince Liu An of Huainan, and in the 楚辞 *Chuci* or 'Odes of Chu' which explores the nostalgic evocations of a poet in a hostile political climate. These texts simultaneously depict, on the one hand, the ordering of Zhou tradition according to rites, music and a veneration for mythic rulers who lived in harmony with Heaven and Nature, and on the other, the disharmonies resulting from the loss of power by the Zhou and the breaking-up of their empire into warring states. Alexandre Journeau identifies signs, perceptible in such texts, of change perceived as decay: the transition from an ancient musical polity in which music had been associated with virtue, to a new music in which it came to be associated with pleasure and was taken to be a sign of decadence.

Ingrid Furniss takes the challenge to Lü's material world, exploring relics of the transition from the Zhou to the Han. During those centuries of acute political tension and military campaigning, finds of bells and chime stones show that ancient Zhou musical ritual (known as *yayue*, or 'Refined Music') outlasted the demise of the Zhou state. From the 5th to 3rd centuries BCE, the south-eastern court of Chu grew in importance and, initially at least, Chu and its vassal states attempted to define their own political

power and reputation in terms of earlier Zhou standards. But as its strength and confidence grew, Chu came also to focus on its own traditions, including especially those associated with lacquered wooden instruments, gradually abandoning the earlier Zhou forms; and the continuation of Chu instrument types beyond its own demise in the 3rd century, overcome by Qin in 223 BCE, shows that Chu's music persisted in its turn, being still in favour at the powerful court of the Han emperors well into the 1st century BCE. Furniss concludes that it is difficult to discern how, for the regimes involved, either of these continuities might have seemed to project political weakness or failure, as such. "Far from associating Chu music with notions of failure," she writes, "Han rulers relied on Chu music as an element, even a weapon, in their imperial propaganda, displaying their own power by affiliating themselves with the cultural traditions of the once powerful Chu." These examples thus, to an extent, already reflect Lü's position: that in ancient China at least, states might adopt particular musics in order to signal and establish their legitimacy; and conversely perhaps, that a regime's confidence in its own worth may be looked for and measured in its conspicuous musical expressions as much as in the projection of its other cultural traits.

Lü's underlying rationale is tested by Stefan Hagel, by proxy as it were, exploring the writings of the earlier music theorist Damon of Athens, who flourished in Greece in the 5th century BCE and influenced the early 4th-century political theory of Plato. In deconstructing Damon's theory of musical *ethos* and in testing the stability of the foundations on which it is built, Hagel introduces the relationship of "musical change to political change – or, more exactly, political change to musical change, since it is the political dangers of musical innovation that are at stake here". Plato, he notes, goes on to use Damon's teachings as a basis for the musical politics of his ideal state, yet at the same time admits to a dependency upon commonsense reasoning and received opinion, rather than any scientific theory of *ethos*. In fact, technical arguments are almost never employed by these writers: there was never a single, coherent, technically-based philosophy of musical ethics, even in the work of Aristoxenus in the middle of the 4th century BCE, of whom Hagel says he "never sets out to evaluate musical technicalities on an ontological basis". Nevertheless the author finds that although "the details are accordingly marked by irony and statements of ignorance [...] all this is by no means meant to detract from [Plato's] very serious assertion: that music, with all its effects on human psychology, is a crucial factor in the state, and ought therefore to be regulated, according to as scientific an assessment of its ingredients as is possible." Foreshadowing the initial musical conservatism of the courts of Chu and Han, Hagel concludes that the "intimate connection between an established city's constitution and music of a more archaic hue, in contrast to ongoing musical development fuelled by constant competition between living poet-performers, could quite naturally load politically conservative discourse with musical overtones." In so doing he implicitly invites us to consider the

converse: that the music associations of such conservative discourses might tell us something about the nature and condition of Greek city-states and institutions.

Plato's notion that states need somehow to regulate music is treated in three recent historical and ethno-archaeological perspectives, first by Ralf Gehler in his chapter on legislative interventions in the lives and traditions of musicians in northern Germany during the post-medieval period. Between the 16th and 19th centuries, he writes, the state sought to influence musical life in the Mecklenburg duchies in two ways: by regulation of cultural events through the imposition of *Ordnungen* (regulations, orders), and by the granting of privileges relating to musical performances. The concept of *Ordnung* was, he notes, fundamental to government in Early Modern Europe, where rationality and reason were seen as guarantors of a solemn life and of continuous economic development in all aspects of society. Four elements of control that permeate the early modern laws of Mecklenburg impacted directly on music and on the lives of musicians: the reduction of the excessive financial burden associated with public events amongst the inhabitants; the curbing of immoral behaviour; the sanctification of Sundays and other holy days; and the suppression of guild communities and certain traditional events like Carnival and *Heischegänge* (Wassailing). Up to the middle of the 17th century, music-making for village festivities, beyond the precincts of the city, still remained largely untouched by magistrates. However, this autonomy of the open countryside disappeared during the 17th century upon the Duke's awarding of privileges to musicians of all the Mecklenburg districts. Such privileges now enabled a musician to establish a monopoly in a specific administrative area, usually a county or *Amt*. The penetration of trained town musicians known as 'municipal waits' into the rural landscape went hand-in-hand with the displacement of traditional musics and widespread reduction in the activities of village musicians. A continuous process of legislation thus led in time to changes not only in the nature and scope of festivities but also in their musical repertoires and in some of their characteristic sounds.

Further valuable tests of political theories of music are to be found in the ethno-archaeology of the Americas, where periods of political and military manoeuvre and cultural collision afford some powerful lessons as well as fertile ground for developments in interpretive method. Mark Howell uses musical evidence as a lens through which to view contact's range of effects on Europeans and Amerindians in three areas of interaction – the English in the American southeast, the French in the Mississippi River Valley, and the Spanish in Central America. For Howell the explorations and colonization of the New World by the Old gave rise to unprecedented political and social changes for peoples living in both. But these changes varied among the actors depending on the time of contact, the nature of interaction(s), societal ontologies, and other factors. Some information about the encounters is contained in ethnohistoric accounts but these are often biased. Although the material record is rich, when approached in

isolation it is at the mercy of environmental factors and excavation choices. Surviving music and music-accompanied events, on the other hand, can retain cultural messages such as sonic preferences, myths and cultural ties, that escape detection by censors of both the human and natural kind. Moreover, though the cultural impact differed for the four indigenous groups studied (Maya, Natchez, Tunica, Cherokee), an overarching theme – and one derived solely from the sonic evidence presented – is that all of these groups developed coping strategies that included the retention of cultural identities through the preservation of preferred pitches and/or timbres. This is shown for the Maya by pre-Columbian instruments, such as the slit-drum, that were preserved across centuries of Spanish acculturation, along with introduced European instruments receiving favoured status, such as the reedy sounding *chirimía*. This retention extended beyond standard organology for the Natchez and Tunica to include the re-fashioning of trade items introduced by the French. The Native American inhabitants of the lower Mississippi River Valley cut-up metal plates, bowls, cups and tea kettles to make ‘jingles’ mimicking the sounds of cowry shells, a critical audio component of the regalia worn by dancers. In the case of the Cherokee, the use of British-supplied guns in a dance performed during the Green Corn Ceremony was meant to mimic the sound of thunder once invoked by Shamans.

Addressing in detail musics and sounds of encounter, conflict and conquest, Adje Both introduces as his case study the military conflict between the Aztecs and the Spanish in what is now Mexico, exploring the part that sound and music played in the ‘spiritual’ aspects of conquest and the establishment of Spanish hegemony. Following the Conquest, religious syncretism would involve musical acculturation for both sides: not just for the subjugated native populations. He begins by describing Cortés’ arrival at Veracruz in July 1519, and follows the role sound and soundscape played in his opponents’ military communications and tactics. The orchestration of Aztec battles was evidently central to their method of waging war, filling the battlefield with a continuous, sustained din. This was both practical and symbolic in purpose. We are introduced to the Aztec notion (and presumably aesthetic) of ‘the strange’, in the ‘otherness’ of sounds and music adopted by them from their defeated enemies. The recent discovery of Zapotec dance notations in an 18th-century manuscript leads Both to opine that, *contra* Gary Tomlinson’s 2007 thesis that the notations evolved in and were shared by several populations, including the Zapotecs and Aztecs, they rather illustrate Aztec adoption through conquest. In other words they confirm musical movement in geographical and political space. But such musics also have their temporal trajectories. By the mid-16th century the teaching at convent schools and colleges reveals the political importance that the new Spanish rulers attached to music in educating and converting the Aztecs to Christianity. This was in fact in a long, well-documented but fundamentally fragile Christian tradition. He describes how the very success of the musical syncretism that



followed came to alarm the Church hierarchy, which then attempted to impose orthodoxy in a process which has analogues in other histories of conversion, both in Europe and elsewhere. Detailing the integration of native elements into the church liturgy, he introduces us to the notion of cultural resistance on the part of native populations. Finally, the legacies of these processes bring us forward to the ethnomusicology of living traditions, traditions which sometimes preserve syntheses of pre-Columbian and Hispanic traits either in their repertoires or in the folk instruments which serve them, or both.

From the pre-Columbian, Contact and Colonial eras, Dahlia Shehata takes us back to the 19th century BCE in the ancient Near East, to the shifting political character of religious song repertoires in the time of Hammurāpi, king of Babylon. For Shehata the most telling case is offered by the vocal repertoire of songs, hymns and prayers of priests and temple musicians, from which she discerns political and social implications in a change which happened under Hammurāpi and his successors. Sumerian music repertoire, including the language used, continued alongside the newer Akkadian repertoire, from the 20th century BCE until well into the Seleucid period, between the 4th and 1st centuries. Already more than a thousand years before the transitions of Zhou and Chu, she attributes the appearance of the first Akkadian hymn to a major change in cult musical practice, whilst another, which she links to Amurrite immigration, nevertheless preserves an earlier Sumerian form. This leads her to conclude that the Sumerian traditions were unusually robust or that special circumstances were conducive to their survival. Turning to Babylonian innovations under Hammurāpi (c. 1790–1750) she identifies the apotropaic character of Akkadian prayers and lamentations addressed to the gods; and, drawing on catalogues of song titles as well as the song texts themselves, she observes that the Akkadian city laments to the Mother Goddess are “further evidence for new Akkadian prayers, composed and collected under Babylonian supervision, perhaps with the aim of replacing Sumerian songs in public divine service.” Examples of Akkadian innovation in genre and form can be attributed to particular reigns, such as that of Hammurāpi’s grandson Ammiditana (1683–1647). It appears that change in religious repertoire had begun under the last kings of Larsa, at the hands of Larsa poets, prior to Larsa’s conquest by Hammurāpi. Hammurāpi himself went on to commission new Akkadian works, using older Sumerian forms. Ammiditana in his turn presided over the development of a sophisticated liturgical repertoire. In considering political factors responsible for these changes, Shehata finds particular significance in their association with another period of military conflict and economic crisis, in which events led to the transfer of gods and cults from affected cities to other cities, notably to Sippar, Kish and Babylon itself. Thereafter there was a considerable increase in the numbers of musicians employed, and, anticipating both Lü and the 17th-century legislators of Mecklenburg, the kings of Babylon came to exert more and more control over their compositions and

performances.

In focusing on musical imagery found on funerary reliefs and paintings of the Etruscan and Roman periods Cristina Alexandrescu finds not only that they provide musical information on individual Romans and the communities in which they lived but also that their representational and sociological aspects vary significantly through time and across geographical space. The *status quo* and subsequent changes to it can be discerned, she says, from the study of, amongst other indicators, the *lituus*, *tuba*, *cornu* and various stringed instruments. Known military and civil associations of instrument types help in this process. The *cornu*, so often seen in circus scenes, is identified with a particular military ceremonial, the *classicum*, long associated with senior Etruscan commanders; but the *cornu* and *lituus* also figure in scenes showing processions of city magistrates. The ways in which music is portrayed in funerary scenes also reveals political intent, with instruments and musical acts adopted as markers of individual and family character and prestige. Whilst for men the recurrent symbol of education is a scroll, stringed instruments are a preferred marker of educational attainment in women. Such topoi and their deployment tell us something particularly useful: that the Romans themselves regarded music as one of the most powerful, and eloquent, indicators of personal status. From this we may conclude that, as for Lü Buwei, musicality and musical patronage were amongst those attributes by which Romans were inclined to see and judge each other, and to be seen and judged by posterity.

Returning to the 2nd millennium BCE, Alexandra von Lieven combines documents with material culture to again touch upon matters of kingship and political space, this time exploring the relevance of Lü to ancient Egyptian musical and political thought. What, she invites us to wonder, might Egyptians have understood Lü to mean? Egypt has produced no musical references to compare with those in the *Spring and Autumn*, she says, but it is possible to adduce evidence for political connexion by taking a broader view of music's place in Egyptian society. She finds that its association with political change is clearly evidenced during the Hyksos period, by the adoption of Hyksos instruments and music. At other times a symbol of Egyptian honour and political pride was their absorption of the musics of conquered foreign populations. Von Lieven notes that music's most obvious place in ancient Egyptian political art is in the representation of royalty, especially in the military sphere where there is a predominance of drums and trumpets. Remarking that Nubian music and dance are prominent in an Egyptian song from the Mut Ritual, she identifies the increase of 'foreign musical elements' with the expansion of the Egyptian empire, especially during the New Kingdom. She notes the inherent paradox: that it also occurs in periods when Egypt is known to have fallen under foreign domination, especially in the Graeco-Roman period. Thus, in Egypt at least – but possibly elsewhere too – diversification of musical forms and of the instrument types that served them, may offer a marker for political expansionism. We are invited to

infer from this that it may not be the *power* of states, as such, that drives such diversification, but rather the acts of expansion that state power may generate, or tolerate. She takes as her case study the tomb of no less a ruler than Tutankhamun, and its musical contents: not for their organological interest but as an assemblage in which music can be seen to embody particular political references. Musical elements in tomb furniture were chosen not arbitrarily but symbolically, she argues, and in Egypt an important aspect of this symbolism relates to the state religion, as expressed during live audiences at the palace and during royal progresses, when rulers toured the state and its conquered territories. Hand-shaped clappers offer a telling example. The clapper ritual was frequently associated with the quelling of rebellion, but such instruments were also played at the time of the king's death, traditionally a time of danger for states. Indeed all the buried musical elements exhibit some link to the politics of state. The sistrum, to take another example, is normally presumed to have been used to appease and address the gods, yet was evidently used also to address kings and even heads of households. Musical rituals of state, she concludes, were not just religious but also profoundly political in purpose, used to ensure divine favour for the state but also to be seen to be attending to the physical well-being of the population. Their political value is confirmed by the texts, one of which states explicitly that failure to observe them will endanger the state as well as its people.

Music's implication for the politics of both state and household is broadened by Graeme Lawson, with reference initially to Barbarian Europe during Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages. For Lawson too the point at issue is the need to identify materialities of music and political behaviour in the archaeological record, particularly the finds record, and to discover ways of correlating them with the evidence of the documents. To this end he explores music's potential for political engagement, especially in matters of diplomacy, as expressed in the material culture of court poets, poetry and music. Beginning with accounts of poets and poet-kings supplied by saga-writers and chroniclers such as Saxo in the 12th century CE, Bede in the 8th and Procopius in the 6th, he isolates the various stages of social and political transformation in which we find them, revealing points of significant correlation with excavated finds. Amongst the documented poets, he pays particular attention to the political activities of the Latin poet-bishop Venantius Fortunatus in 6th-century Francia, the herdsman-poet Caedmon in 7th-century England and the 10th-century Icelandic warrior-poet Egil Skalla-Grímsson. Of especial relevance to their narratives are the graves of princes and warriors buried with lyres between the 6th and 8th centuries, in what are now France, England, Germany and Sweden. From technical continuities of design and use which these lyres exhibit irrespective of social rank, from their associated finds, and from their positioning in the landscape relative to political centres and communications networks, Lawson discerns patterns of connexion between poetry and power that increasingly parallel the affinities evidenced in the texts.

He revisits accounts of singers engaged in specific acts of a political and diplomatic nature, such as the delivery of panegyrics, eulogies and epithalamia, and proceeds to trace some of the archaeological evidence which may also connect ancient song, material culture and diplomacy generally. As remains of lyres and their bearers emerge as potential archaeological proxies for political agency, he poses the question: might closely similar finds of the earlier Iron Age reference similar behaviours, and thereby signal archaeology's potential to locate political as well as poetic tradition in cultural milieux that lie 'beyond the texts' in deep Prehistory?

The Barbarian background is investigated further by Eleonora Rocconi and Christophe Vendries, who explore the recurrent opposition of civilized *versus* barbarous musics which for the Greeks and Romans played such a persistent part in forming their cultural and political identities. For Eleonora Rocconi as philologist and musicologist, music offers another viewpoint on Classical Greek notions of identity and ideology, and thereby – potentially – on aspects of both their foreign and domestic political condition. Much of the use that Greeks make of Barbarian *topoi* is negative. Amongst characteristics which Greek writers attribute to foreign musics, she finds (in the case of the Lydian, or oriental, Greek musics) “womanishness” or effeminacy, “lasciviousness”, a “dangerous softness”, “indecenty”, “luxuriousness”; and elsewhere (of Ionian, or western Greek musics) “harshness” and “hardness”, and “lack of nobility”. The Greeks saw these musics as having a “degenerative” and “contaminative” influence on native music, or merely as being uncouth and uncivilized. She concludes that “growing evidence for an ethnic (and, consequently, ethnic) characterization of the *harmoniai*, and their manipulation in order to express increasing Greek xenophobia and chauvinism, seems to go hand in hand with the history of events occurring during the Classical period”. It is remarkable that Greek poets were “engaged in a constant process of retelling and revising their musical past”, including their musical myths, “to suit the requirements of each age and context”. From this emerges an implication for hermeneutical approaches to Greek musical and political thought: it is undeniable, she writes, “that such opposition [of Greek versus Barbarian music] was directly affected by contemporary events and by related ideologies”, which in turn leads her to emphasize the vital role that the culture of *mousikē* should play in our attempts to improve our understanding of ancient Greek culture.

If Greek negativity towards various ‘other’ musics reveals something tribal about Greek politics and self-image, a judgemental attitude towards ‘otherness’ in music surely has the potential to say something too about many societies and groups that feel themselves to be under threat or which identify themselves as somehow embattled or at least ‘at risk’. It has sometimes been said that for many modern communities, including even states, social or national integrity and cohesion are enhanced by external, existential threats, whether the threat is political or military, economic or even cultural. Might this be reflected in their musical footprints? Not necessarily, it seems. For students of

Imperial Rome a somewhat opposite condition applies, as the eclecticism brought by expansion and integration increasingly impacts upon Roman political identity and music, and musical instrumentaria are characterised by an almost bewildering diversity of foreign forms and influences: a diversity that naturally calls to mind the processes of syncretism and acculturation which Shehata and von Lieven identify in Babylon and Egypt at the height of their political powers, and which Both describes amongst the Aztec.

Christophe Vendries addresses himself to the traditionalists amongst Roman authors, and to their use of aspects of Barbarian music both as a way of framing the ideals of Roman civilization and as a means of asserting the superiority of Rome's cultural and political viewpoint. Drawing on the Graeco-Roman writer Aristides Quintilianus in the matter of Barbarian musical character, he explores music's role in constructing Romanocentric cultural and political identities, and finds that there is a useful distinction to be drawn between Roman attitudes to western Barbarians and their treatment of those in the East. Of Roman perceptions of the Celts and Germans, on the other hand, he echoes Both in sensing that 'strangeness' is the dominant construct, both in perceptions of Celtic musical instruments such as the *cornyx*, and in attitudes to their music. The *cornyx* serves a political function for both parties, but in contrasting ways. Other sounds too contributed to senses of identity, in Vendries' view. As they would for the Aztec, the cacophonies of battle in particular played their part, both on the Roman side and, in their own way, for the Barbarians too. In this way Roman authors and their audiences came to see noise as one of the identifying features of the Barbarian. But another aspect to this begins to emerge in the political and cultural changes that occurred when the Barbarians of Gaul became assimilated into the *pax Romana*. Here Vendries adduces fragments of evidence for the growth of more civilised (which is to say less noisy) musics amongst the Gauls. It seems that for some the Roman Orpheus had by now begun to tame the Barbarian beast. Nevertheless, the opposition between noisy Barbarians and harmonious Romans would prove a resilient one, which would still be being invoked by authors such as Ammianus Marcellinus in the 4th century CE. Indeed Vendries invokes Rousseau's notion of the song-less savage as evidence of the persistence of such ideas even into recent political thought. In conclusion he regrets, as we all might, the repeated failure of culture historians to exploit (or even notice) music's value as a cultural marker. Following the 5th-century writer Macrobius, and anticipating (amongst others) the government and institutions of 16th-century Mexico, he sees the Romans' political use of music as a civilizing tool, if not for the state itself then at least in accordance with Rome's broader policy of civilizing the world.

In forming this view, Vendries wonders, as we all may, whether the Romans believed, like Lü, that they were able to learn something useful about peoples and their political condition from their music, especially, in the case of Barbarians, from their musics of battle. In this no doubt they were deceiving themselves – again like Lü, and

even some more recent commentators. As Hagel and Rocconi conclude for the Greeks, ancient theory, such as it is, seems mostly to be prejudiced by received opinion and myth rather than grounded in empirical observation. In all likelihood it hindered rather than helped them in their attempts to arrive at a working understanding of otherness, and consequently even of themselves. Today, however, the situation is changed. Taken together, the papers presented in this volume already show the potential of musical evidence to impact and illuminate, and to do so far beyond the traditional domain of the performer and the critic and the music technologist. That said, we make no claim that the book represents more than a tentative foray into the subject. But with music's materiality already contributing usefully to our knowledge of cognition and phonological aptitudes in anatomically modern humans around 40 000 years ago, where musical pipes with finger-holes constitute our earliest direct evidence for our ancestors' complex organization of sound, it is surely no less reasonable to advance, as we do in the studies that follow, that there is at least a *prima facie* case for proposing that music and its allied forms have something new and different to say about power and political change. Change, sometimes gradual, at other times abrupt, forms significant fault lines across music's history and archaeology just as it does across the politics of life.

## Conclusion

Certain technical and philosophical caveats naturally apply. Foremost amongst these is the need to be clear about what we mean – and what we do *not* mean – when we talk about 'music' and musical change. Here the perspective of the ethnomusicologist has become one of signal importance, and reveals the potential hazards of an insufficiently critical approach. For many non-specialists, for example, the history of Western Art Music has seemed to follow an evolutionary trajectory dictated by inevitable choices from an assortment of melodic, timbral, harmonic, and rhythmic possibilities. Although this is a persistent and deep-seated view it is nevertheless an erroneous one. The error may partly be explained by the nature of Western musical notation, which from its 9th-century inception has disclosed and adapted to an evolving awareness and utilization of increasingly complex sonic possibilities by Western composers. The scores themselves, with their discrete symbols, are material artifacts that lay witness to this sonic complexity. But notational complexity is in no way analogous to musical progress, and the history of Western Art Music is not so much one of evolutionary inevitability (however much it may seem so in hindsight) as one of selections made from two or more choices available at junctures in time. This is its true history and even a cursory review of sources on Western Art Music reveals critical sonic changes that were not the inevitable result of a Platonic-envisioned master plan. Two that conveniently come to mind are the aban-

donment of the rhythmic modes of medieval *Ars Antiqua* in favour of a metered system; and, more recently, the replacement of diatonic tonality by atonality. The first occurred during the Renaissance, and the second at the start of the 20th century; times when the West reorganized itself socially, legally, economically, politically, as well as artistically.<sup>4</sup> These changes were profound for Western music, and it is surely no coincidence that they occurred during two of the most consequential paradigm shifts in the West.

Western Art Music's perceived history – as one somehow divorced from outside events – versus its reality serves as a cautionary tale when we come to entertain ideas about histories of musics that are less known, in particular those that fall within the purview of music archaeology; including, but of course not limited, to the music of archaeologically known cultures like the Sumerians, Akkadians, Egyptians, Greeks, Chu and Maya. The musics of the peoples of these places also followed complex routes of development, with choices made for a variety of reasons, many of which can now only be guessed.<sup>5</sup> It is knowledge of the choices available and the changes engendered that offer music archaeologists perhaps their best opportunity for listening in, so to speak, to ancient sounds and to explore their social and political meanings.

Further hazards lie in wait as we venture into the hermeneutics of our constituent disciplines. The written documents, for example, demand a scientific approach to exegesis as well as to the aesthetics and poetics of text, to discourse analysis and to the mechanisms of tradition. Organology in particular demands a critical and ethnologically grounded approach to the etymologies of things, as well as actions, and a ready appreciation of principles of ontogeny and the nature of change. Archaeological finds of instruments are significantly different both from extant instruments preserved in music collections and from pictures of instruments in art, conveying very different kinds of information and needing to be addressed within their own terms of reference. Images and the complex layers of meaning that they embody require all the skills and judgement of the art historian and iconographer. And at all times, each new dataset that we interrogate must be judged against the backdrop of its particular material and cultural circumstances.

4 In the case of atonality, music consumers' refusal to fully embrace this 'inevitability' is one reason for the diminishing ticket sales anecdotally reported for art music concerts. *Metre* is another story. Few can now imagine a time when music was not so ordered, but there was one in the not so distant past and it ordered music from the Carolingian Empire until the 14th century.

5 Ethnomusicology has been dealing with the issue of music and social change since at least the late 1970s, and this avenue of research has proven helpful in understanding music in culture and culture

in music. Julian Gerstin 1998 points to an axiomatic reality for "the [...] power of music, as a socially constructed symbolic discourse, to shape other socially constructed discourses such as those of politics, history, and identity," a view amplified by Monson 1999 who postulates that social issues (interaction, authority, politics, race) be understood as part of the musical process. Ethnomusicology, of course, has the advantage of contemporary evidence and the ability to observe and interrogate music making in real time.

But for the time being, with these considerations in mind, we may begin by allowing Ingrid Furniss to take us back to China in the time of Lü Buwei himself, and to the remarkable musical and political changes that followed the collapse of the Zhou Dynasty in 256 BCE.



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Ingrid Furniss

## Political and Musical Change in Early China: The Case of Chu

### Summary

Eastern Zhou (770–221 BCE) to Han (206 BCE–220 CE) was a period of great social, cultural and political change in China. During this transitional time, China went from a land ruled by rivaling states to one dominated by a single emperor. Archaeological evidence of the 7th and 6th centuries BCE suggests that the rival states largely adhered to Zhou musical traditions. The abundance of bells and chime stones, associated with Zhou state ceremonies and ancestral rituals, serves as key evidence of this influence. Material evidence from the 5th and 4th centuries BCE, however, suggests great musical and cultural change, especially in the increasingly powerful Chu state. Despite the political demise of Chu in the 3rd century BCE, its musical and cultural impact continued well into the Han.

Keywords: China; Chu state; lacquer; musical instruments; Eastern Zhou; Han dynasty

Die östliche Zhou- (770–221 v. Chr.) und die Han-Dynastie (206 v. Chr.–220 n. Chr.) waren Perioden sozialer, kultureller und politischer Umwälzungen in China. In dieser Übergangszeit hat sich China von einem durch rivalisierende Staaten beherrschten zu einem unter einem einzigen Herrscher vereinten Land gewandelt. Archäologische Funde aus dem 7. und 6. Jh. v. Chr. legen nahe, dass sich die rivalisierenden Staaten größtenteils der musikalischen Tradition des Zhou-Staats angepasst haben. Die Fülle an Glocken und Klangsteinspielen, die bisher mit Zhou-staatlichen Zeremonien und Ahnenritualen verbunden werden, zeugen von diesem Einfluss. Jedoch implizieren materielle Belege aus dem 5. und 4. Jh. v. Chr. einen weitgreifenden Wandel auf der kulturellen und musikalischen Ebene, vor allem im zunehmend an Macht gewinnenden Chu-Staat. Trotz des politischen Niedergangs der Chu im 3. Jh. v. Chr. hielten sich die musikalischen und kulturellen Einflüsse bis in die Han-Dynastie.

Keywords: China; Chu (Staat); Lack; Musikinstrumente; östliche Zhou-Dynastie; Han-Dynastie

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## I Introduction

Beginning in the 3rd century BCE, Chinese scholars perceived the shift towards *xinyue* 新樂 (New Music), possibly relying on sounds produced by strings, winds, and drums, as a sign of social and political decline. The growing absence of bells and chime stones in Chu and other states, even those located in the north, certainly reflected political change, specifically the decline of the Zhou state and the prestige associated with its ritual and musical practices (Figs. 1–2). However, could people really hear ‘decline’ in the music itself? Lü Buwei 呂不韋, the 3rd-century Qin 秦 statesman, certainly seemed to think so. He believed that the condition of a state was reflected in its music, and that an examination of the ‘tones’ of a particular state would reveal whether it was flourishing or in decline.<sup>1</sup> He argued that when Chu was in decline, it began to produce *wuyin* 巫音 (Shamanic tones), which he perceived as *chi* 侈 (extravagant).<sup>2</sup> He seemed to believe that the development of such music was both evidence for, and a predictor of, the imminent demise of the Chu state. Such theories were perhaps more reflective of political rhetoric than reality; many late Zhou and Han reformists adhered to the idea that governments could only survive if they maintained, or returned to, the ‘tried and true’ traditions of the Zhou state. They felt threatened by political and social change, and Chu was a prime example of such change. Thus, musical change in Chu might well have reflected political change, but not necessarily in the way that Lü Buwei suggested. Instead of focusing on Chu music as evidence for decline, this paper will argue that musical change in Chu was a reflection of that state’s increased power and prestige in the 4th century BCE.<sup>3</sup> Although Chu was defeated by the Qin state in 223 BCE, its music and culture continued to flourish in subsequent periods, especially during the Han dynasty. Rather than reflecting decline, Chu culture and music invoked political, social, and cultural prestige at the Han imperial court, especially that of Gaozu 高祖 (reigned 202 to 195 BCE) and Emperor Wu 武帝 (reigned 141 to 81 BCE).

1 Knoblock and Riegel 2000, 145; *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 5/4.4B.

2 Knoblock and Riegel 2000, 141; *Lüshi chunqiu* 5/3.2. Little is known about the nature of Chu’s “shamanic tones”.

3 This paper expands on Jenny So’s theory that Chu’s

return to its native traditions in the 4th century BCE, particularly evidenced by its increased production of lacquers and silks as opposed to bronzes, was a result of its growing political confidence, So 1999, 36.



Fig. 1 Map showing the Chinese plain, Warring States Period, 5th century BCE.

## 2 The lacquer industry in early Chinese history

Before discussing the music and musical instruments of Chu and its vassal states, it is important to review the early history of lacquer itself and its possible connection to the south, especially during Eastern Zhou (770 to 221 BCE). Lacquer is produced from the sap of a tree indigenous to south and central China, *Rhus verniciflua*. After being heated and purified, color is added and the mixture is then applied in multiple layers, each being allowed to dry before the next is added, to a prepared wooden surface or cloth core. This process is very time-consuming, taking days to months to complete. The lacquer not only serves to decorate the object, producing a glossy surface with a variety of designs, but it is also highly durable and impervious to liquids.

Lacquer has a very long history in China. The earliest extant piece, dating to the first half of the 5th millennium BCE, is a red-lacquered wooden bowl from the Neolithic site, Hemudu 河姆渡, located in the Jiangnan 江南 region of southeast China.<sup>4</sup> This region, which later was dominated by the Chu state, has a consistently warm and humid climate during the summer months, a key requirement for both the growth of *Rhus verniciflua*, and the craft of lacquer production. *Rhus verniciflua*, a deciduous tree growing up to 15 meters in height, grows wild in southern parts of China; it was only

4 Rawson et al. 2012. "Jiangnan" refers to the region south of the lower reaches of the Yangzi River.



Fig. 2 Map showing Chu and its neighboring states in 260 BCE.

during the Han period and later that it was cultivated more widely.<sup>5</sup> Traces of lacquer objects, some dating as early as the first half of the 2nd millennium BCE, however, have been found outside the region where the tree would naturally have grown.<sup>6</sup> It seems reasonable to suppose that either these objects were produced in workshops in the south and shipped to the north, or that the raw material itself was shipped to the north and worked by local woodworkers. Despite a dearth of material evidence in the north, Colin Mackenzie believes that a thriving wood carving, and presumably lacquer, tradition did exist there during the Shang 商 dynasty (ca. 1600 to ca. 1050 BCE).<sup>7</sup> Alain Thote suggests

5 Zhou 1988, 74.

6 Robert Bagley discusses lacquered wood fragments of various objects, including coffins and small articles from Erlitou 二里头 (first half of the 2nd millennium BCE), as well as coffins and chariots from

the Anyang region, the final capital of the Shang dynasty, dating to the late 2nd millennium BCE. Bagley 1999, 160, 195, 205.

7 Mackenzie 1987, 82.



that Western Zhou (ca. 1050 to 771 BCE) rulers also maintained palace workshops for the production of lacquer objects in Chang'an (modern Xi'an).<sup>8</sup> During Eastern Zhou, however, the northern lacquer industry seems to have declined. According to Mackenzie, the decline of these woodworking traditions in the north likely was due to the "gradual deforestation that took place there, either as a result of climatic desiccation or [as a result of] the impact of an expanding population and its insatiable demand for fuel."<sup>9</sup> By the time of Eastern Zhou, he adds, "wood was a much more important [prestigious] material in the cultures of the Yangzi region [the south] than it was further north."<sup>10</sup> The availability of materials and climate made the south a natural center for lacquer production as well.<sup>11</sup> Application and drying of lacquer requires a narrow range of temperature (25–30 degrees Celsius, 77–86 degrees Fahrenheit) and humidity (75–85%). Such conditions were far easier to attain year-round in the warm sub-tropical climate of southern China than they were in northern parts, where both tend to fluctuate more drastically.

By the late 4th and 3rd centuries BCE, Chu and Qin 秦 were the two major centers for lacquer production.<sup>12</sup> In 316 BCE, the state of Qin annexed the southern state of Shu 蜀 (located in modern-day Sichuan), and it appears to have taken control of pre-existing lacquer workshops in that region.<sup>13</sup> The Qin produced objects of exceptionally high quality, many apparently rivaling the quality of Chu products, but their workshops cannot simply have appeared out of thin air. Archaeological evidence from tombs near Chengdu indicate that Shu and its neighbor Ba 巴, also in Sichuan, had well-developed lacquer traditions long before the Qin takeover.<sup>14</sup> Workshops near Chengdu are known to have produced lacquer objects of very high quality as early as the 5th century BCE.<sup>15</sup> Thote argues, however, that "lacquer craftsmanship in the Sichuan Basin may have been stimulated by imported objects," specifically from Chu.<sup>16</sup>

The Chu and Qin workshops in Shu seem to have produced very different products. Thote suggests that Chu lacquer sets tended to be much richer and more diverse.<sup>17</sup> In addition to a greater variety of dishes, he also points to the abundance of lacquer musical instruments, tomb guardians (hybrid animal figures placed in tombs to protect them from malevolent spirits), pieces of furniture, chests, and weapons.<sup>18</sup> As far as I can tell, no lacquer musical instruments – or artistic objects depicting them – survive in tombs associated with the Qin or former Shu states until the early imperial period, ca. 3rd century BCE, and later. The following passage from the Qin statesman Li Si's 李斯

8 Thote 2003, 341.

9 Mackenzie 1987, 83.

10 Mackenzie 1987, 83.

11 The Han historian Ban Gu 班固 (32 to 92 CE) described the region of Chu as a heavily forested, mountainous region fed by the Yangzi and Han rivers. See Hawkes 1985, 18.

12 Thote 2003.

13 Thote 2003, 338.

14 Thote 2003, 338–339.

15 Thote 2003, 340.

16 Thote 2003, 340.

17 Thote 2003, 352.

18 Thote 2003, 352–353.

biography in the *Shiji* 史記 (Records of the Grand Historian) suggests that this might be due in part to preservation bias, discussed in more detail below:

Beating on earthen jars, tapping on earthen crocks, plucking the *zheng*-zither, and striking the thigh while singing and crying ‘Wu! Wu!’ to please the ear, this is the true music of Qin.

夫擊甕叩缶彈箏搏髀，而歌呼嗚嗚快耳（目）者，真秦之聲也。

This passage indicates that the *zheng*-zither, seemingly unknown in Chu during this time, was the favored instrument in traditional Qin music. Unfortunately, no archaeological evidence for the *zheng* survives in the area associated with the Qin state.<sup>19</sup> The above passage leaves little doubt that wooden musical instruments – lacquered or not – were produced in, or for, the Qin state. Judging from the lacquer objects that survive from the Qin workshops at Shu, however, we can surmise nonetheless that production of lacquered musical instruments did not take the same precedence as it did in Chu during Eastern Zhou.

### 3 Lacquer musical instruments in the Chu region

Nearly all surviving wooden or gourd-bodied instruments were excavated from the south-east (particularly Hubei, Hunan, and southern Henan provinces), an area that was dominated primarily by Chu. This may be due in large part to preservation bias, organic materials surviving much better in the climate of south-eastern China. This region does not see the broad fluctuations of temperature and inconsistent rainfall of the north; the climate in the southeast is consistently damp and warm. In the northeast, “variable temperatures and fluctuating precipitation combine to accelerate the processes of decay.”<sup>20</sup> The unique matrix of south-eastern tombs also contributes to ideal preservation conditions for organic materials. Beginning around the 5th century BCE, “south-eastern builders surrounded many tombs with a layer of charcoal and then a lining of clay containing high alkaline levels. This material helped to seal the tomb, thereby producing an atmosphere in which bacteria were unable to thrive.”<sup>21</sup> Conditions for the preservation of wooden and gourd-bodied musical instruments in the Chu region are ideal, while they are not in the northeast. Bells and chime stones, on the other hand, survive well in

19 The earliest surviving examples of thirteen-string zithers, identified in some sources as *zheng*, were excavated from a group of early Warring States tombs (ca. 5th century BCE) in Jiangxi Guixi Shuiyan (see Jiangxi sheng lishi bowuguan and Guixi xian wen-

hua guan 1980). This region was associated with the Yue 越 state in the 5th century BCE.

20 Renfrew and Bahn 1991, 51.

21 Furniss 2008, 12.

the climate of the northeast *and* the south, and we would expect to find them in tombs of both regions had they been buried there.

Although archaeological evidence for wooden and gourd-bodied instruments in the north is sparse, surviving northern texts suggest that they were used together with bells and chime stones in rituals as early as the 11th century BCE. In fact, many of the instruments unearthed in Chu may have existed in the north during the Shang dynasty, as suggested by Tong Kin-woon's study of Shang oracle-bone inscriptions, most dating no earlier than ca. 1200 BCE.<sup>22</sup> If any of these wooden or gourd-bodied instruments were buried in northern tombs, most traces of them have disappeared.<sup>23</sup> Little is also known about northern lacquer industries, as suggested above, and the items they might have produced. Did they produce musical instruments, or were these items supplied from the south? I have suggested above the possibility that lacquer production was better suited to the climate and materials available in the south, particularly in the Chu region, and that such production was especially prevalent during Eastern Zhou. Production of some lacquer instruments – especially string instruments – may well have been Chu specialties, as reflected in the following passage from the ode, “Ding Zhi Fang Zhong” 定之方中 (‘When Ding Was in the Middle of the Sky’) in the *Shijing* 詩經 (Book of Songs), possibly dating to the 8th or 7th century BCE:

When Ding was in the middle of the sky;  
 We begin to build the palace at Chu.  
 Orientating them using the sun (as our guide)  
 We start to build the houses of Chu.  
 We planted the hazelnut and chestnut trees,  
 The *yi* and *tong* (both Wutong?), the *zi* (Catalpa), and the *qi* (Lacquer tree),  
 In order to make the *qin* and *se*.

定之方中，作于楚宮。揆之以日，作于楚室。樹之榛栗，椅桐梓漆，爰伐琴瑟。

Wutong and catalpa wood were common materials for the construction of zithers, both *qin* 琴 and *se* 瑟. The Wutong, *Firmiana simplex*, is native to central and southern China, while the catalpa is hardier and grows more widely throughout China. Both materials

22 See Tong 1982–1984.

23 While the wooden bodies of the *se* and *qin* would have deteriorated quickly in the fluctuating climate of the north, bronze tuning keys for *qin* have survived there from as early as the 5th century BCE. Such keys were needed to reach tuning pegs located on the underside of the *qin*. See Lawergren 2000, 75–79. Southern tombs and texts show a strong pref-

erence for the *se*; the *qin*, on the other hand, rarely appears there, Lawergren 2003b, 94. Drawing on organological and archaeological evidence, such as the bronze tuning keys, Lawergren 2003b provides strong evidence for the northern affinity of the *qin*, as well as possible western influences on its construction and tuning mechanisms.

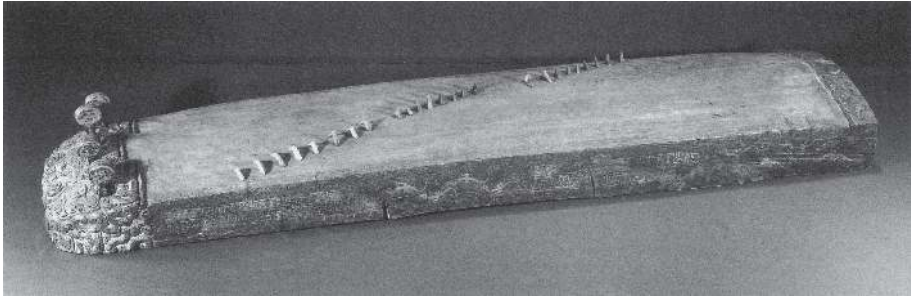


Fig. 3 Example of a *se*, from the tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng (d. 433 BCE), Hubei Suizhou Leigudun M1. Carved lacquered wood.

for the production of string instruments were abundant in the southeast, especially after the deforestation of much of northeast China by the 6th century BCE. At that time, northern states seem to have imported even the hardiest of these woods, catalpa, from Chu.<sup>24</sup>

Beginning as early as the 7th century BCE, string instruments played key roles in Chu formal ensembles with bells and chime stones. In the 4th century BCE, however, they were used primarily to accompany smaller ensembles with drums and/or winds. More than 120 string instruments have been excavated from Eastern Zhou tombs, almost all located in the Chu region.<sup>25</sup> The *se*, a large zither with 19 to 26 strings, seems to have been favored over other string instruments in this area (Fig. 3). Of the 120-plus excavated examples, at least 106 are *se*.<sup>26</sup> The earliest surviving example comes from a tomb in the Chu region, Hubei Dangyang Zhaoxiang M4, dating to the 7th or 6th century BCE.<sup>27</sup> A second example from a tomb in the same region, Hubei Dangyang Caojiagang M5, dates to the 6th or 5th century BCE.<sup>28</sup> Six 19-stringed *se* of high quality were excavated from Henan Gushi Hougudui M1 (ca. 6th and early 5th centuries BCE), possibly belonging to the Wu 吳 or Fan states neighboring Chu.<sup>29</sup> These lacquered and engraved instruments were decorated with snakes and masks, very much like the motifs appearing on the *se* from the tomb found at Suizhou, Hubei, of Marquis Yi 乙 (d. 433 BCE), ruler of the Chu vassal state Zeng 曾. Two other string instruments, the *qin* (a 7- to 10-stringed zither) and the ‘five-string zither’, appear only occasionally in south-eastern tombs (Figs. 4–5).<sup>30</sup> The earliest surviving examples of both were found in the tomb of Marquis Yi.

24 Elvin 2004, 50, suggests that Chu was well-recognized for its thriving forests by late archaic times (ca. 6th century BCE). He cites a passage from the *Zuozhuan* about a 6th-century BCE diplomat, Shengzi, who suggests that the northern state of Jin imported much of its raw materials, including evergreen oak and catalpa, from Chu, but that Jin

workers used those materials to make their own products.

25 Furniss 2008, 288.

26 Furniss 2008, 288.

27 Yichang diqu bowuguan 1990.

28 Yichang diqu bowuguan 1988; Furniss 2008, 250.

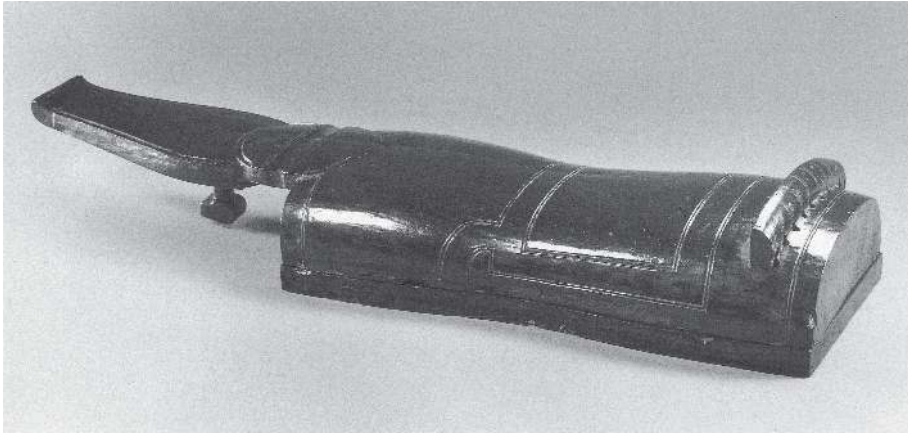


Fig. 4 *Qin* from Marquis Yi's tomb. Carved lacquered wood. Length: 67 cm.

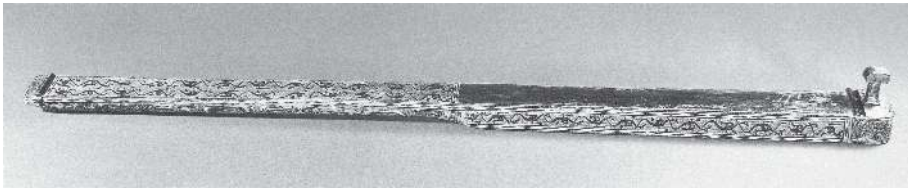


Fig. 5 Five-string zither from Marquis Yi's tomb. Carved lacquered wood. Length: 115 cm.

Drums are the second most common wooden instrument type in tombs of the Chu region; 118 examples dating to Eastern Zhou have been excavated.<sup>31</sup> Although over 53 of these were buried alone or with other drum types, over 65 were excavated with assemblages of musical instruments.<sup>32</sup> Nearly every excavated musical ensemble was accompanied by at least one drum.<sup>33</sup> This evidence suggests that drums served an essential role in Chu musical ensembles.

Li Chunyi distinguishes two primary drum types: the long-barreled and the short-barreled.<sup>34</sup> Barrel drums seem to have existed as early as the Shang dynasty in the north and southeast, as suggested by ceramic and bronze replicas of their wooden forms. The earliest example survives from a Neolithic tomb in northern China, Shanxi Xiangfen Taosi M3015.<sup>35</sup> Although long-barreled drums appear occasionally in Eastern Zhou tombs of the Chu region, short-barreled drums are far more numerous. Many of these

29 Furniss 2008, 238–241; Nomen Nescio 1981.

30 Furniss 2008, 67–71.

31 Furniss 2008, 288.

32 Furniss 2008, 288.

33 Furniss 2008, 288.

34 C. Li 1996, 2; Furniss 2008, 26.

35 C. Li 1996, 2–4; Furniss 2008, 26.

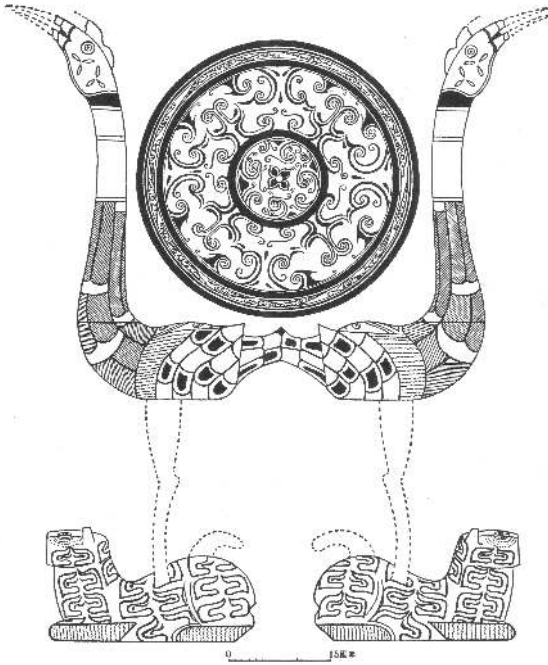


Fig. 6 Bird-and-tiger stand from Yutaishan M354.

drums are small and hand-held, but other short-barreled drums are quite large. Some of the larger examples were suspended from bird-and-tiger stands, consisting of two adorsed birds – possibly cranes – standing on tigers (Fig. 6). This type of drum stand seems to have been a Chu specialty. The deer drum, consisting of a carved wooden figure in the shape of a deer with a wooden striking surface attached to its rump, was also associated with Chu. Although the bird-and-tiger stand and deer drum did not survive the fall of the Chu state, possible evidence for their influence can be seen in depictions of *jiangu* 建鼓 (pole drums) in Han representational art.<sup>36</sup> Han stone engravings from the northeast typically depict pole drums mounted on a single- or double-animal base, usually taking the form of a tiger and, less often, a ram or deer.<sup>37</sup> These animal bases suggest a possible relationship with bird-and-tiger and deer drums in the south.

Short-barreled drums were not limited to the south, as they are mentioned in conjunction with large ritual ensembles in Zhou texts, such as the *Shijing*'s 'You Gu' 有瞽 (Blind Musicians).<sup>38</sup> Archaeological and visual evidence from the 5th century BCE and

36 The pole drum consists of a large long-barreled drum mounted on a tall pole set in a base.

37 Furniss 2008, 41.

38 Waley 1996, 297.

later, however, suggests that short-barreled drums were used infrequently in ritual ensembles of bells and chime stones; the larger and louder pole drums were favored in such ensembles. By Han times, short- and long-barreled drums are depicted frequently in funerary art of the north and south, but rarely in association with bells and chime stones. Instead, both drum types, shown singly or together with other wooden and gourd-bodied instruments, are connected to processions (military or funerary), lively entertainments, and banquets. This evidence once again points to the demise of traditional Zhou ritual music, performed with bells and chime stones, and a growing preference for smaller ensembles of drums, strings, and winds like those seen in the Chu region.

Wind instruments excavated from Eastern Zhou tombs total 51 or more examples; most again were located in the Chu region.<sup>39</sup> The mouth organ, a type of free-reed instrument played by blowing through a mouthpiece at the instrument's side, appears most frequently. At least thirty-nine examples are known.<sup>40</sup> Nearly all of these instruments appear together with ensembles of strings, drums, bells and/or chime stones.

Mouth organs were not limited, however, to the south during the Zhou period. As suggested by northern texts, such as the *Shijing*, mouth organs were also incorporated into Zhou ritual ensembles. Drawing on this textual evidence, Alan Thrasher regards the instrument as indigenous and more closely connected to historical traditions in northern and central-eastern China.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, as he and Tong Kin-woon both have argued, Shang oracle bone inscriptions (ca. 1200 BCE) seem to mention two mouth organ types: the *he* 和 and *yu* 竽.<sup>42</sup> The *sheng* 笙, the smaller and more common mouth organ type during Eastern Zhou and Han, first appears in the poem 'Luming' 鹿鳴 (The Deer Call) in the *Shijing*; this poem is said to date to the 7th century BCE and belongs to the northern textual tradition.<sup>43</sup> This evidence firmly places mouth organs in the tradition of the north.

Basing their claims on the material construction of mouth organs, several scholars assign a southern origin for the instrument. The body of the *sheng* was originally constructed using a bottle gourd, *Lagenaria siceraria*, which is frost tender and thrives in tropical and subtropical climates, while the pipes projecting from the gourd body are bamboo (Fig. 7; Mouth organs with bodies made of wood first appeared in tombs during the 4th century BCE, bronze examples that maintain the shape of bottle gourds survive from as early as the 3rd or 2nd century BCE<sup>44</sup>). Arguing that bamboo is not native to northern China, Guo Moruo suggests a possible origin of the mouth organ amongst

39 Furniss 2008, 288.

40 Furniss 2008, 288.

41 Thrasher 1996, 1.

42 Thrasher 1996, 3; Tong 1982–1984, 41, 52.

43 Thrasher 1996, 4.

44 Several examples of bronze *sheng* have been found in Yunnan province. See Furniss 2008, 104–105; Guangsheng 2000, 96.

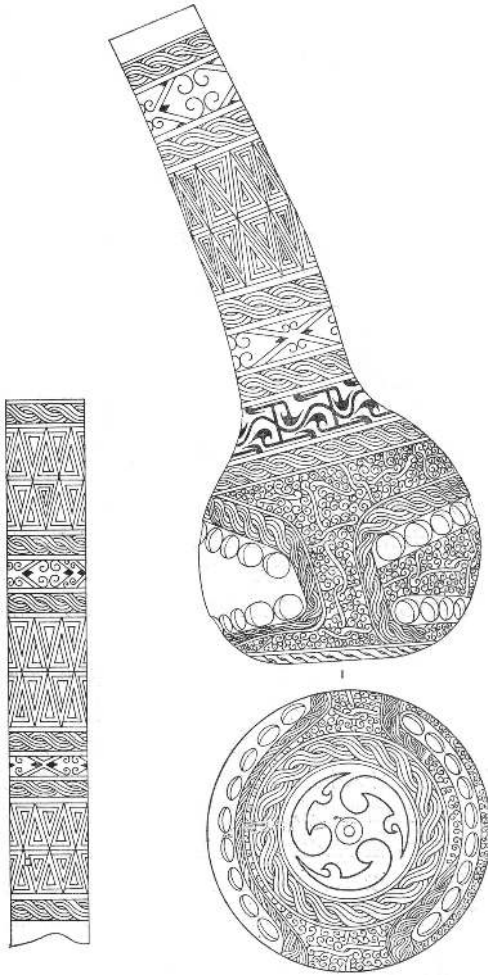


Fig. 7 *Sheng* from eastern compartment of Marquis Yi's tomb. Lacquered gourd with bamboo pipes (not shown). Height of gourd body: 22 cm.

southern Chinese peoples, particularly the Miao, who continue to use a six-piped example to this day.<sup>45</sup> Although Li Chunyi negates Guo's claim about the absence of bamboo in the north, he agrees that the mouth organ may be intimately linked to China's southern peoples.<sup>46</sup> Victor Mair has also provided some tantalizing evidence for the instrument having a southern source, and even perhaps for it not being indigenous at all.<sup>47</sup> Mair suggests that the original 'botanical home' for the bottle gourd was India, from which it spread to southern China and became intimately connected to the cosmological and origin myths of many southern Chinese cultures.<sup>48</sup> One myth, believed to be of

45 Guo 1949, 60; cited in C. Li 1996, 422.

46 C. Li 1996, 422.

47 Mair 1996.

48 Mair 1996, 198.





Fig. 8 *Chi* (transverse flute) from the central compartment of Marquis Yi's tomb. Lacquered bamboo.

southern origin and later adopted into northern Chinese culture, involves the primeval ancestress, Nü Wa 女媧, who is also the mythical inventor of the *sheng*.<sup>49</sup> Mair believes that the *sheng* is an “elaborated, refined, and sophisticated adaptation of the *khaen*,” a free-reed mouth organ prevalent throughout Southeast Asia.<sup>50</sup> Describing Chu culture as “transitional between north and south,” he implies that the *sheng* was transmitted to the north via Chu, which he describes as the “cradle of early Daoist thought” – offering further explanation as to why the instrument became intimately attached to early Daoist myths and stories.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, the earliest surviving *sheng* was recovered from a 6th-century BCE Chu tomb in Hubei Danyang Zhaoxiang.<sup>52</sup> Although the earliest history of the *sheng* is still a point of great contention, archaeological evidence strongly suggests that the instrument, appearing more often than any other winds, played a very important role in ensemble music of the Chu region. During the Han period, they continued to be used frequently in ensemble performances, usually without the accompaniment of bells and chime stones.

While mouth organs are the most common wind instruments appearing in Chu tombs, bamboo flutes and *paixiao* 排簫 (panpipes) also appear occasionally (Figs. 8–9). Of the 51 or so surviving wind instruments from Eastern Zhou tombs in the southeast, 5 were bamboo flutes and 7 were *paixiao*.<sup>53</sup> Although these instruments were constructed using bamboo of the species *Pleioblastus maculatus*, which is moderately hardy and can survive in the warm temperate climate of central and east China, the plant appears to

49 Mair cites a study by Hong Liu stressing the role that mouth organs continued to play in Miao 苗 moon dancing, which is said to resemble yearly sacrificial ceremonies to the goddess of marriage. Mair 1996, 199.

50 Mair 1996, 200.

51 Mair 1996, 200.

52 Yichang diqu bowuguan 1990. Xiangpeng 1996 (Hubei juan), fig. 1.14.5.

53 Furniss 2008, 288.

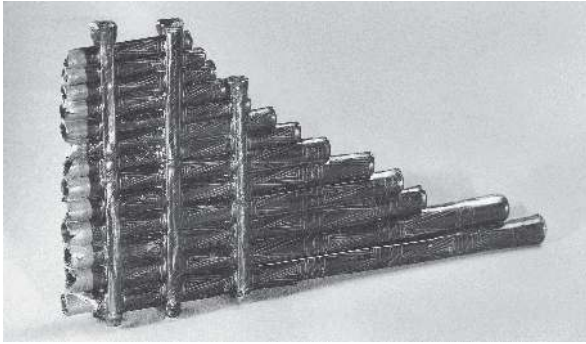


Fig. 9 *Paixiao* (panpipes) from Marquis Yi's tomb. Lacquered bamboo. L: 22.8 cm; W (max.): 11.7 cm.

have been especially abundant in southern China. The following passage from the *Xiang Shui* 湘水 (Xiang River) chapter of *Shuijingzhu* 水經注 (Commentary on the Waterways Classic), a 6th century CE text discussing ancient geography, suggests that materials for the *chi* 篪 (transverse flute) were gathered in the mountainous areas near the Xiang River: the northeast (of Mt. Jun) faces Mt. Bian. The mountain abounds with *chi* bamboo. 東北對編山，山多篪竹。

The region associated with the Xiang River, located in modern Hunan Province, was dominated by Chu during Eastern Zhou. A chapter in the *Biographies of Fan Ju and Cai Ze* 范雎蔡澤列傳 of the *Shiji* also associates the *chi* with a well-known 3rd-century BCE militarist from Chu, Wu Zixu 伍子胥.<sup>54</sup> *Chi*-flutes are not mentioned in northern texts until late Eastern Zhou and early Han, suggesting that they might not have been known there previously.<sup>55</sup>

Archaeological evidence suggests that production of lacquered objects was a Chu specialty. Wooden and gourd-bodied instruments seem to have been key products of this native industry. Although we may never know for certain, Chu might well have been a major supplier of lacquer instruments to the north during Eastern Zhou, and it might have led the shift toward ensembles of such instruments.

#### 4 The shifting instrumentation of Chu ensembles in the 5th to 3rd centuries BCE

Two musical ensemble types are evident in tombs associated with Chu and its vassal states: (1) ensembles of bells and chime stones accompanied by drums, strings and/or

54 *Shiji* 79; Watson 1993, 137; Guangsheng 2000, 91.

55 The earliest datable references to the *chi* are found in the *Chu Ci* 楚辭 (ca. 3rd century BCE to 2nd century CE), *Lüshi chunqiu* (3rd century BCE), and *Guanzi* 管子

(compiled as late as the 1st century BCE). As its name suggests, the *Chu Ci* (Songs of Chu) is a Chu text.

winds; and (2) ensembles of lacquered wooden and gourd-bodied instruments. Most ensembles of Type 1, totaling just over 20 extant examples, dated to the 5th century BCE and before.<sup>56</sup> Ensembles of Type 2 totaled more than 30 examples, most dating to the 4th century BCE and later.<sup>57</sup> Tombs with only one or more example of a string, drum, or wind instrument, and no other musical accompaniment, totaled well over 70 examples; drums and strings appeared most often.<sup>58</sup> This evidence attests to the decline of bells and chime stones and the increasing prestige of wooden and gourd-bodied instruments in the Chu region between the 5th and 4th centuries BCE.

Ensembles of Type 1 were traditionally associated with Zhou ritual music, possibly dating as early as the 11th century BCE. Early Zhou texts, such as the *Shijing*,<sup>59</sup> mention ensembles of bells, chime stones, and wooden and gourd-bodied musical instruments – such as zithers, flutes, and mouth organs – that would accompany Zhou ritual ceremonies. The following passage from the Gu Zhong 鼓鐘 (Strike the Bells) ode in the *Shijing* shows this clearly:

Strike the bells, *qin*, *qin*.  
Strike the *se*-zither, strike the *qin*-zither.  
The *sheng* and chime stones together sound.  
With them (they perform) the *ya* and *nan*.  
They use the *yue*-flute without error.

鼓鐘欽欽，鼓瑟鼓琴，笙磬同音。  
以雅以南，以籥不僭。

The configuration of instruments in this passage closely parallels the types of instruments present in the central chamber of the tomb of Marquis Yi (died 433 BCE). These instruments included a set of sixty-five bronze bells, a large pole drum, a bronze stand for thirty-two chime stones, two smaller drums, seven *se*, four mouth organs, two panpipes, and two transverse flutes.<sup>60</sup>

56 See Furniss 2008, 330–345; tables 6–7. These numbers do not take into account tombs with bells and/or chime stones found without additional accompaniment. Wooden and gourd-bodied instruments may well have accompanied these ensembles, but if so, traces of them have since disappeared. Nevertheless, like ensembles of bells, chime stones, and wooden and gourd-bodied instruments, tombs with only bells and/or chime stones largely date to the 5th century BCE and before.

57 See Furniss 2008, 314–329; tables 4–5.

58 See Furniss 2008, 296–313; tables 1–3.

59 Poems in the *Shijing* are believed to date between ca.

1000 and ca. 600 BCE; see Loewe 1993.

60 Major and So 2000, 14. For a general overview of the musical instruments discovered in the tomb of Marquis Yi, see Major and So 2000; C. Chen 1994 discusses the two-tone bells found in the tomb; see Shao 2010 for a broad discussion of Chu bells and the research that has been done on this subject. For a general overview of Chu music and musical artifacts, see Y. Li 1990; Y. Li 1991; Tang 2002; Huang 2011. Much has been written about Chinese music archaeology by Chinese scholars; just a few examples that were consulted for this study are Fang

Marquis Yi's tomb is thought to be laid out like a palace with tomb furnishings divided by function into four separate compartments.<sup>61</sup> The central chamber may well represent an audience hall, where formal rituals of state would have taken place.<sup>62</sup> Most of the instruments found in this chamber are described in connection with Zhou ritual music (*yayue* 雅樂), and it is possible that they would have been used to perform such music. In the 5th century BCE, Zhou ritual music may still have been regarded as the music of power and prestige. Marquis Yi's 'formal' ensemble may also have performed less formal music, however.<sup>63</sup> The following passage from the *Zhaohun* 招魂 (Summons of the Soul) song of the *Chu Ci* 楚辭 (Songs of Chu), a classic Chu prose text dating from as early as the 3rd century BCE, suggests that Chu people used bells and chime stones for entertainments, not just rituals:

Before the dainties have left the tables, girl musicians take up their places.  
They set up the bells and fasten the drums and sing the latest songs: [...]  
The lovely girls are drunk with wine, their faces are flushed.  
With amorous glances and flirting looks, their eyes like wavelets sparkle;  
Dressed in embroideries, clad in finest silks, splendid but not showy;  
Their long hair falling from high chignons, hangs low in lovely tresses.  
Two rows of eight, in perfect time, perform a dance of Zheng;  
Their xi-bi buckles of Jin workmanship glitter like bright suns.  
Bells clash in their swaying frames; the catalpa-wood zither's strings are swept.  
Their sleeves rise like crossed bamboo stems, then slowly shimmer downwards.  
Pipes and zithers rise in wild harmonies, the sounding drums thunderously roll;  
And the courts of the palace quake and tremble as they throw themselves into  
the Whirling Chu.  
Then they sing songs of Wu and ballads of Cai and play the Da-lü music  
Men and women now sit together, mingling freely without distinction  
Hat-strings and fastenings come untied: the revel turns to wild disorder.  
The singing-girls of Zheng and Wei come to take their places among the guests;  
But the dancers of the Whirling Chu find favour over all the others.<sup>64</sup>

餽羞未通，女樂羅些。陳鍾按鼓，造新歌些。涉江採菱，發揚荷些。美人既醉，朱顏酡些。嬉光眇視，目曾波些。被文服纖，麗而不奇些。長髮曼髻，艷陸離些。二八齊容，起鄭舞些。衽若交竿，撫案下些。竽瑟狂會，攄鳴鼓些。宮庭震驚，發激楚些。吳歛蔡謳，

2011; Fang 2006; and Wang 2006.

61 Major and So 2000, 14.

62 Major and So 2000, 14.

63 Major and So 2000, 19–20.

64 Hawkes 1985, 228–229. For a general overview of Chu music and musical instruments as informed by the *Chu Ci*, see Zhang 2013; A. Chen 2011; Jin 2011; and Jiao 2008.

奏大呂些。士女雜坐，亂而不分些。放陳組纓，班其相紛些。鄭衛妖玩，來雜陳些。激楚之結，獨秀先些。

This famous passage, believed to date between 277 and 248 BCE, describes a wild scene of dancing and singing accompanied by a wealth of musical instruments, including strings, drums, winds, bells, and chime stones. The vivid scene takes place in a palace, clearly belonging to a wealthy person and probably one of high status, possibly even Chu king Qingxiang 頃襄 (reigned 298 to 263 BCE).<sup>65</sup> The passage is very different from those associated with the Zhou state, in which the same musical instruments, especially bells and chime stones, are connected with what some late Eastern Zhou and Han élites described as staid, boring rituals.

Although the above passage indicates that Chu rulers continued to use bells and chime stones on some occasions until the 3rd century BCE, very few examples of bells and chime stones actually survive after the 5th century BCE. The absence of these instruments from Chu tombs may be due in part to changing burial practices; bells and chime stones may have been regarded as too valuable to bury in tombs. Jenny So, however, argues that bronze objects in general had fallen out of fashion in Chu by the 4th century BCE.<sup>66</sup> She suggests a political motivation behind this shift: “The greatly diminished role of ritual bronzes in Chu burials signals a shift in Chu loyalties. In their quest for power and peer recognition, the early Chu rulers subscribed to traditional Zhou values and rituals as signs of their power and status. Confident in their political and territorial success, later Chu rulers returned to native customs as symbols of their unique tradition and achievements. Local products of the Chu domain – the multicolored lacquers and luxurious silks – flourished under royal patronage as they came to replace bronze as prized items in burials.”<sup>67</sup>

Additional evidence pointing to the decline of bronze bells (and chime stones) is also present in Han representations of musical performances, which rarely depict these instruments. By Han times, musical performances consisted largely of wooden and gourd-bodied instruments, including winds, strings, and/or drums.<sup>68</sup>

The growing popularity of such instruments is clearly attested in Chu and its vassal states in the late 5th and 4th centuries BCE. The most famous example of an ensemble of strings, winds and drums (Type 2) was also unearthed from Marquis Yi’s tomb. This ensemble contained eight or nine instruments, including three *se*, one *qin*, one five-stringed zither (identified as a *zhu* 筑 by some scholars),<sup>69</sup> two mouth organs, and

65 Hawkes 1985, 228–229.

66 So 1999, 36.

67 So 1999, 37.

68 I discuss these ensembles at length in Furniss 2008, 157–188.

69 *Zhongguo wenwu bao* (28 July 1996), 3; Lawergren 2000, 79; Major and So 2000, 21. I have debated the accuracy of this identification in Furniss 2008, 71–73.

one small drum suspended between the antlers of a fantastic bronze bird stand inlaid with gold and turquoise. A wooden deer with a hole in its rump may well have been a deer drum. Scholars have suggested that this secondary ensemble, located in the burial chamber of the marquis and thereby representing his “residential” chamber, performed music of a less formal nature, more likely for the marquis’s personal pleasure and entertainment.<sup>70</sup> During the 5th and 4th centuries BCE, the same instrument types that appear in this ‘informal’ ensemble – strings, winds, and drums – appear with increasing frequency in Chu tombs, and they are the dominant instruments in depictions of musical performance throughout the Han period.

In addition to a resurgence of Chu’s native traditions, especially its lacquer industry, there are several possible reasons for the increasing popularity of lacquer musical instruments in Chu and their continued esteem in Han times. It is likely that production of lacquer instruments was less costly in terms of materials and labor than bronze bells, and affordability may therefore have been a key factor. Another likely reason for the growing popularity of lacquer instruments, especially those with strings, was their versatility. Although bells and chime stones were capable of considerably louder tones than strings, the “lingering sounds of (the) bells made them unsuited to follow the fastest melodies.”<sup>71</sup> And, fast music seems to have been the trend of the time, as I will discuss further below. Unlike bells, stringed instruments have the potential to play melodies with fast tempos and long *portamenti* (sliding finger-movements).<sup>72</sup> Stringed instruments are also capable of a higher level of expressiveness in musical performance. For instance, vibrato, a subtle pitch-altering technique often used on stringed instruments to add tone color, is not possible on bells.<sup>73</sup>

Wind instruments, such as flutes and panpipes, were also capable of playing faster melodies. Along with strings, these instruments probably provided melodies, while mouth organs accompanied them with harmonizing notes.<sup>74</sup> Interestingly, in the tomb of Marquis Yi, panpipes and transverse flutes only appear in the large ensemble of the central chamber, while mouth organs accompany both ensembles. Panpipes and flutes

70 Major and So 2000, 21.

71 Bagley 2000, 35.

72 Lawergren has suggested that the distance between the string and fingerboard was not small enough to permit *portamento* or *glissando* playing at this time, suggesting perhaps that “only open strings could have been played”; Lawergren 2003a, 35–36. In my opinion, it might have been possible to play harmonic pitches.

73 If vibrato was employed on the ancient *se*, it might have resembled vibrato on a modern Japanese *koto*,

believed to be a later relative of the *se*. *Koto* vibrato requires the finger of the left hand to push down and release the string several times with varying speed to produce slight variations in pitch.

74 Judging from archaeological finds, the *sheng* was almost exclusively an accompanying instrument in ensembles. In the 1980 edition of the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Colin Mackerras suggests that the ancient *sheng* could only produce simple chords, consisting of open 4ths or 5ths; Mackerras 1980, 278.

seem to have been used primarily for formal court music, while mouth organs were employed for both formal and informal music. By Han times, the function of panpipes and flutes seems to have changed; they, too, were used in small ensembles for entertainment purposes, not just for formal music.

Although the musical instruments in the central chamber were without a doubt more costly to produce, those of the residential chamber seem to exhibit a preference for the more intimate musical styles of the small ensemble. This is attested by the proximity of the small ensemble to Marquis Yi's coffin and by the presence of female attendants, many of whom likely served as musicians, in the same compartment.<sup>75</sup> Small ensembles of strings, winds, and drums like Marquis Yi's, gradually took the place of Zhou ritual orchestras, and were increasingly connected to entertainment into Han times. Such ensembles may well have performed what was then known as 'New Music'.

## 5 New music and Chu melodies

Late Zhou and Han texts, most dating to the 3rd century BCE and later, make frequent reference to new forms of secular entertainment music, known as *xinyue* 新樂 (New Music) or *Zheng Wei zhi yin* 郑微之音 (the Tones of Zheng and Wei),<sup>76</sup> which were gaining popularity at the time. The *Analects*,<sup>77</sup> for example, describe Confucius' views (551 to 549 BCE) on the music of Zheng, which he regarded as a degenerate state: "Abolish the 'music' from the state of Zheng and keep glib talkers at a distance, for the Zheng music is lewd and glib talkers are dangerous."<sup>78</sup> In another passage, he laments that the sounds of Zheng have led to the "corruption" of *yayue*.<sup>79</sup> Lü Buwei discusses the development of *chiyue* 侈樂 (extravagant music) in several declining states, such as that of Chu, Qi 齊, and Song 宋 (see Fig. 1). As indicated in the following passage from the *Lüshi chunqiu*, he suggests that such music only brought further decline: "Thus, the more extravagant is the music, the gloomier are the people, the more disordered the state, and the more debased its ruler."<sup>80</sup> Later texts, such as the *Yueji* 樂記 and *Shiji* (ca. 2nd to 1st centuries

75 Marquis Yi's tomb contained the bodies of twenty-one females, ranging in age from 13 to 25. Their bodies were distributed in two compartments: thirteen were buried in the western chamber, identified by Major and So as corresponding to the "women's quarters" of a palace, and the other eight were buried in the marquis's burial chamber. Major and So suggest that the women in the western chamber may have served as the court ensemble's musicians; Major and So 2000, 14. It is likely that the women buried in Marquis Yi's "residential chamber" were

favorite concubines and personal musicians.

76 Zheng and Wei were feudal states during the Zhou dynasty; see Fig. 1. See Feng 1984 for a discussion of the tones of Zheng and Wei.

77 Although attributed to Confucius, the text is a composite work by various hands. It is believed to date to the 3rd century BCE or later.

78 Ames and Rosemont 1998, 187.

79 Ames and Rosemont 1998, 208.

80 Knoblock and Riegel 2000, 140; *Lüshi chunqiu* 5/3.1.

BCE), also describe new forms of music as demoralizing and reflective of the inevitable decline of a ruling state and of the social mores of its rulers and its citizens.

New Music was everything that *yayue* was not, and was regarded as aesthetically non-Confucian. Since no examples of New Music survive, we must rely on written accounts for our information. Unfortunately, the descriptions are vague. Nevertheless, we can get some sense of its characteristics by looking at the following discussion between Confucius' disciple Zi Xia 子夏 and Marquis Wen of Wei 魏文侯, in the *Yueji*:<sup>81</sup>

Marquis Wen of Wei asked a question of Zi Xia: "When I put on my official robe and black hat and listen to ancient Music (*yue*), I only feel I will keel over (from boredom). When I listen to the music (*yin* [i. e. tones]) of Zheng and Wei, I do not know what it means to be tired. May I ask, why is ancient Music like this and new music like that?"<sup>82</sup>

魏文侯問於子夏曰：“吾端冕而聽古樂，則唯恐臥；聽鄭衛之音，則不知倦。敢問：古樂之如彼何也？新樂之如此何也？”

After discussing the ordered nature of the ancient Music, Zixia responds to Marquis Wen's question by discussing the faults of the new music:

Now with the new Music, (the dancers) advance and retreat in contracted movements, and (the music) overflows with lascivious sounds. It entrances (the listener) and does not cease. It reaches the point of clowns and dwarfs, and boys and girls frolicking together like monkeys, and (the distinction between) father and son is not known [...].<sup>83</sup>

今夫新樂，進俯退俯，奸聲以濫，溺而不止；及優侏儒，糝雜子女，不知父子。

The music of Zheng shows a liking for the overstepping of bounds and (leads toward) a licentious volition [intention]. The music of Song takes its pleasure in women and (inspires) an indulgent volition [intention]. The music of Wei is frantic and hurried, and (makes one's) volition troubled. The music of Qi is haughty and transgressing [defiant], and leads to an arrogant volition [intention]. These four all transgress in sensual pleasures and do harm to virtue.<sup>84</sup>

81 Although Zi Xia is said to have lived in the 6th and 5th centuries BCE, Kern believes that this passage dates to late Western Han (ca. 1st century BCE), not Eastern Zhou. He suggests that the text was composed by Han ritual classicists, who were criticizing Han emperor Wu's preference for the use of

"new sounds" in his state sacrificial hymns. See Kern 1999, 677.

82 Cook 1995, 61; *Yueji* 8.1.

83 Cook 1995, 61; *Yueji* 8.3.

84 Cook 1995, 62–63; *Yueji* 8.7. See Fig. 1 for the location of the states mentioned in this passage.



鄭音好濫淫志，宋音燕女溺志，衛音趨數煩志，齊音敖辟喬志；此四者皆淫於色而害於德。

New Music thus appears to have been fast-paced and exciting, and it permitted men and women to “frolic” and “mix” together. It was also free of traditional rhythms and melodies, whereas *yayue* reused and recycled classical sounds and rhythms associated with ancient Zhou rulers. All of these characteristics supposedly led to excitement and profane acts on the part of the listener. According to Confucian ideology, it was important not to excite the mind unduly. If the mind became excited, it would begin to form new and potentially discordant ideas.

New Music also seems to have been popular in Chu. In the passage from the *Chu Ci* above, we see reference to performances of “the latest songs,” “a dance of Zheng,” and “singing-girls of Zheng and Wei,” all of which were seen as abhorrent by Confucian theorists. The wild abandon of the performance and the licentiousness of the participants also point to non-Confucian behaviors associated with the New Music. Chu’s extravagant “Shamanic tones,” as described by Lü Buwei, might also have been categorized as New Music.<sup>85</sup> Native Chu music still was classified as New Music in Han times, as indicated by a reference in the *Hanshu* 漢書 to the dismissal of Chu musicians from the Han Office of Music in 7 BCE.<sup>86</sup> In that year, Han ritual classicists convinced Emperor Ai 哀帝 (reigned 7 to 1 BCE) to abolish the Office of Music, which had been established by Emperor Wu 武帝 (reigned 141 to 87 BCE). They claimed that the “sounds of Zheng,” apparently synonymous with any form of regional music and song used for court entertainments, had become too popular at the court and that they would lead to the dissolution of the Han empire. The *Hanshu* passage equates the music of Chu, as well as that of several other states like Qi, Cai 蔡, and Ba, to the “sounds of Zheng,” likely because of their ‘barbarian’ non-Zhou origins and disassociation with *yayue*.<sup>87</sup>

Chu music appears to have been very popular at the Han court, beginning under Han emperor Gaozu (reigned 202 to 195 BCE).<sup>88</sup> Gaozu had grown up in Pei 沛 (modern Xuzhou), a region that had gradually fallen under Chu political control and cultural influence in the 5th and 4th centuries BCE. Emperor Gaozu had a deep fondness for Chu, as reflected in his biography in the *Shiji*. One passage describes Gaozu’s final visit in 195 BCE to his old home in Pei, where he held a grand feast and summoned his old friends, elders, young men, and even a group of 120 children, whom he “taught to sing.”<sup>89</sup> At this feast, he is said to have struck a *zhu*, a kind of string instrument played

85 *Lüshi chungiu* 5/3.2; Knoblock and Riegel 2000, 141.

86 *Hanshu* 22 (Treatise on Ritual and Music).

87 *Hanshu* 22 (Treatise on Ritual and Music).

88 For a discussion of Chu music during the Han dy-

nasty, see R. Li 2012.

89 *Shiji* 8 (Annals of Gaozu 高祖本紀). Watson 1993, 81–82.

with a stick,<sup>90</sup> and to have sung a deeply nostalgic song, with tears streaming down his face, about his beloved homeland. Indeed, so great was his love for Chu that he promoted the use of “Chu melodies” at his court, as reflected in the following references from the *Shiji* and *Hanshu*:

1. In 202 BCE, Xiang Yu 項羽 realized that he was surrounded by Liu Bang’s [Gaozu’s] troops when he heard “Chu Songs” sung from all directions.<sup>91</sup>
2. Gaozu’s *Fangzhong yue* 房中樂 (Music for the Inner Chamber), apparently used for imperial ancestral sacrifices, was “composed of ‘Chu melodies’ to honor the southern origins of the imperial house.”<sup>92</sup> This passage also seems to associate wind instruments, including *xiao* 簫 (panpipes) and *guan* 管 (pipes), with *Fangzhong yue*.<sup>93</sup> One hymn of this genre, *Anshi Fangzhong* 安世房中 (Bedroom Divinity Who Brings Security to the Generations), is said to have been performed by women to the accompaniment of strings.<sup>94</sup>
3. According to the *Hanshu*, Gaozu asked his consort Lady Qi to perform a Chu dance, while he sang a Chu song. The song that he sang, *Song on the Swan* (*Honghu ge* 鴻鵠歌), explained to Lady Qi why he could not replace the heir apparent with their son, Liu Ruyi.<sup>95</sup>

These passages reflect the continuing impact that Chu had in the Han court, as well as to the enduring importance of wooden instruments in Chu music. They also show the diverse roles that this music (and dance) played in Han military, ritual, and daily life at the court. As Kern argues, Chu songs also had a “strong influence on Western Han imperial literature culture, especially in the main poetic genre of the Han, the *fu* [賦]”; as well as in songs composed during Emperor Wu’s reign, some even by that emperor

90 As discussed earlier in this paper, some scholars believe that the five-stringed instrument in Marquis Yi’s tomb is a *zhu*. The earliest *zhu* identified by a tomb inventory was excavated from an early Han tomb, Hunan Changsha Mawangdui M3, deep in former Chu territory. The instrument, an unplayable replica made for burial purposes, has holes for five strings, a single string anchor for attaching and tightening the strings, and a graduated fingerboard. Though smaller in size, its construction is very similar to the instrument in Marquis Yi’s tomb. See Furniss 2008, 71–73.

91 Kern 2004, 38; *Shiji* 7 (Annals of Xiang Yu); *Hanshu* 31 (Biographies of Chen Sheng and Xiang Ji 陳勝

項籍傳). Liu Bang 刘邦 was the given name for Emperor Gaozu.

92 Kern 2004, 38. *Hanshu* 22 (Treatise on Ritual and Music).

93 Jenny So suggests that the small ensemble in Marquis Yi’s tomb may well have performed *fangzhong yue*, which she takes to be chamber or entertainment music, see So 2000, 30. The ritual role of *fangzhong yue*, however, is suggested by the above mentioned passage in the *Hanshu*.

94 Major 1999, 151.

95 Kern 2004, 39. *Shiji* 55 (The Hereditary House of Marquis of Liu 留侯世家); *Hanshu* 40 (Biographies of Zhang, Chen, Wang, and Zhou 張陳王周傳).

himself.<sup>96</sup> John Major also argues for a “definite and growing fad for Chu culture in fashionable Han social and intellectual circles”, a trend that he claims accelerated during the reign of Emperor Wu.<sup>97</sup> The Han admiration for things Chu also is suggested by the emergence of Huang-Lao Daoism,<sup>98</sup> the popularity of Chu shamanic practices and texts (for example, the *Chu Ci*),<sup>99</sup> and the continuity of Chu lacquer and woodworking traditions.<sup>100</sup>

## 6 Conclusion

Despite the destruction of Chu by Qin in 223 BCE, Chu’s political and cultural legacy, especially in the form of music, thrived during the Han dynasty. This is not perhaps what Lü Buwei might have expected when he suggested that the decline of a state could be seen in its choice of music. Chu music and the musical instruments associated with it were clearly favored at the Han court well into the 1st century BCE under Emperor Wu, arguably the most powerful and successful ruler of the Han dynasty. Did such music reflect any weakness in the power or confidence of his state? Considering that the Han dynasty survived until the 3rd century CE, I would argue that it did not. Far from associating Chu music with notions of failure, Han rulers relied on Chu music as an element, even a weapon, in their imperial propaganda, displaying their own power by affiliating themselves with the cultural traditions of the once powerful Chu. These rulers, it seems, had little interest in traditional Zhou music and culture, which had been connected to prestige and power up to the 5th century BCE. Up until that time, Chu had tried to define and express its own political power and status in terms of earlier Zhou standards. However, with increasing confidence in its own power and prestige, Chu began to focus on its native traditions and crafts, including the increased production and use of lacquered musical instruments. As Chu rulers and élites had once done with Zhou traditions, Han rulers and élites now turned to Chu to define and proclaim their own power and status.

96 Kern 2004, 38.

97 Major 1999, 140.

98 Major 1999, 140–141. Major describes Huang-Lao 黄老 as a ‘school’ or intellectual trend that was closely linked to the origins of early Daoism. Based on tex-

tual and iconographical evidence, he argues that Huang-Lao was strongly linked to the Chu intellectual tradition.

99 Sukhu 1999.

100 So 1999, 37.

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6 Jingzhou bowuguan 1984, fig. 82. 7 Hubei sheng bowuguan 1989, vol. 1, fig. 79; measurement from Guangsheng 2000, 89, fig. 4.3. 8 Hubei sheng bowuguan 1989, pl. 113. 9 Hubei sheng bowuguan 1989, pl. 114; measurements from Guangsheng 2000, 88, fig. 4.2.

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Véronique Alexandre Journeau

## Musique ancienne versus musique nouvelle dans la Chine ancienne

### Résumé

From the end of the 2nd millennium BCE, music occupied a prominent place in the Zhou system of governance. Ritual and music remained pregnant with resonance and meaning well into the 1st millennium, when writers emphasize the power and virtues of music, a cosmogony in which music is important (notably in the 吕氏春秋 *Lüshi chunqiu* or *Springs and Autumns* of 吕不韋 *Lü Buwei*), the nostalgia of a poet in a hostile political climate, and various philosophical approaches. Zhou tradition is ordered in relation to a binary opposition between ancient harmony and a disharmony resulting from loss of power as their empire fragmented into warring states (475–221 BCE). This change was perceived as decline from an ancient polity in which music was associated with virtue to a new music associated with pleasure.

Keywords: power; virtue; decadence; China; Zhou (Dynasty); ‘warring states’; ‘virtuous music’

Depuis la fin du II<sup>e</sup> millénaire avant notre ère, la musique tient une place importante dans le système de gouvernement des Zhou. Divers écrits témoignent que le rôle des rites et de la musique reste prégnant tout au long du I<sup>er</sup> millénaire avant notre ère, mettant l'accent sur tel ou tel aspect : la régulation par le pouvoir et les vertus de la musique dans les canons confucéens, une cosmogonie intégrant pleinement la musique dans des œuvres de lettrés (*Lü Buwei*), la nostalgie d'un poète dans un contexte politique hostile (*Qu Yuan*) ou encore l'approche philosophique (écoles de pensée). Lors de l'éclatement en royaumes combattants (475–221 av. notre ère), le passage d'une musique ancienne associée à la vertu à une musique nouvelle associée au plaisir est perçu comme une décadence.

Keywords: pouvoir; vertu; décadence; Chine; (Dynastie des) Zhou; ‘Royaumes combattants’; musique vertueuse

## I Introduction

Le pouvoir de la musique dans la Chine ancienne est célébré dans de nombreux textes, notamment dans le Livre de musique de l'antiquité chinoise (樂記 *Yueji*), confucéen, où il est dit que la musique traduit les sentiments du peuple comme elle sert au gouvernement à guider les comportements et qu'elle procède du ciel tout en accompagnant les activités terrestres, en particulier les rites, ce qui a valu au « 樂記 *Yueji* » d'être inséré dans le Livre des rites (禮記 *Liji*). Les sources convergent pour situer un seuil décrit comme entre musique ancienne et musique nouvelle au cours de la période des Royaumes combattants (I<sup>re</sup> moitié du Ve siècle à 221 avant notre ère), ce qui corroborerait un impact d'influences réciproques entre musique et société. Il est possible de repérer des indices de modifications dans la musique qui sont signes d'un changement de pouvoir politique dans la plupart des textes et en particulier dans ceux présentés ci-après. Il est même possible de valider ou réfuter certaines hypothèses de datation d'un texte, par exemple les Rites des Zhou (周禮 *Zhouli*),<sup>1</sup> ou de son attribution à tel ou tel auteur, par exemple Qu Yuan (屈原) dans les Odes de Chu (楚辭 *Chuci*), selon la musique qui y est mentionnée.

Le 禮記 *Liji*, Livre des rites, et le 樂記 *Yueji*, Livre de musique, sont des canons confucéens datés des III<sup>e</sup>–II<sup>e</sup> siècle avant notre ère (transmis par les disciples) mais qui reflètent bien une tradition des Zhou, antérieure à cette époque, à laquelle Confucius (551–478) était très attaché, lui qui avait également sélectionné 305 poèmes (Odes, hymnes, chansons de pays) du XI<sup>e</sup> au VII<sup>e</sup> siècle pour constituer le premier recueil de textes littéraires chinois connu (詩經 *Shijing*).

- (1) Dans le 詩經 *Shijing*, Livre des Odes, se trouvent déjà les aspects relatifs à l'harmonie de la musique et à sa place dans les cérémonies à la fin des Shang et au début des Zhou ;
- (2) Dans le 周禮 *Zhouli*, Rites des Zhou, de datation incertaine, sont décrits le rôle et les caractéristiques de la musique du point de vue de l'organisation administrative ;
- (3) Dans les 楚辭 *Chuci*, Odes des Chu, recueil de poèmes et principalement de Qu Yuan (ca. 340–278 avant notre ère), est confirmé le basculement entre musique ancienne et musique nouvelle avec précision sur les airs et les contextes ;

1 Reconstitué au II<sup>e</sup> siècle avant notre ère, son contenu est attribué à Zhou Gong 周公 (frère du roi Wu des Zhou, vainqueur de la dynastie Shang au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle avant notre ère), et il semble articulé en deux parties, l'une d'organisation administrative et fon-

tionnelle de la musique (probablement restitution du texte d'origine), l'autre de commentaires (explicitant ce qui n'existe plus à cette époque postérieure au règne Zhou).

- (4) Le 呂氏春秋 *Lüshi chunqiu* (Printemps et Automnes) de Lü Buwei (ca. 291–235), haut conseiller dans le royaume Qin (vainqueur et unificateur de la Chine), et le 淮南子 *Huainanzi* du Prince Liu An (179–122) entouré d'une cour de spécialistes de toutes disciplines, sont des textes narratifs, écrits ou retranscrits par des dignitaires, dans lesquels des légendes et faits sont structurés selon une double logique cosmogonique et de gouvernance. Ils sont également utiles sur le plan théorique.<sup>2</sup>

Par la suite, dans le 史記 *Shiji* rédigé par Sima Qian (145–186), qui est considéré comme le premier historien de l'histoire de la Chine, nombre d'éléments de ces écrits antérieurs sont repris et structurés.

## 2 L'effet des sons sur la psyché selon leur nature était connu dans l'antiquité chinoise

Le début du Livre de musique de l'antiquité chinoise, « 樂記 *Yueji* »,<sup>3</sup> chapitre 1 (樂本篇 Fondements de la musique), établit la relation entre les sentiments ou états d'âme et la nature des sons émis<sup>4</sup> (seuls trois caractères sur dix varient, les 2e, 8e et 10e, ce qui met en relief l'essentiel).

是故	
其哀 心感者	其聲焦以殺
其樂 心感者	其聲嗶以緩
其喜 心感者	其聲發以散
其怒 心感者	其聲粗以厲
其敬 心感者	其聲直以廉
其愛 心感者	其聲和以柔

Ainsi

Ceux dont le cœur éprouve de la tristesse

ont un son tourmenté par étouffement.

Ceux dont le cœur éprouve de la joie

ont un son détendu par relâchement

Ceux dont le cœur éprouve de la bienveillance

ont un son rude par accroissement

Ceux dont le cœur éprouve de la vénération

2 Voir Journeau 2015b, chapitre 1.

3 Sauf indication contraire, les traductions sont miennes et les exemples extraits de mes propres pu-

blications, ici Journeau 2008.

4 Journeau 2008, 6.

ont un son droit                    par tempérament  
 Ceux dont le cœur éprouve de l'amour  
 ont un son harmonieux            par rapprochement

Le texte conclut que c'est un moyen de gouverner si l'on est attentif aux états d'âme du peuple : « Ces six états ne sont pas stables, l'émotion ressentie au contact du monde les meut. Ainsi les anciens souverains étaient attentifs aux émotions (六者非性也感於物而后動) ».

L'effet réciproque de l'agencement des sons sur les sentiments est également énoncé<sup>5</sup> dans le chapitre 5 (樂言篇 Propos de la musique),<sup>6</sup> construit sur une formule refrain « 之音作而民 : ces sons agissent et le peuple [est] » au centre de chaque distique, avec une description des sons par l'ensemble du premier vers et celle de l'état du peuple par les deux derniers caractères du deuxième vers :

是故志微唯殺	之音作而民	思憂。
擘諧慢易繁文簡節	之音作而民	康樂。
粗厲猛起奮末廣賁	之音作而民	剛毅。
廉直勁正莊誠	之音作而民	肅敬。
寬裕肉好順成和動	之音作而民	茲愛。
流辟邪散狄成滌濫	之音作而民	淫亂。

Ainsi

Les sons à faible visée, évanescents,  
 font un peuple s'attristant plein de soucis ;  
 Les sons d'accords aisés, aux mutations lentes, tracés foisonnants et rythme simple,  
 font un peuple se reposant plein de joie ;  
 Les sons stridents et vigoureux, au déploiement extrême avec amples accélérations,  
 font un peuple se sentant plein d'énergie ;  
 Les sons sobres et directs, fermes et justes, majestueux et sincères,  
 font un peuple s'inclinant plein de respect ;  
 Les sons généreux et charnus, se succédant en mouvements harmonieux,  
 font un peuple compatissant plein d'amour ;

5 Journeau 2008, 94-95.

6 L'effet des sons selon leur nature est relaté dans les autres textes dont le *Lüshi chungü* ; voir notamment la traduction de Knoblock et Riegel 2000, 144: "If [musical tones] are too grand and large, the inner

mind is unsettled [...]. If a tone is too small, the mind will feel cheated [...]. If musical tones are too clear, the inner mind will be threatened [...]. If musical tones are too muddy, the inner mind will be depressed?"

Les sons au cours dépravé, déréglé et dispersé,  
font un peuple se pervertissant plein de confusion.

Un troisième passage, chapitre 8 (魏文侯篇 Marquis Wen de Wei), celui où sont comparées la musique ancienne et la musique nouvelle par dialogue entre le marquis de Wei et un disciple de 孔子 Confucius, 子夏 Zixia,<sup>7</sup> affecte un effet selon le timbre des instruments :<sup>8</sup>

鍾聲鏗	鏗以立號	Le son de la cloche est résonnant, la résonance établit un signal,
號以立橫	橫以立武	qui traverse d'est en ouest et instaure la bravoure au combat ;
君子聽鍾聲	則思武臣	le souverain à l'écoute de la cloche pense aux dignitaires militaires.

Cette version répartit par grandes catégories de timbres, simplification par rapport à l'organisation en catégories instrumentales présentée dans les Rites des Zhou (周禮 *Zhouli*) (avec leurs effectifs et leur emploi). Le *Yueji* met l'accent sur les sentiments à l'écoute de tel ou tel timbre, alors que le *Zhouli* précise leur emploi, par exemple pour les tambours :<sup>9</sup>

On bat le tambour du tonnerre [*lei gu*],  
pour annoncer les sacrifices aux esprits du Ciel ;  
On bat le tambour des esprits supérieurs [*ling gu*],  
pour annoncer les sacrifices aux génies de la Terre ;  
On bat le grand tambour [*lu gu*],  
pour annoncer les sacrifices aux esprits inférieurs ;  
On bat le tambour [*fen gu*] long de 8 pieds  
pour annoncer les manœuvres des troupes et armées ;  
On bat le tambour [*gao*] long de 12 pieds  
pour annoncer les manœuvres des grandes chasses ;  
On bat le tambour [*jin*] long de 6 ½ pieds  
pour accompagner les instruments métalliques ;

7 Voir Journeau 2015b, 154.

8 Journeau 2015b, 154 et, la suite « le son de la pierre est clair, le son de la soie est triste », 155.

9 La traduction est d'Édouard Biot (Biot 1851, 264).  
Le texte chinois est : 以雷鼓鼓神祀, 以灵鼓鼓社祭,

以路鼓鼓鬼享, 以鼗鼓鼓军事, 以鞀鼓鼓役事, 以晋鼓鼓金奏。以金鐃和鼓, 以金鞀节鼓, 以金饶止鼓, 以金铎通鼓。凡祭祀百物之神, 鼓兵舞、敝舞者。http://www.guoxue.com/jinbu/13jing/zhouli/zl\_002.htm (dernière visite 19/07/2019).

- Avec l'instrument métallique [*chun*]  
on donne le ton aux tambours ;  
Avec la clochette [*zhuo*]  
on donne la mesure aux tambours ;  
Avec la clochette sans battant [*rao*]  
on arrête les tambours ;  
Avec la clochette à battant métallique [*duo*]  
on règle le nombre de coups sur les tambours ;

Dans tous les sacrifices adressés aux esprits des cent choses, ils [les instruments métalliques] accompagnent avec les tambours la danse des armes et la danse des baguettes à touffes de soie.

### 3 La musique faisait partie de la gouvernance par les rites instituée par la dynastie Zhou

Plusieurs passages du « 樂記 *Yueji* » (Livre de musique) évoquent une musique qui révèle la qualité de la gouvernance<sup>10</sup> ou l'accompagne dans ses cérémonies, en particulier :

先王之制	禮樂	人為之節
衰麻哭泣	所以	節喪紀也
鐘鼓干戚	所以	和安樂也
昏姻冠笄	所以	別男女也
射鄉食饗	所以	正交接也

Le système des anciens souverains rites et musique  
fait la modération des hommes :  
La tenue de deuil, les gémissements et les larmes,  
c'est pour la cérémonie des funérailles ;  
Cloches et tambours, boucliers et haches,  
c'est pour l'harmonie, la paix et la joie ;  
Le mariage, la coiffe virile et l'épingle à cheveux,  
c'est pour séparer les garçons des filles ;  
Les joutes de tir à l'arc lors des banquets,  
c'est pour établir des relations justes et  
entretenues.<sup>11</sup>

10 Voir Journeau 2008, 16–17.

11 Voir Journeau 2008, 34–35.

Le détail en est donné dans le 周禮 *Zhouli*, par exemple pour ce dernier vers sur le tir à l'arc :<sup>12</sup>

En général, quand on fait le tir à l'arc, on marque la mesure des temps pour l'empereur par l'air [驍虞 *zou yu*], pour un prince feudataire par l'air [狸首 *lizhou*], pour un préfet par l'air [采蘋 *caipin*], pour un gradué par l'air [采芣 *caifan*].

Cette musique accompagne une société très hiérarchisée. Il y a neuf grands airs pour la musique rituelle (九夏) qui sont joués aux entrées et sorties des personnages ainsi : *wang* (王夏), « air de l'empereur » (entrées et sorties du souverain); *gai* (肆夏), « air du sacrifice » (départ des hôtes ou des esprits des ancêtres à la fin d'un sacrifice); *zhao* (昭夏), « air de l'appel » (entrée et sortie de la victime du sacrifice); *na* (納夏), « air de l'introduction »; *zhang* (章夏), « air de l'illustration »; *zhai* (齊夏) ou *qi*, « air de l'offrande de grains »; *zu* (族夏), « air de la parenté » (familles, clans, ...); *gai* (袞夏), « air des degrés »; *ao* (醵夏), « air du respect ».<sup>13</sup> Les petits airs et les petites danses sont pour les feudataires et fonctionnaires de rangs inférieurs. Les grades et les effectifs dans l'administration de la musique, comme dans l'administration dans son entièreté dont elle fait partie, forment la structure de base et probablement la partie la plus ancienne du *Zhouli* (Rites des Zhou). Cette structure est ensuite précisée et commentée du point de vue des rôles par affectation (pierres sonores, cloches, orgues à bouche, ...).<sup>14</sup> L'absence de musique est aussi régie par les événements :<sup>15</sup>

Lorsqu'il survient une éclipse de soleil ou de lune, un éboulement aux quatre monts [*zhen*] ou aux cinq monts [*yue*], un prodige, un événement extraordinaire ou désastreux, lorsqu'un prince feudataire meurt, [le grand directeur de la musique] ordonne d'éloigner la musique. Lorsqu'il y a une grande épidémie, une grande calamité, un grand désastre, lorsqu'un grand officier meurt, en général dans les circonstances où il y a une cause de tristesse publique, il fait descendre les instruments suspendus sur des châssis.

Du point de vue du rôle événementiel de la musique, le principe est le même pour les dynasties Shang et Zhou et il relève, pour ce qui est de la détermination des circonstances,

12 Dans la traduction de Biot 1851, II, 42. Il indique en note que les airs correspondent à des chants du *Shijing* Livre des Odes.

13 Les appellations entre guillemets sont celles de la traduction de Biot 1851, tome II, 59. Les explications sont celles données par le *Grand dictionnaire Ricci* (disponible en cédérom). Le texte chinois est :

凡樂事，以鐘鼓奏九夏：《王夏》、《肆夏》、《昭夏》、《納夏》、《章夏》、《齊夏》、《族夏》、《袞夏》、《醵夏》。Xuedong 1999, 624, dans son commentaire de ce passage, le *Lishi chunqiu*.

14 Voir Biot 1851, I, 404-408.

15 Biot 1851, II, 39.

d'un autre office de l'administration impériale, le ministère des rites :<sup>16</sup>

Les offices de l'astronome et de l'astrologue impérial constituent des charges héréditaires. Comme chez les Chaldéens. Le premier suit assidûment la marche du soleil, de la lune, des planètes, spécialement celle de Jupiter. Il détermine leur place dans les vingt-huit divisions stellaires. Le second est chargé spécialement d'observer les phénomènes accidentels et extraordinaires qui surviennent dans le ciel, de les consigner sur ses registres et d'en tirer des pronostics. [...] Un grand nombre de cérémonies sacrées du [*Zhouli*] sont mises en relation avec certains astérismes stellaires.

Par la suite, les dynasties ou les royaumes font cependant certains choix de préférences musicales qui marquent leur volonté de se différencier et de s'affirmer : cela peut être le choix d'une note diapason, ce qui explique les variantes constatées dans les différents royaumes,<sup>17</sup> ou encore d'une note évincée.

#### 4 Un signe musical symbolique et de datation du *Zhouli* (Rites des Zhou) : la note « 商 *shang* »

La dénomination des notes existait déjà en Chine durant ce premier millénaire avant notre ère et les évolutions constatées dans cette dénomination sont significatives de changements politiques. Dans la plupart des textes mentionnés, la dénomination des notes du pentatonique est la suivante : 宮 *gong* (fondamentale), 商 *shang* (seconde), 角 *jue* (tierce), 徵 *zhi* (quinte), 羽 *yu* (sixte). Mais dans le *Zhouli*, d'une part la note 商 *shang* semble absente, au moins de certaines cérémonies, alors que les quatre autres notes sont mentionnées (et, par conséquent, les intervalles se succèdent en {deux tons, un ton et demi, un ton} ou, en d'autres termes, révèlent l'absence de la scission du diton en deux tons) ; d'autre part, dans un passage prenant pour référence le système des douze tubes musicaux 律呂 *lǜlǚ* (ici dans le système équivalent en cloches), le terme 圓鍾 *yuanzhong*<sup>18</sup> est présent, qui n'est pas usité par la suite, de même que les termes 函鍾 *hanzhong* et 小呂 *xiaolǚ* plus loin. De plus, la flûte est mentionnée comme catégorie d'instrument sous son appellation ancienne (簫) *yuè*.

Ces énoncés sont dans la partie du *Zhouli* où est présenté le rôle du grand Directeur de la musique avec, d'emblée, cette précision rythmée par six : « il enseigne les vertus de la musique aux fils de l'État : juste milieu, harmonie, vénération des esprits, constance,

16 Biot 1851, II, 17–19.

17 Voir Rault-Leyrat 2000.

18 圓 correspond à ce qui est circulaire, au ciel, à la voûte céleste ronde par rapport à la terre carrée (方).



piété filiale, amitié; les modes du langage musical : incitatif, ineffable, allusif, incantatoire, parlé, narré (以樂德教國子, 中、和、祇庸、孝、友; 以樂語教國子, 興、道、諷、誦、言、語). »

Ce passage est suivi de la mention d'une progression en six pas qui montre que les deux gammes par tons s'emboîtent par mouvements contraires. C'est implicite dans la description de l'enchaînement en trois temps, qui correspondent aux trois types de cérémonies (offrandes aux esprits des trois ordres : 祭 *ji*, 享 *xiang*, 祀 *si*), d'une musique associée aux instruments (奏 *zou*), au chant (歌 *ge*) et à la danse (舞 *wu*) qui donne les six étapes pour l'instrument (奏) : 黃鍾, 大簇, 姑洗, 蕤賓, 夷則, 無射; soit : *Do, Ré, Mi, Fa-dièse, Sol-dièse, La-dièse* (gamme par tons ascendante) et pour le chant (歌) : 大呂, 應鍾, 南呂, 函鍾, 小呂, 夾鍾; soit : *Do-dièse, Si, La, Sol, Fa, Mi-bémol* (gamme par tons descendante, complémentaire de la précédente).<sup>19</sup> Les danses (舞) sont citées successivement ainsi : 雲門, 咸池, 大磬, 大夏, 大濩, 大武. Puis vient un bref passage énonçant, sans le dire explicitement, un procédé de métabole musicale (凡樂, 圓鍾為宮, 黃鍾為角, 太簇為徵, 姑洗為羽, 雷鼓、雷鼗, 孤竹之管; 云和之琴瑟, 雲門之舞).<sup>20</sup>

C'est une des explicitions du processus qui a été présenté dans d'autres articles<sup>21</sup> et spécifiquement pour le *Zhouli*,<sup>22</sup> dans un article à part entière, plus musicologique,<sup>23</sup> qui incite à le dater dans une période bien antérieure aux textes datés du IV<sup>e</sup> au II<sup>e</sup> siècle avant notre ère qui ont été davantage traduits et commentés comme, notamment, le 禮記 *Liji* (Livre des rites), le 呂氏春秋 *Lüshi chunqiu* (Printemps et Automnes) de Lü Buwei et le 淮南子 *Huainanzi* du Prince Liu An. En effet, la relation cosmogonique est présentée dans le « 月令 *Yueling* » (chapitre du calendrier) du *Liji* sous la forme de l'énoncé de quatre configurations, quatre notes, quatre saisons, chacune divisée en trois avec mise en relation des notes du système pentatonique 五聲 *wusheng* avec les douze tubes musicaux en sorte qu'une note du *wusheng* (cinq sons) reste trois fois – une saison, trois mois – à la même place pendant que les autres bougent, comme ici 角 *jue* reste sur *Do*. Pour résoudre le problème de cinq notes pour quatre saisons,<sup>24</sup> c'est la note 宮 *gong* qui est mise au centre et qui correspond à la cinquième saison (insérée à la fin de l'été) en sorte que la note 商 *shang* est explicitement présente, de même dans le *Lüshi chunqiu* et dans le *Huainanzi* où, de façon similaire dans les deux textes, cette relation est développée.

19 Texte chinois : 乃分樂而序之, 以祭、以享、以祀。乃奏黃鍾, 歌大呂, 舞雲門, 以祀天神; 乃奏大簇, 歌應鍾, 舞咸池, 以祭地示; 乃奏姑洗, 歌南呂, 舞大磬, 以祀四望; 乃奏蕤賓, 歌函鍾, 舞大夏, 以祭山川; 乃奏夷則, 歌小呂, 舞大濩, 以享先祖; 乃奏無射, 歌夾鍾, 舞大武, 以享先祖。

20 管 est le terme générique pour instrument à vent tubulaire (tube), 孤竹 est le bambou solitaire et l'ensemble indique une flûte isolée tout en évoquant par 孤竹 aussi un ancien royaume de la dy-

nastie Shang-Yin. 云和 est un mont (harmonie des nuages), 雲門 est une danse (porte des nuages).

21 J'ai présenté la démarche notamment dans Journeau 2007a, 117-134.

22 Le décompte chinois ancien scinde le mois en six fois cinq jours ou trois décades ou encore deux fois quinze jours, toujours une interaction du 2 et du 3, d'où l'importance du 6.

23 Journeau 2015a.

24 Journeau 2016.

Le décompte par quinze jours tient compte du fait qu'il y a deux séries emboîtées.<sup>25</sup> Cependant, dans ces ouvrages qui se recoupent les uns les autres, les noms des tubes musicaux sont ceux que nous connaissons (圓鍾 *yuanzhong*, 函鍾 *hanzhong* et 小呂 *xiaolü* ont disparu) et la progression, telle qu'énoncée dans le *Yueling*,<sup>26</sup> semble par demi-tons mais l'interprétation par la métabole semble oubliée (l'oubli de la musique des anciens, perte de filiation, est un leitmotiv des dynasties successives depuis cette époque) :

孟春之月	甲乙	角	大簇	(Ré)	
仲春之月	甲乙	角	夾鐘	(Ré#)	} Printemps
季春之月	甲乙	角	姑洗	(Mi)	
孟夏之月	丙丁	徵	中呂	(Fa)	
仲夏之月	丙丁	徵	蕤賓	(Fa#)	} Été
季夏之月	丙丁	徵	林鍾	(Sol)	
孟秋之月	庚辛	商	夷則	(Sol#)	
仲秋之月	庚辛	商	南呂	(La)	} Automne
季秋之月	庚辛	商	無射	(La#)	
孟冬之月	壬癸	羽	應鍾	(Si)	
仲冬之月	壬癸	羽	黃鍾	(Do)	} Hiver
季冬之月	壬癸	羽	大呂	(Do#)	

Les tableaux des correspondances saisonnières et des correspondances mensuelles par Chantal Zheng dans la traduction française du *Huainanzi*<sup>27</sup> confirment un usage généralisé à l'époque.

25 Il serait trop long d'expliquer cela ici en détail : voir Journeau 2015b, chapitre 1, « La musique en Chine ancienne : cosmogonie et philosophie de la nature », et deux extraits de Philosophes taoïstes II, *Huainanzi*, respectivement dans « Des Signes célestes » dans la traduction de Matthieu 2003, 115–118, et « Des Règles saisonnières » dans la traduction de Zheng 2003, 205–247 : « Lorsque Dou indique *zi*, c'est le Solstice d'hiver, et la note correspondante est celle du tube musical *huangzhong* « cloche jaune ». Au bout de quinze jours, il indique *gui*, [...] la note correspondante est celle du tube *yingzhong*, « cloche résonnante ». Quinze jours plus tard, il indique *chou*, [...] la note correspondante est celle du tube musical *wuyi*, « sans surgissement ». Quinze autres jours plus tard, [...] le *yin* qui excède réside dans la terre.

C'est pourquoi l'on dit qu'il saute un jour, et que quarante-six jours après le Solstice d'hiver, c'est le Début du printemps » ; « Au premier mois de printemps, [...] la note est le *jue* ; le tube musical juste est *taicou*, [...] ; Au second mois de printemps, [...] la note est le *jue* ; le tube musical *jiazhong*, [...] ; Au troisième mois de printemps, [...] la note est le *jue* ; le tube musical *guxi*, [...] ; Au premier mois de l'été, [...] la note est le *zhi* ; le tube musical *zhonglü*, [...] »

26 D'après Zheng 2003, 199, note 2 : « Les chapitre intitulés *Yueling* furent ajoutés par Ma Rong (79–166) vers la fin de la dynastie Han. Pour plusieurs commentateurs, dont Zheng Kangcheng (127–200), le *Yueling* du *Liji* serait l'œuvre de Lü Buwei ».

27 Zheng 2003, 202.

Quant à savoir pourquoi la note « 商 *shang* » est quasiment absente du *Zhouli*, plusieurs hypothèses sont possibles.<sup>28</sup> D'un point de vue politique et social, certains noms sont tabous pendant une période. Ainsi, il est de coutume de proscrire l'usage du nom du nouveau souverain, le temps de son règne. La suppression de la note « 商 *shang* » peut être advenue pour marquer l'élimination de la dynastie Shang par la dynastie Zhou, ce qui serait corroboré par le fait que le *Zhouli* est attribué à Zhou Gong, frère du roi Wu, dit le combattant, qui en est le vainqueur. D'un point de vue musical, puisque d'autres appellations du *Zhouli* sont, à l'inverse, en usage mais disparaissent par la suite, il est possible que cela corresponde à un état du système musical à l'époque. L'histoire de la musique est une histoire de la fragmentation des sons : dans la haute antiquité, les intervalles repères furent l'octave, l'unisson et la quinte, considérée parfois comme l'unisson des voix d'homme et des voix de femmes, puis, présente dans les harmoniques, la tierce.<sup>29</sup> La succession des plus petits intervalles fut alors le diton et le ton et demi ; le ton apparaissant par différence de la quinte et de la quarte (son complémentaire à l'octave). Puis vint la prise en compte « directe » du ton par scission du diton en deux tons et l'établissement de l'échelle pentatonique 五聲 *wusheng* (cinq sons) qui perturba la correspondance entre les quatre notes et les quatre saisons et le cheminement dans les vingt-huit mansions. C'est pourquoi les relations cosmogoniques furent retravaillées à l'extrême. L'étape suivante fut perturbatrice, en Chine comme en Grèce, avec l'introduction d'une musique nouvelle qui pervertit, qui s'oppose à la musique vertueuse et que nous allons maintenant décrire. Une question brièvement évoquée dans le *Yueji* est d'ailleurs révélatrice de ce point de vue : « pourquoi les sons sont-ils exagérés et utilisent-ils la note *shang* ? » ; ce qui semble indiquer que cette note a été introduite ou réintroduite.

## 5 Un signe musical du déclin des Zhou : l'apparition d'une musique nouvelle, de plaisir

Un passage du *Livre de musique* est particulièrement révélateur d'une évolution politique en miroir d'une évolution musicale :

魏文侯問於子夏曰

Le marquis Wen de l'État de Wei demande à Zixia :

《吾端冕而

28 Une autre interprétation est celle du commentateur sur lequel Édouard Biot s'appuie, Biot 1851, 51: « la note [*shang*] indique qu'on est vainqueur dans le

combat ».

29 Voir Journeau 2008, 487–507.

« Moi, en robe et coiffe de cérémonie

聽古樂則唯恐臥

à l'écoute de la musique ancienne, je ne peux que craindre de m'endormir

聽鄭衛之音則不知倦

à l'écoute des notes de Zheng et Wei,<sup>30</sup> je ne connais pas de lassitude

敢問

j'ose dire que

古樂之如彼何也

la musique ancienne est telle

新樂之如此何也》

la musique nouvelle est ainsi »

[...]

《今夫新樂 進俯退俯 姦聲以濫 溺而不止 .....

« De nos jours, cette musique nouvelle, aux avancées et retraits biaisés  
aux sons déréglés par excès, sombre dans une déchéance sans fin [...]

今君之 所問者樂也 所好者音也 夫樂者與音 相近而不同》

De nos jours, les seigneurs / ce qu'ils demandent, c'est de la musique / ce qu'ils  
aiment, ce sont les sons  
or la musique comparée aux sons / a l'air proche mais est différente »

文侯曰

Le marquis Wen dit :

《敢問何如》

« oserais-je demander de quelle façon ? »

子夏對曰

Zixia répondit :

30 Deux États qui ont coexisté avec la dynastie Zhou  
durant le 1er millénaire avant notre ère et ont  
été vaincus comme les autres par le souverain du

royaume Qin qui devint le premier empereur en 221  
avant notre ère.

夫

《古者天地 順而四時 當民有德 而五穀昌 疾疢不作 而無妖祥

此之謂大當

« Autrefois, le ciel et la terre / suivaient leur cours en quatre saisons / à cette époque le peuple était vertueux / et les cinq céréales abondaient / souffrances et calamités n'advenaient pas / pas plus que les esprits maléfiques / C'est cela une grande époque /

然後 聖人作為 父子君臣 以為紀綱 紀綱既正 天下大定 天下大定

Ensuite / les sages établirent en tant que tels / père et fils, seigneurs et vassaux / pour en faire des lignes directrices / ces lignes directrices étant normalisées / le monde était bien ordonné /

然後 正六律和五聲 弦歌詩頌 此之謂德音 德音之謂樂 [...]

le monde étant bien ordonné / Ensuite / ils réglèrent les six *lüs* étalons / en harmonie avec les cinq sons / le chant des cithares et les hymnes poétiques / c'est cela qu'on appelle notes vertueuses / et les notes vertueuses, ce qu'on appelle musique [...]

今君之所好者其溺音乎》

De nos jours, les seigneurs, tout ce qu'ils aiment, ce sont les sons décadents.»

文侯曰

Le marquis Wen dit :

《敢問溺音 何從出也》

« Puis-je demander, les sons décadents, d'où proviennent-ils ? »

子夏對曰

Zixia répondit :<sup>31</sup>

《鄭音好濫淫志

Les notes de Zheng sont un motif pour aimer excès et licence

宋音燕女溺志

31 Les royaumes Zheng et Wei ont été mentionnés précédemment ; les royaumes Song et Qi sont également des royaumes des périodes des Printemps et

automne (722-481) et des Royaumes combattants (481-221).

les notes de Song sont un motif pour être oisif et ivre de femmes

衛音趨數煩志

les notes de Wei sont un motif pour créer maints troubles

齊音放辟喬志

les notes de Ji sont un motif pour musarder pervers et arrogant

此四者 皆淫於色 而害於德 是以祭祀 弗用也》

Ces quatre styles pervertissent la forme naturelle et sont nuisibles pour les vertus ;

ils sont, dans les cérémonies rituelles [...] inusités. »

Ce moment de passage d'une musique ancienne à une musique nouvelle est bien repéré et correspond à la vogue d'une musique populaire tournée vers les plaisirs et à la désaffection pour la musique des rites et célébrations dirigée par le souverain et sa cour. Ce thème est présent dans le *Lüshi chunqiu*<sup>32</sup> mais pas dans le *Zhouli* qui, en revanche, mentionne des préposés aux danses et airs étrangers, ce qui prouve qu'une place a été faite à cette musique,<sup>33</sup> dite « barbare ». Le rôle de la musique dans sa tradition rituelle confucianiste avait été contesté par le philosophe 墨子 Mozi, dans un chapitre « 非樂 Contre la musique », dès la seconde moitié du Ve siècle avant notre ère.<sup>34</sup>

La période des Royaumes Combattants qui fait suite à celle de Printemps et Automnes marque la transition du Ve au IIIe siècle, entre la féodalité Zhou en déclin et la tendance centralisatrice qui culminera dans l'unification de l'espace chinois par le premier empereur en 221 avant notre ère. C'est une époque de bouleversements sans précédents dans tous les domaines de l'activité humaine et particulièrement celui de la pensée, sur fond de guerres incessantes entre vassalités et de luttes féroces pour l'hégémonie...<sup>35</sup>

32 Voir la traduction du titre du chapitre 3 (侈樂) par "extravagant music" dans Knoblock et Riegel 2000, 140.

33 Les « porte-drapeaux à queue de bœuf », maîtres de danse pour la musique étrangère, dite irrégulière, et les « préposés aux bottines de cuir » pour les airs et

chants des quatre peuples étrangers, selon la traduction de Biot 1851, tome II, 64-67.

34 Voir le chapitre XXVII du Mozi, intitulé « Contre la musique ».

35 Cheng 1997, 86.

## 6 Les ancêtres vertueux sont la référence pour une musique ancienne savante et les Odes de Chu, 楚辭 *Chuci*, font écho à ces bouleversements

Dans le *Livre de Musique*, on célèbre les ancêtres vertueux ainsi :<sup>36</sup>

「大章」章之也

l'air “*dazhang*”: la conduite vertueuse [de 堯 Yao<sup>37</sup>]

咸池」備矣

l'air “*xianchi*”: la gouvernance vertueuse [de 皇帝 Huangdi<sup>38</sup>]

「韶」繼也

les danses “*shao*”: sa continuation [par 舜 Shun<sup>39</sup>]

「夏」大也

les danses “*xia*”: son rayonnement [par 禹 Yu<sup>40</sup>]

殷周之樂盡矣

la musique des Yin et des Zhou<sup>41</sup> atteint la perfection.

L'invocation de ces ancêtres mythiques réapparaît dans les périodes de trouble ; elle constitue une alternative à l'évolution apparue à cette époque et la musique y est directement associée pour célébrer la vertu et le discernement dans les cérémonies, comme

36 *Le Livre de musique de l'antiquité chinoise*, 樂記 Yueji ; Journeau 2008, 81.

37 Le quatrième des 五帝 *wu di*, souverains mythiques de la haute Antiquité, et qui, réputé pour sa vertu, aurait régné entre les XXIV<sup>e</sup> et XXIII<sup>e</sup> siècles avant notre ère, cf. *Grand dictionnaire Ricci* : Dictionnaire RICCI, vers 2357–2256 selon une chronologie révisée en 2002 sur la base d'un consensus d'experts. Il aurait instauré le règne de la piété filiale et des vertus civiques.

38 Le Souverain Jaune, empereur légendaire (cf. Dictionnaire RICCI). Premier des cinq souverains mythiques (2698–2597) et souverain idéalisé, il naquit à la fin du règne de Shennong, le divin laboureur, un des trois Augustes avec Fuxi et Nügua (début du III<sup>e</sup> millénaire avant notre ère). Il fit fabriquer des tambours, des cloches, des phonolithes et autres instruments de musique (les cithares avaient été inventées précédemment), eut plusieurs femmes et fils

dont Yao.

39 Héros civilisateur mythique. Le cinquième et dernier des 五帝 *wu di*, souverains mythiques de la haute Antiquité, qui était réputé pour sa vertu (et aurait régné de 2255 à 2506 avant notre ère). Ministre puis successeur de 堯 Yao, il représente avec lui l'idéal du souverain sage et vertueux. Il eut pour successeur 大禹 Yu le Grand. Cf. Dictionnaire RICCI.

40 Le successeur de 舜 Shun (qui serait né en 2059 avant notre ère), fondateur de la dynastie 夏 Xia, célèbre pour avoir entrepris de grands travaux contre les crues du fleuve Jaune.

41 Les dynasties qui ont succédé à la dynastie légendaire 夏 Xia (qui remonterait au moins à la fin du III<sup>e</sup> millénaire et aurait duré jusqu'au milieu du II<sup>e</sup> millénaire) : 商 Shang (puis 商殷 Shang-Yin) dans la 2<sup>e</sup> moitié du II<sup>e</sup> millénaire et 周 Zhou dans la 1<sup>re</sup> moitié du I<sup>er</sup> millénaire avant notre ère.

en témoignent notamment des odes sacrificielles (頌), des Zhou et des Shang du 詩經 *Shijing* Livre des Odes.<sup>42</sup>

Entre 屈原 Qu Yuan (ca. 340–278 avant notre ère) et son plus proche successeur, neveu ou disciple, 宋玉 Song Yu (298–222), le passage d'une musique ancienne à une musique nouvelle se fait sentir. Tous deux étaient musiciens et le nom de leur cithare *qin* est connu (號鍾 est indiqué dans le manuel pour citharistes *Fengxuan xuanpin* (1539) comme le *qin* des *Chuci*).<sup>43</sup> Dans les *Élégies de Chu* (楚辭), certains écrits, ceux de Qu Yuan et Song Yu, mentionnent de façon significative la musique alors que les autres textes de cette compilation ne mentionnent comme élément musical, et rarement, qu'un chant de Ning Qi.

Ainsi, Qu Yuan cite essentiellement la musique ancienne, en particulier dans le 《離騷 *Lisao*》, 《九歌 *Jiuge*》, 《天問 *Tianwen*》, 《九章 *Jiuzhang*》 et 《遠遊 *Yuanyou*》.<sup>44</sup>

(1) Dans le 《離騷 *Lisao*》, sont associés deux chants de la dynastie 夏 Xia qui sont aussi les titres de deux séries de poèmes, l'une attribuée à Qu Yuan et l'autre à Song Yu :

« 启《九辯 *Jiubian*》与《九歌 *Jiuge*》兮 »

(Enseigner<sup>45</sup> les « neuf discernements » et les « neuf chants »)<sup>46</sup>

Ce chiffre « neuf » est évocateur et symbolique de la continuité avec la haute antiquité (九夏), ce que confirme la fin du poème :

« 奏《九歌 *Jiuge*》而舞《韶 *Shao*》兮 »

(Jouer les « neuf chants » et danser les « airs *Shao* »)

Peu avant, l'expression « 鸣玉之啾啾 » (tintements du jade chantant) évoque également les anciens souverains.<sup>47</sup>

42 Par exemple le poème 274. 執競 [Puissance] des Odes sacrificielles des Zhou (周頌) et 301. 那 [Exclamation] des Odes sacrificielles des Shang (商頌).

43 Volume 2, folio 45 verso.

44 Le *Grand dictionnaire Ricci* indique : les 《九歌 *Jiuge*》 célébraient les neuf sortes de travaux au temps de l'empereur mythique 大禹 Yu ou Yu le Grand (2207–2197 avant notre ère) ; les 《九辯 *Jiubian*》 sont aussi des chants de l'époque des 夏 Xia ; les 《韶 *Shao*》 sont, dans la musique ancienne des Zhou, un air de danse rituelle (repris neuf fois), attribué à l'empereur 舜 Shun dont la vertu est la continuation (紹 *shào*) de celle de l'empereur 堯 Yao.

45 启 (enseigner) est aussi 夏启 le fils et successeur au trône de 大禹 Yu le Grand.

46 Toutes les traductions des Odes de Chu sont dans ma traduction comme pour les citations suivantes (sauf indication contraire) avec consultation du texte chinois commenté dans Yuan 2010 林家驪, respectivement pp. 16, 31, 30, 87, 39, 62, 178, 65, 75, 219.

47 Voir la mention dans le 禮記 *Liji*, chapitre « 玉藻 Pendentifs de jade » (IIIe siècle avant notre ère) : 古之君子, 必佩玉, 右徵角, 左宮羽, 趨以采齊, 行以肆夏, 周還中規, 折還中矩, 進則揖之, 退則揚之, 然後玉鏘鳴也。



- (2) Dans 《天问 *Tianwen*》, il reprend la double évocation des neuf discernements et neuf chants et d'un lointain ancêtre (dynastie 夏 *Xia*, la plus ancienne) en insistant sur le terme 商 *shang*, signifiant de la note comme de la dynastie, ainsi :

« 启棘宾商，《九辩》《九歌》。 »

(Qi<sup>48</sup> admet l'autorité *Shang*, les « neuf discernements » et les « neuf chants »)

- (3) Dans 《九歌 *Jiuge*》, premier poème :

« 扬枹兮拊鼓。疏缓节兮安歌，陈竽瑟兮浩倡 »

(Lever les baguettes ' frapper tambours ; les rythmes sont modérés ' les chants pacifiés ; les syrinx et cithares se disposées ' les choristes à gorge déployée)<sup>49</sup>

Cela correspond à une fin de récitatif, de premier poème, ouvrant sur un interlude chanté et dansé en musique ; mais comme d'autres caractères auraient pu dire la même chose, il est possible qu'il y ait une intention dans le choix de ces termes là.<sup>50</sup>

- (4) Dans 《九歌 *Jiuge*》, une évocation dans le sixième poème et un passage détaillé dans le septième poème :

« 与女沐兮咸池 »

(Baignade avec la femme ' à l'étang uni)

(Autrefois, le seigneur portait des pendentifs de jade, à droite *zhi* [la quinte] et *jue* [la tierce], à gauche *gong* [la fondamentale] et *yu* [la sixte] ; il marchait vite sur l'air '*caiqi*', posément sur l'air '*sixia*', pivotait en tournant au compas, en se penchant à l'équerre, s'avancait en saluant mains jointes, reculait en se relevant, alors, les jades tintaient et chantaient).

48 启 (*Qi*) est un des souverains mythiques de la dynastie Xia (~ XXIe–XVIIe siècles) qui succéda à la période faste et vertueuse encore plus légendaire des Trois Augustes et Cinq Souverains (antérieur au XXIe siècle avant notre ère), et fut vaincue par la dynastie Shang (~ XVIIe–XIe siècles), elle-même anéantie ensuite par la dynastie Zhou (~ 770–476 dans la période des Printemps et Automnes puis ~ 475–221 dans celle des Royaumes Combattants) qui se trouve dans la période étudiée ici (~ IIIe

siècle) en voie d'effondrement.

49 J'utilise « ' » pour marquer la pause indiquée par 兮 (*xi*) dans le texte chinois.

50 Le *Grand dictionnaire Ricci* indique aussi : 揚 (*yang*) comme l'une des 九州 *jiu zhou*, les « neuf provinces » de l'empire instituées par 大禹 *Da Yu* ou *Yu* le Grand ou un État qui était situé au 山西 *Shanxi* ; 安 (*an*) comme Bukhâra, ville d'Asie centrale, dans la vallée de l'Amu-Darya qui devint l'une des circonscriptions chinoises créées au-delà du Pamir sous la dynastie Tang ; 陳 (*chen*) comme un État de la dynastie 周 *Zhou*, à l'époque 春秋 *Chun Qiu*, annexé au royaume de 楚 *Chu* à la fin de cette époque, en 478 avant notre ère ; 浩 (*hao*) comme préfecture également d'une des neuf provinces de *Yu* le grand. La cithare 瑟 a disparu lors du règne du premier empereur qui a éradiqué tous les emblèmes de la dynastie Zhou.

« Étang uni 咸池 » fait référence à une constellation et à un air célèbres dans la légende de la création du système musical chinois par l'empereur jaune, narrée notamment dans le 吕氏春秋 *Lüshi chungiu* (Printemps et Automnes) de Maître Lü.<sup>51</sup>

« 絕瑟兮交鼓，箫鍾兮瑤簫。  
鳴簫兮吹竽，思靈保兮賢媯。  
翺飛兮翠曾，展詩兮會舞。  
應律兮合節，靈之來兮蔽日 »

(cithares *se* à cordes ' tambours *jiao* ; flûtes et cloches ' montants de jade ; faire résonner la flûte ' souffler dans la syrinx ; médium de la pensée ' beauté vertueuse ; arabesques en vol ' strates de vert jade ; inscrire un poème ' survenir une danse ; tube *ying* ' rythme harmonisé ; venue de l'âme ' à l'abri du soleil)<sup>52</sup>

À la fin de 《九歌 *Jiuge*》, dixième poème (les neuf chants sont intercalés entre les poèmes) :

« 援玉枹兮击鸣鼓 »

(Lever les baguettes de jade ' faire résonner les tambours)

(5) Dans 《九章 *Jiuzhang*》, sont seulement mentionnés un musicien aveugle dans un poème (le cinquième) et le chant de Ningqi dans un autre (le septième).

(6) Dans 《遠游 *Yuanyou*》, les allusions musicales sont plus développées, toujours à partir des ancêtres :

« 張《咸池》奏《承雲》兮，二女御《九韶》歌。使湘靈鼓瑟兮，令海若舞馮夷 »

(Déployer l'« Étang uni », jouer « Offrande aux nuées »<sup>53</sup> ' les « neuf airs dansés (*Shao*) » des deux concubines ◦ faire que les esprits de la Xiang jouent de la cithare *se* ' que le génie de la mer danse avec celui du fleuve jaune)

puis

« 音乐博衍无终极兮，焉乃逝以徘徊 »

51 Voir ma présentation dans Journeau 2007b, 513-514.

52 C'est aussi « garder secret à l'égard de l'empereur ».

53 Autre composition musicale attribuée au légendaire empereur jaune (Huang Di).

(La musique se propage / se déploie largement sans fin ' c'est alors que je pars en errance).

Il y a donc une grande homogénéité de références musicales dans les textes attribués à Qu Yuan, de même que dans ceux attribués à Song Yu dans lesquels, cependant, une plus large place est accordée à la musique et à la description des contextes de jeu avec citation d'airs nouveaux comme ces extraits de 《招魂 *Zhaohun*》 et 《大招 *Da Zhao*》 le prouvent :

- (7) Dans 《招魂 *Zhaohun*》, la musique occupe une large place et de nouveaux airs sont explicitement cités :

« 陳鍾按鼓，造新歌些。《涉江》、《采菱》，發《揚荷》些。

.....

二八齊容，起鄭衛舞些。

衽若交竿，撫案下些。

竽瑟狂會，攄鳴鼓些。

宮庭震驚，發《激楚》些。

吳歛蔡謳，奏大呂些。

士女雜坐，亂而不分些。

放陳組纓，班其相紛些。

鄭衛妖玩，來雜陳些。

《激楚》之結，獨秀先些。

.....

鏗鍾搖虞，攄梓瑟些。

娛酒不廢，沈日夜些。》<sup>54</sup>

(Les cloches sont disposées et les tambours apprêtés ; on crée de nouveaux airs. « Passage du fleuve », « Cueillette des châtaignes d'eau », puis survient « Exalter le lotus » [...] En deux rangées de huit, on entame la danse des Zheng et Wei. Comme les pans de robe, les cannes de bambou se croisent, avec un maniement par frappes légères. Les cithares *se* et les syrinx se font libertines, les tambours résonnent de frappes redoublées. Dans la cour du

54 Le *Grand dictionnaire Ricci* indique aussi : 齊 (*qi*), État constitué sous la dynastie 周 Zhou, à l'époque 春秋 *Chun Qiu* (722-481), qui devint hégémon lors du serment d'alliance que présida le prince 桓公 Huan Gong (684-643 avant notre ère) en 632. À partir du IIIe siècle aussi subit les luttes exacerbées entre les familles dans les royaumes ; 吳 (*wu*), Royaume

qui occupait la vallée du bas 長江 Chang Jiang ou fleuve Bleu à l'époque de la dynastie 周 Zhou et fut détruit par le royaume de 越 Yue en 473 蔡 (*cai*), État (époque 春秋 *Chun Qiu*, Printemps et automnes) détruit en 477 par l'État de 楚 Chu. Pour 陳 (*chen*), voir notice précédente (40).

palais, on s'excite et s'emballe, déployant la « farandole de Chu ». Chant Yu de Wu et a cappella de Cai, sur [le mode] *dalü*. Hommes et femmes s'assoient, dans une proximité confuse. Les cordons et rubans<sup>55</sup> de Chen s'accordent toute licence, entremêlés les uns avec les autres. Les séductrices de Zheng et Wei s'amuse à semer le trouble chez les Chen. À la fin de la « farandole de Chu », une gracieuse solitaire s'avance. [...] Frappe des cloches suspendues au montant, et des cithares de catalpa. Vin joyeux à satiété, plongée dans le vice jour et nuit).

C'est donc la reconnaissance d'une forme de musique licencieuse dans un autre style que celui utilisé dans le Livre de musique *Yueji*. Il semble aussi que, comme dans le cas des Annales historiques rédigées par chaque nouvelle dynastie pour ce qui est des faits et gestes de la dynastie l'ayant précédée, les dits « nouveaux airs » sont ceux de la période précédente.

(8) Dans 《大招 *da zhao*》, un passage est particulièrement significatif :

« 代秦鄭衛，鳴竽張只。  
伏戲駕辯，楚勞商只。  
謳和揚阿，趙蕭倡只。  
魂乎歸來！定空桑只。  
二八接舞，投詩賦只。  
叩鐘調磬，娛人亂只。  
四上競氣，極聲變只。  
魂乎歸來！聽歌謨只。 »

(Chez les Dai, Qin, Zheng et Wei, le chant des orgues à bouche s'amplifie ; Fuxi a régné par le discernement,<sup>56</sup> et les Chu exalte la note *shang*;<sup>57</sup> Les chants de louange à l'unisson, c'est la flûte des Zhao qui les entonne ;<sup>58</sup>

55 Métaphore pour les hommes et les femmes. 組 (*zu*) : bande de soie ou cordon avec lequel les fonctionnaires suspendaient leur seau à la ceinture ; 纓 (*ying*) : Ruban ou franges multicolores portées par les filles promises en mariage.

56 Cf. « 九辯 *jiubian* ».

57 Qu'il s'agisse de la dynastie Shang ou de la note dite *shang*, cela signifie que, contrairement aux autres royaumes cités (premier vers), les Chu s'affichent ainsi, en conservant la note *shang*, dans la filiation directe de Fuxi jusqu'aux Shang, contre celle des Zhou.

58 *Xiao* pourrait être un nom propre (mais on ne voit pas bien pourquoi) ou bien la flûte bien qu'elle s'écrive en principe avec la clé du bambou – son matériau – à la place de la clé des plantes (glissement de copiste). C'est ici l'interprétation la plus probable car tous les royaumes cités (premier vers puis Zhao au troisième vers) sont de l'époque des Royaumes Combattants, époque qui a vu une émancipation de la musique par rapport aux canons antérieurs (cf. note ci-dessus), comme l'explicite le « *Yueji* » Livre de musique pour les Zheng et les Wei.

Âme ! Reviens ! Accorder le mûrier creux [la cithare].<sup>59</sup>

En deux rangées de huit, on entame la danse, offrant poésie et prose narrative ;<sup>60</sup>

Frappant de la cloche en accord avec les pierres sonores, divertir les gens à l'envie ;

Des quatre (royaumes) on rivalise, jusqu'à employer les notes mobiles ;

Âme ! Reviens ! Écouter les chants qui t'exhortent !)

Ce qui accroît le pouvoir émotif de la musique est ici indiqué de la façon la plus claire possible et contribue à préciser la théorie musicale sous-jacente : « jusqu'à employer les notes mobiles », c'est-à-dire qu'il y a jeu en demi-tons. La modulation fait ordinairement passer d'un mode du système pentatonique anhémitonique à un autre selon des processus que j'ai déjà décrits dans d'autres articles<sup>61</sup> et qui revient, pour le résumer simplement, à garder, par exemple, le *Fa* du mode [*Do, Ré, Fa, Sol, La, Do, Ré*] (mode sur *Fa*) quand on module dans [*Do, Ré, Mi, Sol, La, Do, Ré*] (mode sur *Do*), voire à garder aussi le *Si* quand on module dans [*Si, Ré, Mi, Sol, La, Si, Ré*] (mode sur *Sol*).

(9) Quant à 《九辯 *Jiubian*》, également attribué à Song Yu, il ne comporte que peu de mentions musicales.

## 7 Conclusion

Au-delà du pouvoir à la fois céleste et terrestre de la musique que dévoilent les textes canoniques et poétiques et que confirment les textes philosophiques, ces derniers mettent l'accent sur les aspects pédagogiques, éthiques et esthétiques, d'humanité ou vertu chez les confucianistes, de pouvoir céleste ou surnaturel chez les taoïstes, d'apprentissage de maître à disciples et de culture de soi. Fables ou paraboles, par exemple dans le 列子 *Liezi* (莊子 *Zhuangzi*),<sup>62</sup> peuvent compléter le panorama que nous avons tenté de brosser, de façon brève et synthétique, du rôle de la musique dans l'antiquité, qui s'est avéré avoir

59 Fuxi est réputé avoir créé la cithare. C'est elle qui, dans la tradition, donne le ton de jeu (en pentatonique) et elle prend comme note de référence le *gong*, donné par une cloche, qui est la signature de l'empereur.

60 Souvent traduit par rhapsodie.

61 Voir, notamment, « Musique de l'antiquité en Chine : quand 'soies et bambous' (cordes et vents) sont accordés sur les cloches », Journeau 2008 et

« L'Antique Cithare chinoise *qin*, un heptacorde pentatonique, est un archétype de la musique de l'antiquité », Journeau 2007a.

62 Voir, par exemple, la parabole dans « Le Vrai Classique du vide parfait, Les maîtres de musique » V, XI, Liou et Grynpsas 1980, 491. Le texte chinois est accessible sur : <http://www.guoxue.com/zibu/liezi/lz005.htm> (列子, 汤问第五) (dernière visite 19/07/2019).

pour visée principale, sous les différents angles traités (administratif, politique, social, scientifique, poétique et philosophique), une pensée d'adéquation à l'ordonnement du monde, à dominante tour à tour naturelle, céleste puis, finalement, terrestre.

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Stefan Hagel

## Shaping Character: An Ancient Science of Musical Ethos?

### Summary

The idea that the effect of music on the human soul crucially affects matters of education and politics is first found in Plato, with reference to Damon of Athens (5th century BCE). On the basis of a late antique treatise by Aristides Quintilianus, which also refers to Damon, the latter has been ascribed a full-fledged theory of musical ethos. The present contribution critically evaluates the sources from Plato through Aristotle and up until Aristides, arguing for a reading of Plato's *Republic* that does not consider opinions on musical details reflecting the authorial voice, as well as for the absence in the classical era of a musical ethos theory that was based on technical reasoning.

Keywords: Damon; Plato; ethos theory; ancient music; Aristides Quintilianus; 4th century BCE

Die Idee, dass die psychologische Wirkung der Musik auch für Fragen der Erziehung und Politik entscheidend ist, findet sich zuerst bei Platon, mit Verweis auf Damon von Athen (5. Jahrhundert v. Chr.). Auf Basis der Schrift des Aristeides Quintilianus, der ebenso auf Damon zurückverweist, wurde dem Letzteren eine eigenständige Theorie des musikalischen Ethos zugeschrieben. Im vorliegenden Beitrag werden die Quellen von Platon über Aristoteles bis zu Aristides einer kritischen Betrachtung unterzogen. Dabei wird für eine Lesart von Platons *Politeia* plädiert, die Äußerungen der Dialogfiguren über musikalische Details nicht automatisch mit der Autorenmeinung gleichsetzt. In der klassischen Zeit finden sich so keine Anhaltspunkte für eine Ethostheorie, die von technischen Überlegungen ausgeht.

Keywords: Damon; Platon; Ethoslehre; antike Musik; Aristides Kointilianos/Aristeides Quintilianus; 4. Jh. v. Chr.

## I Introduction

Some of Damon's research was regarding harmoniai, classifying and describing the various harmonies. He is credited by some scholars as the creator of the hyper and hypo categories (as in Hypophrygian). He did the same with poetic meter. Beyond this technical aspect his work also focused on the social and political consequences of music, through what came to be called the ethos theory. He is the first one to study the effects of different types of music on people's mood.<sup>1</sup>

This quotation from the planet's most widely accessed source of opinion quite adequately outlines a view on Damon of Athens that is, *grosso modo*, not uncommon even among scholars specialising in ancient music.<sup>2</sup> It entails quite a lot, attributing to Damon not only a systematic description of musical structures, both in terms of pitch and temporal organisation, but also a theory of musical 'ethos' that was detailed enough to appear applicable in practice, to the end, potentially, of influencing people. Most prominently, the idea that spawned our conference and the present volume is attributed to him:

οὐδαμοῦ γὰρ κινουῦνται μουσικῆς τρόποι ἄνευ πολιτικῶν νόμων τῶν μεγίστων,  
ὥς φησί τε Δάμων καὶ ἐγὼ πείθομαι.

Styles of music are never changed without changing the most essential political rules, as Damon says and I agree.<sup>3</sup>

And yet, once we access the sources with the critical eye of the philologist and the historian, interpreting references within their proper context and with a sensibility to the texts' respective agendas as well, Damon becomes increasingly evasive. In my contribution I will give an account of the ground on which a common understanding of Damon's ethos theory is built, and reconsider the stability of the various assumptions on which it rests. Our concern will be with surprisingly few authors. Central in all respects is Plato, firstly because he is the major source anyway, then because our image of Damon has come to partake in the supreme philosopher's authority, and finally also because the later texts we are going to consider will serve to explain Plato's method, or are influenced

1 Wikipedia, s. v. Damon (ancient Greek musicologist), [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Damon\\_of\\_Athens](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Damon_of_Athens) (visited on 19/07/2019).

2 Cf. Anderson 1955, 88 with no. 3 on previous opinions, and 89 for his own: "in no other [Pre-Socratic]

thinker can one find comparably precise views, views which in their coordinate form obviously represent a carefully elaborated theory of ethos."

3 Plato, *Republic* 424c; translation Barker 1984, 140.

by him, standing in the Platonic tradition. Among all the possible questions concerning Damon – and there are many – we will be concerned only with his alleged theory of musical ethos, which will necessarily lead us to an evaluation of Plato’s conceptions in this respect: for, if the historicity of a Damonian theory of musical ethics is called into question, Plato can no longer be assumed to have approved of it.

Apart from the above quotation that evidently links musical change to political change – or, more exactly, political change to musical change, since it is the political dangers of musical innovation that are at stake here<sup>4</sup> – three notions are very commonly found: (1) that Plato associates musical expertise quite generally with Damon; (2) that he attributes to him the ethical evaluation of music; and (3) that Plato uses Damon’s teachings as a basis for the musical politics of his ideal state, and Damon as a convenient point of reference, which spares him the trouble of detailing technical minutiae. All this is mostly inferred from the text of the *Republic*.

Some details are often assumed to be filled in by a late antique musical writer, Aristides Quintilianus, who mentions Damon once in connection with ancient scales (*harmoníai*) “handed down by him”; these scales are almost certainly identical to a set which Aristides had previously specified as ones having been used already by “the most ancient”; and as those that Plato had in mind when referring to various *harmoníai* in the *Republic*.<sup>5</sup> Damon’s name, at any rate, occurs in the context of ‘ethical’ evaluation of scales by means of characteristics of their constituent notes, so it has been inferred that this was Damon’s approach.<sup>6</sup> From all this derives what we might call the maximal assumption of an ancient theory of musical ethos, underlying also the initial quotation: a detailed and systematic evaluation of musical structures also in respect of their ethical or psychological effects, both rhythmical and melodic, created in the mid-5th century BCE by Damon of Athens, largely accepted and presupposed by Plato, though its details can only be gleaned from Aristides’ account many centuries later. Several constituent parts of this construction, however, have been assessed critically by recent scholarship. Let us re-evaluate their credentials.

### 1.1 Damon of Athens, Plato and musical ‘ethos’

First of all, there can be no reasonable doubt that Damon’s interests centred on music, even if one could expect to benefit from discussion with him on any important topic,

4 At stake, that is, in Plato’s text; cf. Anderson 1955, 94: “Socrates’ meaning is plain; but possibly it should be taken into consideration that these words, once they are removed from the Platonic context, do not necessarily constitute, either explicitly or implicitly, any indictment of such musical change. It

might be argued that one thinks they do because of Socrates’ strictures, which surround the quotation and seem to echo it.”

5 Aristides Quintilianus 1.9, 18.5–19.10 Winnington-Ingram; cf. e. g. West 1992, 247 with n. 81.

6 Cf. e. g. Schäfke 1937.

and some deemed him the most sensible man of his generation at Athens.<sup>7</sup> Since we know him neither as a poet nor as a performer, his musical skills were evidently of a theoretical sort; hence also his association with the ‘sophists.’<sup>8</sup> That his ideas involved a connection between music and politics seems clear from Plato as well, unless one entertains the possibility that the details on Damon in Plato are largely fictional. However, most scholars would assume that fiction was probably still sufficiently restricted by the memory of the historical Damon, especially if a written work by him was circulating;<sup>9</sup> so we ought not to be overly sceptical here. Anyway, that Damon believed in an association between music and ethical values (beyond what was commonly assumed) is attested otherwise.<sup>10</sup>

Apart from that, we are on a slippery ground. Aristides’ remark about *harmoníai* being handed down by Damon sounds reasonably confident. However, there must have been at least one intermediate stage between ‘Damon’ and Aristides, if not more, and in the course of this process it is at least possible that Aristides misunderstood his source, misled by the association between those *harmoníai* and Plato’s *Republic* on the one hand, and the reference to Damon as a source of musical information in the *Republic*, on the other.<sup>11</sup> At any rate, the single mention of Damon in Aristides’ three books *On Music* hardly seems to warrant the view that the details of his ethical ascriptions were heavily influenced by the teaching of the elusive Athenian intellectual, more than six centuries

7 Cf. Plutarch, *Pericles* 180d (ἀνδρῶν χαριέστατον οὐ μόνον τὴν μουσικὴν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἄλλα ὀπόσου βούλει ἄξιον συνδιατρίβειν τηλικούτοις νεανίσκοις – note that this is Nicias speaking); Isocrates 15.235 (Δάμωνος τοῦ κατ’ ἐκείνον τὸν χρόνον φρονιμωτάτου δόξαντος εἶναι τῶν πολιτῶν).

8 Cf. Plutarch, *Pericles* 4; Anderson 1955; Lynch 2013.

9 But cf. Wallace 1991.

10 Philodemus, *On Music* 1.13, evidently resting on a source other than Plato; μὴ μόνον ἀνδρεῖαν ἐμφαί>νεσθαι καὶ σω<φροσύνην> ἀλλὰ καὶ δι<καισύνην> “[when making music, ought to] display not only manliness and moderation, but also justice”; if not a purely rhetorical formula, might indicate that a musical display by an educated young nobleman was commonly expected to exhibit manliness and moderation, to which Damon added the idea of justice.

11 I have argued that the specific form and extent of the scales in question betray their origin in the context of the development of modulating auloi (Hagel 2009a; Hagel 2009b, 379–393), at some point between the later 5th and earlier 4th centuries. From our sources it appears unlikely that both detailed and extensive information of that sort predated the

modulating *tónoi* systems would have survived even into the later 4th century. If, as seems plausible, Aristides’ ultimate source is a lost work from Aristoxenus’ hand (cf. Barker 2007, 45–48), we might envisage a scenario where this author listed the earliest available scale structures together with a brief reference to Plato’s discussion, in this context mentioning also Damon. On the other hand, it is just as conceivable that Aristides’ account accurately reflects the historical view taken by Aristoxenus. The modulating aulos is associated with Pronomus (Pausanias 9.12.5; Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists* 631e), whom one tradition made Alcibiades’ music teacher (Duris of Samos, *apud* Athenaeus. 184d). Alcibiades, in turn, in the dramatic setting of the (pseudo-) Platonic *Alcibiades 1* (118c), refers to Damon as a prominent presence. Therefore it is clear that the 4th century would conceive of Pronomus and Damon as contemporaries within the same Athenian intellectual milieu. An account of Damon actually ‘inventing’ a musical mode, finally, would moreover associate him closely with the concerns of instrumental development (pseudo-Plutarch, *On Music* 1136e).

earlier. On the contrary, I think that a close look at facts and at the text excludes such speculation. Aristides introduces the concept of male and female (and intermediate) qualities of individual notes, on the basis of the particular vowels used for these notes in a kind of solmisation system (a system in which the individual notes are identified with, and/or sung to, different syllables or vowels). This system is only found in Aristides and another late antique source, the excerpts known as Bellermann's Anonymi,<sup>12</sup> which fact would suffice to raise suspicion about attempts to date it back to the classical period. Moreover, the idea of a solmisation system would be to encode musical structures in the mind of the student, in a way that the phonetic shape of syllables automatically evokes intervallic relations. Bellermann's Anonymus throughout exemplifies the system using diatonic scales, as were most common in the Roman period. The ancient 'Damonian' scales, however, are not diatonic.<sup>13</sup> In principle, they are enharmonic, although now and then exhibiting 'irregular extra notes' (if interpreted from the later standpoint), which might be taken as diatonic alternatives. In connection with the solmisation system, this gives rise to a couple of problems: firstly, it is by no means always clear how to treat the irregularities, and therefore which characteristic to assign to which note. Secondly – and more importantly – the idea of a solmisation system ceases to make any sense if applied to more than one genus: notes of identical designation have different pitches in different genera, and therefore no fixed intervals would be assigned to specific sequences of vowels. In any case, it is even more than doubtful that such an analysis in terms of 'similar' notes in enharmonic and diatonic scales would have been possible in the 5th century, as such an (artificial) attempt demands just the heptatonic regularity and symmetry of the later Aristoxenian unification that these early scales so notoriously lack. All in all, then, Aristides' theory is especially ill-suited for the allegedly Damonian scales.

To be sure, Aristides himself does not envisage returning to these scales for his own music-therapeutic project. After explaining the general idea he continues:

Ἐοίκασι γάρ, ὡς ἔφην, αἱ μὲν ἀρμονίαι τοῖς πλεονάζουσι διαστήμασιν ἢ τοῖς περιέχουσι φθόγγοις, οὗτοι δὲ τοῖς τῆς ψυχῆς κινήμασι τε καὶ παθήμασιν. ὅτι γὰρ δι' ὁμοιότητος οἱ φθόγγοι καὶ συνεχοῦς μελωδίας πλάττουσι τε οὐκ ὄν ἦθος ἐν τε παισὶ καὶ τοῖς ἤδη προβεβηκόσι καὶ ἐνδομυχοῦν ἐξάγουσιν, ἐδήλουν καὶ οἱ περὶ Δάμωννα· ἐν γοῦν ταῖς ὑπ' αὐτοῦ παραδεδομέναις ἀρμονίαις τῶν φερομένων φθόγγων ὅτε μὲν τοὺς θήλεις, ὅτε δὲ τοὺς ἄρρενας ἔστιν εὐρεῖν ἦτοι πλεονάζοντας ἢ ἐπ' ἕλαττον ἢ οὐδ' ὄλως παρειλημμένους, δῆλον ὡς κατὰ τὸ ἦθος ψυχῆς ἐκάστης καὶ ἀρμονίας χρησιμεύουσιν.

12 Anonymi Bellermannii 9–10; 77; 86; 91–92.

13 Ancient scales, in the standard system known from Aristoxenus (4th century BCE) on, come in three 'kinds' (genera): diatonic, consisting of tones and

semitones only; chromatic, dominated by semitones and 1-tone intervals; enharmonic, set apart by the use of quartertones and ditones. Fine tuning accounted for various 'shades' of these.

As I have said, the *harmoníai* resemble their frequent intervals or the notes which bound them, and these resemble the movements and emotions of the soul. For, the fact that it is through similarity and a continuous melody that the notes form a character that does not yet exist, in children just as in older people, as well as bring out one deeply hidden, was made clear by Damon's circle as well. At any rate, in the *harmoníai* handed down by him, one can sometimes find that among the moving notes it is the female ones, and at other times, the male ones that are frequent, or less so, or not adopted altogether, so that it is obviously with regard to the character of each particular soul and *harmonía* that they are used.<sup>14</sup>

Textual considerations support our line of reasoning. Firstly, although Aristides clearly wants to convey the impression that his treatise stands in a tradition of musical lore reaching back to Plato and Pythagoras, he by no means claims that he has drawn his ideas from Damon. On the contrary, “as well” (καί) clearly indicates that he regards Damon more as his colleague than his master: Damon's scales are the earliest evidence Aristides can come up with, and still, he finds his ideas supported by their structure. How this really works out, we are not told, by the way, and therefore we are at a loss in determining how to apply Aristides' nice principles to the ‘irregular’ notes. Secondly, his “at any rate” (γούν) appears to betray that Aristides had no direct information on the principles underlying Damon's supposed ethical teaching.<sup>15</sup> It is only by inference from the ancient scales that Aristides determines that they must have been either evaluated or even construed by “Damon's circle” according to principles similar to his own.

Anyway, the categorisation of all factors into female and male and intermediate entirely permeates Aristides' method, in a way that, if his characterisation of scales is Damonian, the contents of his pedagogic-therapeutic second book seemingly would have to depend on Damon wholesale. But nothing either in Plato or in any other reference to Damon associates him with a predilection for interpreting the world in terms of gender polarity.<sup>16</sup> All in all, Aristides certainly insinuates that Damon and others had developed a systematic classification of musical ethos as simplistic as his own is, but he was unable to adduce any proof for his assumption, up to the point of excusing himself for not doing so right at the outset of his respective chapter:

14 Aristides Quintilianus 2.14; 80.23–81.3 Winnington-Ingram.

15 Cf. Liddell, Scott and Jones 1996: “restrictive Particle with an inferential force, *at least then* [...] freq. in adducing an instance, or a fact giving rise to a presumption [...] *at all events*”.

16 Unless one counts the fact that the young lyre player in the testimony recorded by Philodemus (cf. no. 9) is expected to show both manliness and moderation, the latter the characteristic female virtue in Plato's *Republic*.

Καιρὸς δὲ λοιπὸν ἐξηγεῖσθαι ποῖα μὲν μέλη, ποῖοι δὲ ῥυθμοὶ καταρτύσουσι τὰ τῆς φύσεως παθήματα. λέξω δὴ τὰ μὲν παλαιοῖς τισιν εἰρημένα, τὰ δὲ εἰσέτι νῦν σιωπηθέντα οὔτ' ἀγνωσίᾳ τῶν συγγραφέων οὔτε βασκανίᾳ· τοῦτο μὲν γὰρ οὔδ' εἰπεῖν θέμις ἀνδρῶν πέρι φιλοσόφων μουσικῆ τετελεσμένων· ἀλλὰ γὰρ τὰ μὲν αὐτοῖς ἐν συγγράμμασι κατετάττετο, τὰ δ' ἀπορρητότερα ταῖς πρὸς ἀλλήλους ὁμίλιας διεσῶζετο. αἰτία δ' ἦν ἡ τῶν τότε περὶ τὰ κάλλιστα ὀρμή τε καὶ φιλοχωρία· νυνὶ δὲ τοσαύτης ἐπιπολαζούσης (δεῖ γὰρ εὐφημεῖν) ἀφιλομουσίας <ἄρ'> ἀγαπητὸν ἔσται τοῖς μετρίως ἐπιμελέσιν, εἰ βίβλω οὐ σαφές τι περιεχούση περιπέσειεν.

It is now time to explain what kinds of melody and rhythm will discipline the natural emotions. I shall set out what some ancient writers said, and also some things which have not previously been discussed – not, however, because the writers were ignorant or malicious. That would be a quite improper thing to say of philosophers initiated in the mysteries of music. The fact is rather that while they expounded some things in their writings, they reserved the more esoteric secrets for their discussions with one another. The reason lay in the enthusiastic affection of the men of those times for all that is finest. But now, when indifference to music (to put it politely) is so widespread, we cannot expect people with only a mild interest in the subject to tolerate being faced with a book in which not everything is explicitly spelled out.<sup>17</sup>

These statements are entirely consistent with the view that what Aristides took over from “the ancient writers” was merely the general idea of musical ethos and its pedagogical usage. As he expounds on no technical details beyond his simple gendering of notes in the regular scale, this must be the “esoteric secrets” that could not be found in any book so far. However, if we subtract this bit from Aristides’ system, nothing technical in his work is left that might be associated with Damon. All the more we can understand why Aristides had to adduce, desperately enough, the ‘Damonian’ scales as arguments for Damon’s adherence to a paradigm similar to his own.

If Aristides had no access to a truly Damonian theory of musical ethos, this need not exclude, of course, that Plato, who lived only a few decades after the time in question, did possess such information. However, it has often been observed that his *Republic* conspicuously does not mention Damon in its discussion of *harmoníai* to be admitted to or excluded from the ideal state. Instead, the average musical knowledge of Socrates’ dialogue partner Glaucon suffices to supply the general characteristics of individual ‘modes’. Far from invoking a quasi-scientific ethos theory, therefore, Plato bases the results of this

17 Aristides Quintilianus 2.7; 65.10–21 Winnington-Ingram; translation Barker 1989, 469.

famous passage – the admission of Dorian and Phrygian only – on what he depicts as entirely common notions.

Only when the argument turns to rhythms, and when both dialogue partners confess their ignorance in this intricate matter, is the question deferred to later discussion with Damon:

Ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, καὶ μετὰ Δάμωνος βουλευσόμεθα, τίνες τε ἀνελευθερίας καὶ ὕβρεως ἢ μανίας καὶ ἄλλης κακίας πρέπουσαι βάσεις, καὶ τίνες τοῖς ἐναντίοις λειπτέον ῥυθμούς.

‘Then on these points we shall take advice from Damon,’ I said, ‘and ask him which movements are suitable for illiberality, conceit, madness and other vices, and which rhythms we should keep and assign to their opposites.’<sup>18</sup>

Here Damon seems indeed regarded as a specialist on rhythmical ethos, at least. But not even that is absolutely beyond doubt, since it cannot be taken for granted that Damon is envisaged to have dealt with the specific question before. Instead, he might be conceived as a specialist confronted with a novel question belonging to his field – an option that seems much less far-fetched when we recall the Socratic method of other Platonic dialogues, explicitly spelled out in the *Apology*, which consists exactly in questioning ‘specialists’ (with the ‘unintended’ outcome of eventually exposing their ignorance). Nevertheless, in the sequel to the above quotation, Damon is depicted as not only analysing rhythms, but passing judgement on them, although it is still not clear whether this would have been done according to the criteria envisaged for the ideal state:

οἶμαι δέ με ἀκηκοέναι οὐ σαφῶς ἐνόπλιόν τέ τινα ὀνομάζοντος αὐτοῦ σύνθετον καὶ δάκτυλον καὶ ἠρῶν γε, οὐκ οἶδα ὅπως διακοσμούντος καὶ ἴσον ἄνω καὶ κάτω τιθέντος, εἰς βραχὺ τε καὶ μακρὸν γιγνόμενον, καί, ὡς ἐγὼ οἶμαι, ἴαμβον καὶ τιν' ἄλλον τροχαῖον ὠνόμαζε, μήκη δὲ καὶ βραχυτήτας προσῆπτε. καὶ τούτων τισὶν οἶμαι τὰς ἀγωγὰς τοῦ ποδὸς αὐτὸν οὐχ ἦττον ψέγειν τε καὶ ἐπαινεῖν ἢ τοὺς ῥυθμούς αὐτούς – ἦτοι συναμφοτέρων τι· οὐ γὰρ ἔχω λέγειν.

I think I have heard him not very clearly talking about one in armour, put together, and a finger and, yes, a heroic one, somehow arraying them and making up and down equal as it turned into short and long; and, I think, he talked about an “iamb” and some other “trochee” and attached longs and shorts to them. And of these, I think, he blamed and praised the conduct of the foot no less than the rhythms themselves – or somehow both? I cannot tell.<sup>19</sup>

18 Plato, *Republic* 400b; translation Barker 1984, 134.

19 Plato, *Republic* 400c; translation Barker 1984, 134.



It is perhaps surprising that this description of Damon in discussion or lecturing should be characterised by such a considerable admixture of comic elements: not always easy to render in translation, they cannot but signal irony.<sup>20</sup> As a literary device, they entertain the reader by combining bits and pieces of rhythmical theory out of their context, in such a way that they appear nonsensical: e. g. the obvious paradox of “making up and down equal”, whose precise sense as the definition of ‘equal rhythm’ the reader is expected to be familiar with. Apart from entertainment, however, we would not expect Plato to mark Damon’s entry onto the stage as comic, were it not for a particular reason. We need not pin it down – the true philosopher’s contempt for technicalities is a plausible suggestion<sup>21</sup> – but what we get is at least a clear signal that there is no Damonian lore that in Plato’s eyes deserves untempered reverence. And, as regards the criteria that inform Damon’s evaluation, the passage gives us not the slightest hint. Considering the contrast to the comparative richness of detail (even if blurred) on rhythmical analysis on a purely technical level, this absence would appear highly surprising if Damon had in fact proceeded from technical analysis to ethical assessment systematically. On balance, the text of the *Republic* does not support the notion of a fully fledged Damonian ethos theory; indeed the contrary is true.

If Damon is now out of the game as a fictional as well as a historical authority on a systematic theory of musical ethos, our quest narrows down to Plato himself. So, are the conclusions about *harmoníai* reached in the *Republic* backed by – unwritten – systematic evaluation of their structures in the Academy (accompanied perhaps by analogous teachings on rhythms, which are just not directly reflected in the *Republic*), because their treatment would have required too long an excursion? Or, in other words, did Plato believe he had found (or inherited, at any rate) the recipe, by which to judge the ethical value of music (apart from the lyrics)?

Again, the ironic treatment of rhythmical technicalities must caution us against such an assumption, especially in combination with the complete absence of technical criteria in the evaluation of modes, which appeared to be judged solely on the basis of common conceptions (however, these too may be fictional).

Apart from that, any view on that question must needs depend on our view of the *Republic* as philosophy expressed in a literary work. Plato has often been chided for many things “he” says there; however, there is nothing there to prompt us to assume that any one of the interlocutors is expressing the views of the dialogue’s author. In the case of the ‘purgation of music,’ the presented views are moreover qualified, and conspicuously so, by the confession of Socrates, the protagonist, not to understand anything about the subject, and the initial assertion of his dialogue partner, Glaucon, that he is unable to

20 Cf. Wallace 2005, 150: “with his customary dry humor”; also Anderson 1955, 91: “gentle parody”

21 Cf. Anderson 1955, 91–96.

answer the question, in spite of Socrates having addressed him half-ironically as *mousikós*, ‘educated’. The scene is therefore set for all kinds of misconceptions in a rough and brutal attempt to identify proper and improper elements of music culture. Moreover, the result of the evaluation of *harmoníai* is puzzling enough, as Phrygian is admitted side-by-side with Dorian. Aristotle, it is often said, already rebuked Plato for this obvious error.<sup>22</sup>

But neither was Plato that careless, nor would Aristotle have assumed him to be. In fact, Aristotle, as Plato’s former student being admittedly in a better position than we are, proved very well able to distinguish between the voice of Plato and those of his literary figures, including Socrates. A glance at his manner of quoting Platonic texts in his own *Politics* shows how naturally this distinction expressed itself.<sup>23</sup> Whenever talking about the *Republic*, Aristotle refrains from attributing the views found there to Plato, even if that demanded a more complex mode of quotation (which many modern studies on Plato might benefit from imitating). Not that Plato was wrong about the Phrygian,

ὁ δ' ἐν τῇ Πολιτείᾳ Σωκράτης οὐ καλῶς τὴν φρυγιστὶ μόνην καταλείπει μετὰ τῆς δωριστί.

but the ‘Socrates’ of the *Republic* is wrong to retain just the Phrygian along with the Dorian.<sup>24</sup>

Similarly, a little later on, Aristotle even relates the views of others in the same painstaking manner:

διὸ καλῶς ἐπιτιμῶσι καὶ τοῦτο Σωκράτει τῶν περὶ τὴν μουσικὴν τινες [...]

For this reason some musical experts quite fairly find fault with Socrates [...]<sup>25</sup>

As its author, Plato is named only where Aristotle refers to the *Republic* for the first time, and here it becomes most conspicuous that the view in question is not quoted in Plato’s name:

[...] ὥσπερ ἐν τῇ Πολιτείᾳ τῇ Πλάτωνος· ἐκεῖ γὰρ ὁ Σωκράτης φησὶ [...]

[...] as in Plato’s *Republic*: for there Socrates says [...]<sup>26</sup>

Most importantly, however, this manner of quotation is not mechanical. When referring to the *Laws*, Plato’s second large work on the question of an ideal constitution, in which

22 Cf. e.g. Anderson 1955, 95: “Aristotle’s outspokenly frank disagreement with Plato over the ethos of Phrygian?”

23 Cf. Halliwell 2006, 200–202.

24 Aristotle, *Politics* 1342a; translation Barker 1984, 181.

25 Aristotle, *Politics* 1342a; translation Barker 1984, 181.

26 Aristotle, *Politics* 1261a; translation Barker 1984.

much space is also devoted to music, Aristotle knows equally well that here it was more or less Plato's own ideas that he – at least in the specific case under scrutiny – put in the mouth of the unnamed Athenian. Consequently, Aristotle does not hesitate to write

Πλάτων δὲ τοὺς Νόμους γράφων [...] ᾤετο [...]

But Plato, when writing the *Laws*, thought [...] <sup>27</sup>

This distinction, in fact, would sufficiently explain the differences between the apparently much more rigorist *Republic* and the comparatively more moderate *Laws*, both in musical and in other matters, much better than the assumption of an intervening evolution in Plato's thought. The *Republic* explores and exemplifies the philosophic quest for the ideal state, in a most uncompromising way exactly for the sake of clearly demonstrating the method. The *Laws*, in contrast, are situated within and aiming at reality, with all its practical uncertainties. The treatment of music exemplarily illustrates this difference. In the *Republic*, Socrates talks *as if* all necessary information were available to distinguish 'good' from 'bad' music. This results in simplistic decisions, rejecting instruments and modes on the basis of superficial associations that – as must have been clear to everybody – would not do justice to actual musical reality. The details are accordingly marked by irony and statements of ignorance, but all this is by no means meant to detract from the very serious assertion: that music, with all its effects on human psychology, is a crucial factor in the state, and ought therefore to be regulated, according to as scientific an assessment of its ingredients as is possible. As a proxy for such a true understanding of musical ethos, Plato introduces Glaucon's questionable expertise and the anticipation of Damon's professional support. Indeed, Plato was not so naïve as to believe in a system like that of Aristides, which claims to determine the details of musical ethos. Consequently, the *Laws* cannot base the necessary musical regulations on such a 'true' theory, which explains the absence of technical details there: in practice, the experience and wisdom of aged citizens who have acquired the ability to assess what is appropriate must substitute for it. Nevertheless Plato had not given up, in principle, his vision of a true music theory: but he knew only too well how far any technical descriptions of his time fell short of it – after all, even with all our modern advances in psychology and neurology, we ourselves are still a long way away from achieving such a theory (and of course, are much more aware about cultural conditioning). Thus we find him stating the ideal basis of musical laws only as a potentiality:

ὥσθ', ὅπερ ἔλεγον, εἰ δύναιτό τις ἐλεῖν αὐτῶν καὶ ὀπωσοῦν τὴν ὀρθότητα, θαρροῦντα χρῆ εἰς νόμον ἄγειν καὶ τάξιν αὐτά.

27 Aristotle, *Politics* 1266b; translation Barker 1984.

Thus, as I said, if one could somehow grasp the nature of correctness in melodies, one ought boldly to bring them under law and regulation.<sup>28</sup>

If Plato operated with simplistic ideas only as a temporary expedient, this does not mean that such ideas had not been around otherwise. A text plausibly dating from Plato's day, preserved in the famous Hibeh Papyrus 1.13, quotes and argues against music theorists who held that enharmonic music would render people manly, whereas chromatic music would engender cowardice. Analogous ascriptions of various characteristics to genera or modes appear in the sources over the centuries, which we need not treat here. Suffice it to state that they are never based on technical arguments, and are partly contradictory, thus evoking the ridicule of thinkers who did not subscribe to the idea.<sup>29</sup> Thus it is hardly possible to construe a consistent history of these ideas; at any rate, they appear to rest on a purely impressionistic basis, governed by cultural connotations associated with the appraised characteristics.

Throughout, however, the major thinkers abstain from simplicity. Aristotle basically reflects Plato's approach, as he accepts that music does influence the character and the soul as proven by daily, notably religious, experience:

[...] δεῖ μὴ μόνον τῆς κοινῆς ἡδονῆς μετέχειν ἀπ' αὐτῆς, ἣς ἔχουσι πάντες αἴσθησιν (ἔχει γὰρ ἡ μουσικὴ τιν' ἡδονὴν φυσικὴν, διὸ πάσαις ἡλικίαις καὶ πᾶσιν ἦθεσιν ἢ χρῆσις αὐτῆς ἐστι προσφιλέης), ἀλλ' ὄραν εἶ πη καὶ πρὸς τὸ ἦθος συντείνει καὶ πρὸς τὴν ψυχὴν. τοῦτο δ' ἂν εἴη δῆλον, εἰ ποιοὶ τινες τὰ ἦθη γιγνόμεθα δι' αὐτῆς. ἀλλὰ μὴν ὅτι γιγνόμεθα ποιοὶ τινες, φανερόν διὰ πολλῶν μὲν καὶ ἐτέρων, οὐχ ἥκιστα δὲ καὶ διὰ τῶν Ὀλύμπου μελῶν· ταῦτα γὰρ ὁμολογουμένως ποιεῖ τὰς ψυχὰς ἐνθουσιαστικάς, ὁ δ' ἐνθουσιασμός τοῦ περὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἦθος πάθος ἐστίν.

[...] we ought not only to gain from it the common sort of pleasure, which everyone has the capacity to perceive (since music dispenses pleasure of a natural kind, so that the use of it is beloved by all ages and characters), but ought also to see whether it has a tendency to improve the character and the soul. We would have proof of that, if we are caused by music to acquire specific qualities in our characters. And indeed we do acquire specific qualities, as is shown by many things, and especially by the melodies of Olympus: for it is generally

28 Plato, *Laws* 657b; translation Barker 1984, 145.

29 Cf. Philodemus, *On music* 4.2.15, quoting characterisations of enharmonic and chromatic either as solemn and noble, as opposed to unmanly and vul-

gar, or as harsh and despotic, as opposed to gentle. After the classical era, when the enharmonic had gone out of use, characteristics formerly ascribed to it became associated typically with the diatonic.

agreed that they inspire our souls with ecstasy (*enthousiasmós*), and ecstasy is a qualification [*pathos*] of the character [*éthos*] of the soul.<sup>30</sup>

Just like Plato, Aristotle only deals briefly with *harmoníai*, recommending the Dorian, among unspecified others, for common educational purposes, and omits a discussion of rhythms altogether. Further details are left to specialists:

ἐπεὶ δὴ τὴν μὲν μουσικὴν ὀρώμεν διὰ μελοποιίας καὶ ῥυθμῶν οὔσαν, τούτων δ' ἐκάτερον οὐ δεῖ λεληθέναι τίνα δύναμιν ἔχει πρὸς παιδείαν, καὶ πότερον προαιρετέον μᾶλλον τὴν εὐμελῆ μουσικὴν ἢ τὴν εὐρυθμον, νομίσαντες οὖν πολλὰ καλῶς λέγειν περὶ τούτων τῶν τε νῦν μουσικῶν ἐνίου καὶ τῶν ἐκ φιλοσοφίας ὅσοι τυγχάνουσιν ἐμπείρως ἔχοντες τῆς περὶ τὴν μουσικὴν παιδείας, τὴν μὲν καθ' ἕκαστον ἀκριβολογίαν ἀποδώσομεν ζητεῖν τοῖς βουλομένοις παρ' ἐκείνων, νῦν δὲ νομικῶς διέλωμεν, τοὺς τύπους μόνον εἰπόντες περὶ αὐτῶν.

We see that music consists in melodic composition and rhythms, and we must neither forget the educative power that each of them has, nor neglect to ask whether music with good melody or music with good rhythm is to be preferred. Now since I believe that many excellent things have been said about these matters both by some contemporary musical experts and by those philosophers who have been well acquainted with education in music, I shall hand over to them the people who wish to pursue a precise account of every detail, and deal with the issues only in general terms for the present, stating no more than their outlines.<sup>31</sup>

[...] δέχεσθαι δὲ δεῖ κἄν τίνα ἄλλην ἡμῖν δοκιμάζωσιν οἱ κοινωνοὶ τῆς ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ διατριβῆς καὶ τῆς περὶ τὴν μουσικὴν παιδείας.

[...] and we should also accept other *harmoniai* if these are recommended to us by our colleagues in the study of philosophy and in the musical aspects of education.<sup>32</sup>

In respect of the Damonian question, it is noteworthy that Aristotle's words display no awareness of a past authority. The authoritative voices he has in mind seem primarily to be contemporaries, both musicians and theorists. His own students Aristoxenus and Theophrastus come to mind, who both published works on musical matters, the first explicitly concerned with questions of ethos, the other emphasising the psychological

30 Aristotle, *Politics* 1339b–1340a; translation Barker 1984, 174–175.

179.

32 Aristotle, *Politics* 1342a; translation Barker 1984.

31 Aristotle, *Politics* 1341b; translation Barker 1984.

aspects of music's nature.<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, we might also think about Plato, whose views on the use of music as expressed in the *Laws* seem not very different from Aristotle's. In any case, the general reference to what he seems to envisage as a possible variety of sources to be consulted, with different backgrounds, apparently precludes the predominance of a single account, and therefore the existence of a dominant systematic evaluation of musical modes analogous to the model of Aristides.

Neither do we find any trace of such an idea in Aristoxenus, the most renowned and most influential musical writer throughout antiquity. Although musically conservative with rigorist traits, his general stance on musical ethos, as emerging from extensive quotations in the pseudo-Plutarchan *On Music*,<sup>34</sup> never sets out to evaluate musical technicalities on an ontological basis. Quite to the contrary, the ability to pass adequate musical judgment is presented as acquired by proper education (which makes the whole point regrettably circular).

## 2 Conclusions

All in all, therefore, the three major exponents of 4th-century (musical) philosophy appear to agree that, as things stand, musical value is to be assessed by an experienced, well-educated taste, there being neither automatable recipes like those offered by Aristides nor quick shortcuts of the sort developed by Socrates and Glaucon on the *Republic's* literary surface.

As we have seen, a critical assessment of the sources does not support the retro-projection of Aristides' ideas, or of anything similar, to the classical era. This is of course not to say that the idea of musical ethos with its pedagogical and political implication was not influential at that period, though it is difficult to see how far it was received outside elitist circles. At any rate, it was based on common experience, above all on the fact that particular melodies, modes and rhythms would instantly invoke the emotional state with which they had become associated through participation in communal activities, ritual, military, sympotic or whatever. Ancient city states had their traditional songs accompanying recurrent events, perhaps associated with a half-legendary musician of the remote past, and newly founded ones might associate themselves with outstanding composers also of a more recent past.<sup>35</sup> The ensuing intimate connection between an established city's constitution and music of a more archaic hue, in contrast to ongoing musical development fuelled by constant competition between living poet-performers,

33 On Theophrastus' views cf. Barker 2007, 411–436.

34 Cf. Barker 2007, 233–259.

35 Cf. e. g. pseudo-Plutarch, *On music* 1134b; Scholion to *Odyssey* 3.267; Pausanias 4.27.7.

could quite naturally load politically conservative discourse with musical overtones. Another factor being national pride and an emerging 'European' self-awareness in the prolonged aftermath of the Persian wars, we generally find that the elements of music rejected by conservative writers are generally those which are regarded as recent or carry foreign associations: the Lydian and Phrygian *harmoníai* in contrast to the Dorian,<sup>36</sup> or the chromatic genus, which probably evolved along with modulating instruments. In that way, ancient musical ethics before Aristides, wherever going beyond most general statements, was unable to transcend the level of a mere self-assertion of culturally acquired taste. Aristides, on the other hand, provides but the late proof of how poor any elaborated system would have looked, justifying the wise restraint of earlier philosophers.

36 Cf. Plato, *Laches* 188d; 193d; Heraclides Ponticus at

Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists* 624c–625f.

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Ralf Gehler

# Volksmusik und Recht im frühneuzeitlichen Mecklenburg

## Zusammenfassung

Zwischen dem 16. und 19. Jahrhundert beeinflusste der Staat das Musikleben in den mecklenburgischen Herzogtümern, indem er kulturelle Ereignisse durch Auferlegung von Ordnungen regelte und Privilegien in Bezug auf musikalische Aufwartungen gewährte. Es gibt Versuche, die übermäßigen Kosten öffentlicher Veranstaltungen zu reduzieren, unmoralische Verhaltensweisen einzudämmen, die Heiligkeit der Feiertage zu wahren und bestimmte traditionelle Ereignisse wie die Fastnacht und Heischegänge zu unterdrücken. Im 17. Jahrhundert verschwand die Autonomie der offenen Landschaft mit der Privilegierung ausgebildeter Stadtmusikanten in allen mecklenburgischen Ämtern. Diese Privilegien ermöglichten es einem Musiker, in einem bestimmten Verwaltungsbereich ein Monopol zu errichten. Das Eindringen von Stadtmusikanten in die ländliche Sphäre veränderte die traditionelle Musik.

Keywords: Ordnungen; Volksfeste; Stadtmusikanten; Dorfmusikanten; Privilegien; Musikveranstaltungen; traditionelle Musik

Between the 16th and 19th centuries the state influenced musical life in the Mecklenburg duchies by regulating cultural events through the imposition of orders, and by granting privileges in relation to musical appearances. There are attempts to reduce the excessive costs of public events, to curb immoral behaviour, to ensure the sanctity of Sunday and other holy days, and to suppress certain traditional events such as Carnival and Wassailing. During the 17th century the autonomy of the open countryside disappeared with the Duke's award of privileges to trained town musicians of all the Mecklenburg districts. Such privileges enabled a musician to establish a monopoly in a specific administrative area. The penetration of municipal 'waits' into the rural landscape changed traditional music.

Keywords: Ordinances; folk festivals; town 'waits'; village musicians; privileges; music events; traditional music

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## 1 Einführung

Wie jeder Bereich menschlicher Kultur ist auch die Musik Veränderungen unterworfen. Der Wandel musikalischer Praktiken, des Instrumentariums und der Funktionen sind Forschungsfelder der Musikgeschichte. Auslöser von Veränderungen ist jedoch häufig nicht das Wollen kulturprägender Protagonisten der Geschichte, sondern die Maßnahmen des Staates zur Regulierung des Alltagslebens. Diese Maßnahmen bewirken häufig Wandlungsprozesse, die eigentlich ungewollt herbeigeführt werden. Im Folgenden soll am Beispiel Mecklenburgs gezeigt werden, wie die Volksmusik der gesellschaftlichen Unterschichten durch obrigkeitliche Rechtgebung im Zeitraum der frühen Neuzeit bewusst und unbewusst (1500–1800 n. Chr.) verändert wurde.<sup>1</sup>

## 2 Frühneuzeitliche Ordnungen in Bezug auf die ländliche Festkultur und deren Musik

Der Begriff ‚Ordnung‘ stand im Mittelpunkt staatlichen Wollens vom 16. bis ins 19. Jahrhundert. Rationalität und Vernunft galten als Garanten eines gottgefälligen Lebens, einer kontinuierlichen wirtschaftlichen Entwicklung auf allen Gebieten und eines sozialen Friedens. Wie der Hausvater das gerechte Regiment über die Familie führen sollte, sah sich der Staat als ‚Vater‘ seiner Landeskinder.

Der Untertan hatte sich seinem Stand gemäß zu verhalten und zu kleiden. Müßiggang, übermäßiger Luxus, Völlerei und unsittliches Verhalten standen unter der Lupe staatlicher und kirchlicher Ordnungshüter.

So nahmen auch in Mecklenburg seit dem 16. Jahrhundert landesherrliche Ordnungen Einfluss auf die Festkultur der Landbevölkerung. Sicher wirkte die Kirche schon lange vorher gegen die „Entweiheung des heiligen Sonntags“ durch Musik und Tanz oder gegen Unordnung und Gewalt auf ländlichen Festen. Die Instanz des Staates und des Herzogs jedoch, mit funktionierenden Sanktionierungssystemen und einem kontrollierenden Beamtenapparat, gestaltete das Disziplinieren weitaus effektvoller. Die Einflussnahme des Staates in die Bereiche Hochzeit, Tanzvergnügen und Brauchtum war Ausdruck eines zentralisierenden Staatssystems, das nach dem Dreißigjährigen Krieg zum absolutistischen Machtanspruch ausgeweitet werden und alle Bereiche menschlichen Zusammenlebens einschließen sollte (Abb. 1).

Wie gestaltete sich dieser Ordnungswille für das öffentliche Musizieren? Die Einflussnahme des Staates auf die Musiziersituationen im öffentlichen Raum begann auf

<sup>1</sup> Dieser Artikel ist eine kurze Zusammenfassung der Aussagen zur Verrechtlichung des Musiklebens in: Gehler 2012.



Abb. 1 Kolorierte Kupferstichkarte „Mekelnburg: Ducatus“, Matthäus Merian der Ältere, Frankfurt am Main, um 1650.

Landesebene bereits mit der Mecklenburgischen Polizei- und Landordnung vom 2. Juli 1572.<sup>2</sup> Die Verrechtlichung von Gasthausbesuchen, Hochzeiten, Abendtänzen und jedweder für Musik in Frage kommenden Situationen setzte sich bis zum Beginn des 19. Jahrhunderts in den verschiedenen mecklenburgischen Herzogtümern kontinuierlich fort. Ihren Höhepunkt erreichte die Reglementierung der Musik Mecklenburg-Schwerins in den Jahren zwischen 1756 und 1788, in denen sämtliches Musizieren im Domanium vom pietistischen Herrscher Friedrich verboten wurde. Zielobjekt der Verordnungen waren weniger die Musik und Musikanten selbst, sondern die sich angeblich durch Festlichkeiten ausbreitende Verschwendung, Unsittlichkeit und Trunkenheit, die der Haushaltung der Untertanen schädlich erschien.

Andere Ordnungen hatten regionale Bedeutung. Die Stadtoberigkeiten erließen, ebenso wie die Herzöge, verschiedenste Ordnungen zur Regelung der städtischen Angelegenheiten.

<sup>2</sup> Vgl. Polizei-Ordnung vom 2. Juli 1572, in: Sammlung 1851, Erster Band.

Gegen die „schedllichen mißbreuche“ bei Hochzeiten richtete sich bereits die Polizeiordnung von 1572. Die „Bittelkösten“, also die rituelle Bestellung des Hochzeitsbitters mit Ladung von Gästen, wurde verboten. Adelshochzeiten sollten nicht länger als drei Tage dauern, „die Tentze sollen nach altem adelichem Teutschen gebrauch, züchtig und erbarlich, ohne alles verdrehen, und andere unzüchtige leichtfertige geberde gehalten werden“.<sup>3</sup>

Schulzen, Hufner und die „andern gemeinen leute“ hatten Reglementierungen der Anzahl der Gäste und der Größe der Hochzeitsgeschenke hinzunehmen.

All diese Verordnungen wirken sich indirekt auf die Arbeitsbedingungen und die finanziellen Einnahmen der Musikanten aus. Die Dauer der Feste wurde gekürzt, das Repertoire reglementiert und die Anzahl der für die Tänze zahlenden Hochzeitsgäste herabgesetzt.

Das Edikt vom 30. Dezember 1769 *Wider die Ueppigkeit der Domanial-Untergebenen* führte zum oben genannten vollständigen Verbot der Musik, selbst bei Hochzeiten. Es handelte sich um eine Erinnerung an eine gleich lautende Verordnung vom 23. Oktober 1756. Den Untertanen wurde darin verboten:

5. Weder bey Verlöbnissen, noch Hochzeiten, noch bey anderen frölichen Begebenheiten Spielleute und Musicanten herbey zu rufen, oder, es sey unter welchem Vorwand es wolle, dergleichen bey sich hören zu lassen.<sup>4</sup>

Dass das Verbot bereits 1756 auferlegt wurde und hier erneuert wird, da dasselbe „an vielen Orten in Vergessenheit gerathen sey oder doch größten Theils nicht gehörig befolget werde“;<sup>5</sup> zeugt von der Unmöglichkeit, traditionelle Geselligkeitspraktiken und das öffentliche Musizieren per Gesetz zu unterbinden. Erst im Jahre 1788 lockerte der Nachfolger Friedrichs, Friederich Franz, das Verbot:

[...] wogegen Wir lieber an Werkeltägen in Unseren Domainen einem Jeden gerne verstatten wollen, nach seinem Gefallen und Umständen, bey Hochzeiten, Erndte-Collationen und anderen dergleichen erlaubten Zusammenkünften der Musik zum Vergnügen sich zu bedienen, und mit Tanzen auf eine anständige Art sich zu belustigen.<sup>6</sup>

3 Polizei-Ordnung vom 2. Juli 1572, in: Sammlung 1851, Erster Band, 72.

4 „Wider die Ueppigkeit der Domanial-Untergebenen“ vom 30. 12. 1769, in: Sammlung 1851, Fünfter Band, 264–265.

5 „Wider die Ueppigkeit der Domanial-Untergebenen“ vom 30. 12. 1769, in: Sammlung 1851, Fünfter Band, 264.

6 Vom 2. Februar 1788, in: Sammlung 1851, Vierter Band, 482–483.

Ähnliche Gesetze finden wir in der Gesetzgebung des Herzogtums Mecklenburg-Güstrows und nach 1701 in Mecklenburg-Strelitz mit dem Land Ratzeburg. In dieser Strelitzschen Exklave heißt es in einem Gesetz Adolph Friedrichs vom 18. Juli 1787:

Wer Music bey der Hochzeit haben will, dem soll solche, auch anständige und nicht üppige Tänze vergönnet, dabey alles Gezänke, Vordrängen und Schelten der Musikanten, bey Gefängniß- oder anderer Leibes-Strafe verbothen seyn.<sup>7</sup>

Um das Fehlen in der Kirche am Sonntagmorgen zu vermeiden, ordnete die Strelitzsche Regierung am 25. August 1758 an, in den Krügen Festlichkeiten zu verbieten:

An solchen Tagen [Sonnabende, hohe Festtage und Buß- und Bettage] soll alles Saufen, Spielen, Tanzen, Nachtsingen und Schwärmen, und was solchem wüsten Leben mehr anhängig, auf das schärfste inhibirt [sein]. Nach völlig geendigtem Gottesdienst soll zwar auf einige Stunden Getränk feil seyn [...] in dessen ohne Musik und Saufen.<sup>8</sup>

Das auch im protestantischen Mecklenburg recht entwickelte Fastnachtswesen stand bereits in der mecklenburgischen Polizeiordnung von 1572 im Fokus der Obrigkeit. Vermummungen, lärmende Umzüge sowie gemeinsames Trinken und Speisen wurden verfolgt und die Unchristlichkeit des Brauchtums als auch die Störung der Ruhe beklagt. Der Mecklenburg-Güstrowsche Herzog Gustav Adolf veranlasste 1661 ein Edikt zur Fastnacht:

Demnach leider bis daher unter den Christen an verschiedenen Öhrtern, wie auch in unserem Fürstenthumb – und Landen in den Fastnacht Zeiten allerhand Heydnische mißbräuche und hochärgerliches wesen, mit Umblauffen, freßen, sauffen und dergleichen ärgerlichen Dingen im schwang gangen. Und aber durch solches Böses, Gottloses und unChristliches wesen, Gott im Himmelheftig erzürnet, zu Zorn und straff gereizet, auch viel unschuldige fromme Herten sehr geärgert werden.<sup>9</sup>

Die Musik selbst wurde in den Verboten nicht explizit genannt, sie war jedoch in Form der Begleitung der Gildenumzüge als auch der Tänze Bestandteil der Brauchhandlungen.

7 Aufwand (5.) vom 18. Juli 1787, in: Masch 1851, 50.

8 Verordnung vom 25. August 1758, in: Kamptz 1794, 98–99.

9 LHAS (Landeshauptarchiv Schwerin), Domonialamt Dargun-Gnoien-Neukalen 503; Edikt vom 12. Februar 1661.

Die Verbote wurden im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert immer wieder aufgelegt und unterscheiden sich nur wenig im Wollen und im Ausdruck. Die Fastnachtsbräuche sind so fester Bestandteil des Volkslebens, dass die Verbote scheinbar kaum Auswirkungen haben.

Anscheinend versuchte die Obrigkeit hier, eine Kanalisation des Festbedürfnisses zu einem bestimmten, christlich legitimierten Termin, nämlich zu Pfingsten, anzustreben. Auch andere brauchtümliche Aktionen von Gilden, wie das Vogelschießen, sollen zu dieser Zeit stattfinden, „[...] nicht ausserhalb der zeit, sondern auff die tage [...], Wan die gemeine Pfingst Gilde, wie hieroben gemelt, gehalten wirt“.<sup>10</sup>

Die traditionellen Umzüge und Treffen der Jugend mit Geselligkeit und Tanz zwischen Weihnachten und Ostern werden 1572 verboten und folgendermaßen beschrieben:

Uns kombt auch bericht ein, das auf den Dörfern hin und herwider von den iungen leuten, zwischen den Weinachts feyrtagen und der Fastnacht, etzliche Nacht und Abendtentze, gehalten werden, Und das sich die iugent zu zeiten, auch sonsten in dem Flachs schwigen versamlet, Desgleichen in den Oster feiertagen die knecht und megde einander umbsteupen, und darüber einn Col- lation versamlen und halten, daraus nicht wenig unrath, Leichtfertigkeit, Un- zucht auch wol Todtschlege erfolgen sollen.<sup>11</sup>

### 3 Konsequenzen für die Volksmusikanten

Für die mecklenburgischen Volksmusikanten hatte jede dieser Verordnungen Konsequenzen für die Ausübung der Musik und für ihre Geldbeutel. Als Musikanten waren sie aktive Gestalter der Feste, vertraut mit den traditionellen Abläufen und allem, was zu einem guten Fest gehört. So waren sie auch die ersten, die bei Ausübung ihrer Musik neue Verbote überschritten und ins Blickfeld der rügenden und strafenden Obrigkeit gerieten.

Fünf Felder der Kontrolle zogen sich durch die frühneuzeitliche Gesetzgebung Mecklenburgs, die sich direkt auf die Musik und das Leben der Musikanten niederschlugen:

1. Die Reduzierung übermäßigen Aufwandes, der mit den Feiern der Untertanen einhergeht. Hauptsächlich repräsentative Feste wie Hochzeiten oder Kindelbiere führ-

10 Polizei-Ordnung vom 2. July 1572. „Von den Fastnachts und andern Gilden, auch Brüderschaften in den Stetten“, in: Sammlung 1851, Erster Band, 78.

11 Polizei-Ordnung vom 2. July 1572. „Von den Fastnachts und andern Gilden, auch Brüderschaften in den Stetten“, in: Sammlung 1851, Erster Band, 79.



ten die Festgeber scheinbar an den finanziellen Ruin. Das Geben brachte einen enormen Prestigeerwerb mit sich, der die Familienkasse jedoch ebenso enorm belasten konnte.

2. Die Eindämmung der Hochzeitsgeschenke, die die Ausgaben des Festes direkt zum Teil wieder hätten ausgleichen können, brachte das traditionelle Gleichgewicht zwischen Geben und Nehmen aus dem Lot. Es kam zu einer Verkleinerung der Gästeanzahl. Auch diese wird obrigkeitlich reglementiert. Ein kleineres Fest hatte für den Musikanten kleinere Einnahmen zur Folge, bestimmte sich seine Gage doch nicht nur durch den ‚Hochzeitstaler‘, sondern auch durch das ‚Gefälle‘, die Bezahlung jedes einzelnen Tanzes durch die Tanzenden. Gleiches galt für die Beschränkung der Tage, an denen eine Hochzeit gefeiert wird. Zudem kamen im 18. Jahrhundert immer mehr ‚stille Hochzeiten‘ in Mode, bei der keinerlei Musik gefordert wurde. Ein aus den Verordnungen resultierender Effekt wird die Verkleinerung der Musikgruppen gewesen sein. Für ein kleines Fest waren ein, zwei oder drei Musikanten oft ausreichend.
3. Die Eindämmung unsittlichen Verhaltens. Unzüchtige Tänze wurden bereits in der Polizeiverordnung von 1572 bei adeligen Hochzeiten verboten. Die Untersagung, bestimmte ‚unsittliche‘ Tänze zu spielen, schränkte den Musikanten in seinem Repertoire ein. Die Eindämmung geselligen Miteinanders der Geschlechter bewirkte ein Weniger an Tanzmusiksituationen, die bespielt werden können.
4. Die Heiligung des Sonntags und anderer kirchlicher Feiertage. Das Verbot, Hochzeiten auf einen Sonntag oder andere Feiertage zu legen, schränkte die möglichen Aufwärtungstermine des Jahres ein. Fielen nun zwei in Frage kommende Hochzeiten wegen Terminmangels aufeinander, konnte oft nur eine Bespielmöglichkeit wahrgenommen werden. Der Sonnabend ist bis heute ein beliebter Festtermin, lagen doch die Mühen der Woche hinter den Feiernden und der freie Sonntag vor ihnen. Das Verbot dieses Festtermins war sicher äußerst brisant.
5. Das Verbot brauchtümligen Auslebens bestimmter Feste, wie Fastnacht, karnevalistische Heischegänge und Gildenbildung. Hier waren hauptsächlich die nichtausgebildeten Spielleute im direkten Umfeld der Brauchhandlungen betroffen. Sie büßten mit dem Verbot ein Gebiet des Musizierens ein, das ihnen sonst von niemandem streitig gemacht wurde, da eine Teilnahme der Stadtmusikanten für diese als unehrenhaft galt und auch eigentlich nichts damit zu verdienen war.

Gegen Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts wurde von Seiten der Obrigkeit, gestützt durch die Ideen der Aufklärung, die Wichtigkeit eines gewissen zeitlich begrenzten Müßiggangs vor allem der Landbevölkerung erkannt. Lockerungen der Gesetze waren die Folge, jedoch nicht die Abschaffung einer Reglementierung. Im frühen 19. Jahrhundert entsteht ein Taxreglement, das die Bezahlung der Amts-Musikanten und die Spieldauer genau festlegt.<sup>12</sup>

Die kontinuierlich geführten Gesetzgebungen in Bezug auf die Festkultur bewirkten mit vielen anderen Faktoren einen Wandel derselben. Obrigkeitliche Verordnungen spiegeln jedoch nicht die gelebte Wirklichkeit wider. Ganz im Gegenteil richtete sich ihr Augenmerk auf das Widersetzliche innerhalb der Festkultur, das sie nie wirklich ganz zerstören konnten. Das ständige Wiederholen mancher Verbote ist jedoch ein Hinweis auf eine ebenso kontinuierliche Missachtung der obrigkeitlichen Bestimmungen.

Einen weitaus größeren Anstoß für den Wandel der Festkultur und besonders der Musik bringt die Wirkung des Privilegsystems in den mecklenburgischen Herzogtümern mit sich, dessen Bedeutung im Folgenden beschrieben werden soll.

#### 4 Die Verrechtlichung des Musizierens

Ein Verrechtlichungsprozess des Musiklebens durchzog die gesamte frühe Neuzeit, angefangen von den oben erörterten Gesetzgebungen bis hin zur Vergabe von Rechten über die mecklenburgischen Gebiete an professionelle Musikanten aus den Städten.

Dieser zweite Aspekt soll nun im Mittelpunkt der folgenden Betrachtungen stehen: die Gründe der Vergabe herzoglicher Privilegien über die ländlichen Gebiete, der Prozess der ‚Verprivilegierung‘ und die Wirkungen derselben auf die Volksmusik.

Das Musizieren zu Festlichkeiten auf dem Dorfe außerhalb des Weichbildes der Städte stellte bis in die Mitte des 17. Jahrhunderts noch größtenteils ein Geschehen dar, das von obrigkeitlichen Rechten unberührt blieb. Reglementiert wurde, wie oben dargelegt, lediglich der Ablauf der Festlichkeiten in Bezug auf den Aufwand und die Sittlichkeit. Wer musizierte blieb eine Entscheidung des Veranstalters. Diese Autonomie des ‚platten Landes‘ verschwand im Laufe des 17. Jahrhunderts mit der Vergabe herzoglicher Privilegien an Musikanten über alle mecklenburgischen Ämter.

Ein Musikantenprivileg monopolisierte einen Musikanten über ein bestimmtes Gebiet, meist über einen Verwaltungsbezirk, der in Mecklenburg ‚Amt‘ genannt wurde. Aus dem ‚Stadtmusicus‘ wurde ein ‚Amtsmusicus‘. Nur er allein war berechtigt, Festlichkeiten musikalisch zu bedienen. Jedes Eindringen nicht privilegierter Musikanten konnte eine Geld- oder Gefängnisstrafe und/oder das Abnehmen der Instrumente nach sich

12 Vgl. u. a.: Taxreglement für die Amtsmusicanten vom 8. Januar 1821, in: Sammlung 1851, Fünfter Band, 404.

ziehen. Ein herzogliches Privileg der alleinigen Aufwartung organisierte den Rechtsanspruch. Das Privileg wurde direkt vom Herzog nach Stellung einer ‚Supplication‘ des Musikanten vergeben. Die Antragsteller waren meist die in den Städten bestellten Stadtmusikanten, die im Privileg ein wichtiges zusätzliches Mittel zur Erlangung ihres Lebensunterhalts sahen.

Das Eindringen der Stadtmusikanten in die ländlichen Gebiete ging Hand in Hand mit der Verdrängung traditioneller Musik, deren typische Ensembles und der Einschränkung der Volksmusikanten selbst.

Die Interessen des Stadtmusikanten trafen sich mit denen des Herzogs. Waren die städtischen Professionellen bestrebt, in der wirtschaftlich schweren Zeit nach dem Dreißigjährigen Krieg in ihrem Beruf zu bestehen, so waren die Herzöge beider Mecklenburgs im Zuge eines angestrebten Absolutismus darauf aus, zentralisierende Rechtssysteme zu schaffen. Das Musikantenprivileg band den Kunstpfeifer über andere Abhängigkeiten hinweg direkt an den Landesherrn. Weiterhin kann man vermuten, dass der Herzog mit der Privilegierung eines ‚Kunstverständigen‘ für die ländlichen Gebiete, einen ‚zivilisatorischen‘ Aspekt verfolgte, stammen doch, wie oben erörtert wurde, aus der zweiten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts eine Vielzahl von Edikten, die die Festkultur zivilisieren sollten.

Die Herzöge schufen mit der Einführung des Privilegsystems in einer Zeit verarmter Städte eine Lebensgrundlage für die Stadtmusikanten und somit für eine Gruppe Untertanen, deren einziger Broterwerb das Musizieren war.

Die schlechte wirtschaftliche Situation der Städte nach dem Kriege machte eine ausreichende Besoldung der Kunstpfeifer unmöglich. Weiterhin waren der Aufwand der Bevölkerung bei Festlichkeiten und die Anzahl der Feste nun sehr viel geringer, so dass auch hier die Einnahmen des Kunstpfeifers gering blieben. Zum Teil ließen die nach dem Kriege verarmten Bevölkerungsreste die Musik bei Hochzeiten ganz fort.

In diesem Zusammenhang ist für den Beginn des Prozesses der Verprivilegierung der Ämter zu Beginn der fünfziger Jahre des 17. Jahrhunderts ein wichtiges Ereignis auf Reichsebene zu benennen – die „Kayserliche Confirmation der Artickel deß Instrumental-Musicalischen Collegii in dem Ober- und Nieder-Sächsischen Creiß, und anderer interessirter Oerter“,<sup>13</sup>

Neben der Schaffung einer Berufsordnung, vor allem in Bezug auf die Ausbildung, war ein weiterer wichtiger Grund das Suchen nach einer Möglichkeit, die ungeliebte Konkurrenz auszuschalten. Die Erlangung dieser beruflichen Sicherheit war nur durch obrigkeitliche Privilegien möglich. Für den hier darzulegenden Aspekt der Artikel, nämlich der Vergabe bestimmter Gebiete, ist vor allem der 1. Artikel relevant:

13 Vgl. Wustmann 1908, 104–117.

Es soll Erstlichen keiner von dem Musicalischen Collegio sich aus freyen Stücken seiner Kunst zu gebrauchen in einer Stadt, Ambt oder Closter, woselbst allbereit in unserer Societät einer gesessen und in Bestallung genommen, niederlassen, noch demselben darinn von Vffwartungen ichtwas entwenden, es wäre denn Sache, daß er sich einer andern Handthierung gebrauchen, oder daß er von der Oberkeit des Orts dahin vociret, der allbereit bestallte Musicus auch versichert würde, daß ihm an seinen Accidentien kein Eintrag geschehen, oder er zum wenigsten des Abgangs halben schadloß gehalten werden möchte.<sup>14</sup>

Der Inhaber eines Privilegs über eine Stadt und ein Amt erlangte somit das Monopol im Bereich der musikalischen Aufwartung. Da diese Monopolstellung vom Kunstpfeifer angestrebt wurde, sein Einflussbereich bisher jedoch auf die Stadt beschränkt war, stellte das herzogliche Privileg das geeignete Mittel dar, diese Situation zu seinen Gunsten zu regeln. Die „sächsischen Musikantenartikel“ waren in Mecklenburg bekannt, wenn auch bei der Unterzeichnung der dem Kaiser vorgelegten Fassung kein mecklenburgischer Kunstpfeifer vertreten war.

Drei inhaltliche Punkte sind in den mecklenburgischen Privilegien fast immer vertreten:

1. Darlegung, welcher Musikant über welchen Raum für welche Festlichkeiten privilegiert wird,
2. Befehl an die örtlichen Obrigkeiten, den Privilegierten zu schützen,
3. die Androhung von Strafen für Personen, die dem Privileg zuwiderhandeln.

Als vierter Punkt erscheint zusätzlich häufig eine Mahnung an den Musikanten, „sich dabei bescheidenlich und willfährig zu bezeigen, niemand zu übersetzen, oder in andere Wege zu beschwehren, sondern sich allemahl unverweißlich zu verhalten“.<sup>15</sup>

Um 1650 ist der größte Teil des ländlichen Gebietes noch von keinem Privileg berührt. Die Bewohner sind in der Wahl der Musikanten frei. Um 1700 ist Mecklenburg bis auf wenige, kleinere Gebiete aufgeteilt.

<sup>14</sup> Wustmann 1908, 109.

<sup>15</sup> Landshauptarchiv Schwerin, AC Rehna 153; Privileg

des Kunstpfeifers Jochim Schmitt vom 9. Februar 1671.

## 5 Wirkungen des Verrechtlichungsprozesses

So wie die traditionellen Rechte durch die Vergabe von Privilegien der Obrigkeit immer mehr eingeschränkt wurden, brachte das Eindringen eines ‚Kunstverständigen‘ eine Veränderung der traditionellen Musik des Dorfes mit sich. Das sich mit der Verprivilegierung entwickelnde ständige Anwesendsein des Stadtmusikanten zu den Festen der Dorfbevölkerung bewirkte zwangsläufig mit dem Wechseln der Musikanten auch einen Wechsel der Musik selbst. Die Spielleute und ihr Spiel wurden zunächst von den Hochzeiten der Wohlhabenderen und in der Entwicklung selbst von ‚geringen Hochzeiten‘ verdrängt. Der städtische Musiker mit seinem bürgerlichen Spiel vernichtete das traditionelle bäuerliche Spiel zunehmend.

Der Wandel von musikalischer Volkskultur bekam durch die Novationen der Stadt nach dem Dreißigjährigen Krieg einen starken Schub, der traditionelle Musizierpraktiken und deren spezielles Instrumentarium zurückdrängte. Im 17. Jahrhundert startete durch den Einfluss der städtischen, ausgebildeten Musikanten ein musikalischer ‚Zivilisierungsprozess‘, der die instrumentale Volksmusik beeinflusste. Typische Borduninstrumente wie die in Mecklenburg stark vertretene Sackpfeife oder die Drehleier wurden weniger benutzt. Der Einfluss der städtischen Geiger auf die Spielleute des Dorfes veränderte nicht nur das Repertoire, sondern auch den Charakter der Volksmusik. Wohl nicht in einem Maße, der die Unterschiede verschwinden ließ – dazu war die Überlieferung und die Kontinuität des Charakters der zu bespielenden Feste zu groß – wohl aber in einem anderen Sinne:

Das Repräsentationsbedürfnis der wohlhabenderen Landbevölkerung und des Adels mit dem Blick zu Kulturformen der Stadt verlangte nach städtischer Musik, gekoppelt mit der öffentlichen Darstellung, dass man in der Lage war, den Stadtmusikanten zu bezahlen. Das Bestellen eines Sackpfeifers lag oft unter der Würde der Hochzeiter. So wurden die Städter zunächst weniger musikalisch, als vielmehr als Statussymbol der Festgeber geschätzt. Musikalische Traditionen und die enge Bindung der Musik an die Kultur der Festgemeinschaft wurden zu Teilen dem Prestige geopfert.

Das ständige Aufspielen der Städter in den Ämtern bewirkte die Aneignung kunstmusikalischer Fähigkeiten bei den Musikanten des Dorfes. Das ‚Denken‘ des Borduns wurde abgelöst durch das ‚Denken‘ von Harmonien. Der grobe, diffuse Klang wird bald weniger geschätzt als das weiche Musizieren nach den Grundlagen der Kunstmusik. Auch Musikinstrumente, wie die Geige und später Waldhörner und Klarinetten, wurden zu Instrumenten der Volksmusik. Die Übernahme städtischer Instrumente und Musizierweisen bewirkte ebenfalls die ‚Rationalisierung‘ des Instrumentariums und der Ensemblevielfalt. Die große Anzahl der Ensembleformen des 16. und frühen 17. Jahrhunderts u. a. mit Drehleiern, Maultrommeln, Trommeln oder Schalmeyen wurde zurückgedrängt. Trommeln im Ensemblespiel kamen in den bisher ausgewerteten Quel-

len vorrangig im 16. und nur bis zum Ende des 17. Jahrhunderts vor. Zwei Violinen oder zwei Violinen und ein Bass werden zum typischen ländlichen Ensemble des 18. Jahrhunderts.

Gerade in den schriftlichen Zeugnissen zu Beginn der Verprivilegierung Mecklenburgs im 17. Jahrhundert erkennt man jedoch einen zähen Widerstand des Alten und eine noch ungebrochene Ablehnung der privilegierten Musikanten durch die ländliche Bevölkerung.

Folgt man der Terminologie des italienischen Kulturwissenschaftlers Piero Camporesi, so erweist sich der geschilderte Prozess, „als eine Frage der Ausweitung der städtischen Kultur *extra moenia* (über die Stadtmauern hinaus)“.<sup>16</sup> Eine Gruppe von Musikanten, die eine sich an den Werten und der Ästhetik einer städtischen und höfischen Kultur orientierende Ausbildung bekommen hat, gelingt es, mit Hilfe obrigkeitlicher Reglementierung in eine kulturelle Sphäre außerhalb der Stadt einzudringen, und diese zu verändern. Der zunehmende Einfluss von ‚Recht und Ordnung‘ im Zuge der Entwicklung des frühmodernen Staates ist für diesen Prozess entscheidend.

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## Abbildungsnachweis

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Mark Howell

# The Impact of Sound on Colonization: Spanish, French and British Encounters with Native American Cultures, from Colonial Guatemala to Virginia

## Summary

The colonization of the New World gave rise to unprecedented political and social changes, but these varied among the actors, and depended on the time of contact, the nature of interaction(s), societal ontologies, and other factors. Some information about the encounters is contained in ethnohistoric accounts but they are often biased, and the material record on its own is at the mercy of environmental factors and excavation choices. Music and music-accompanied events, on the other hand, can retain cultural messages (sonic preferences, myths, cultural ties etc.) that escape detection by censors (of both the human and nature kind). In this paper I use music evidence as a lens through which to view contact's range of effects on Europeans and Amerindians in three areas of interaction.

Keywords: music; politics; New World; colonization; sound

Die Kolonialisierung der Neuen Welt führte zu beispiellosen politischen und sozialen Veränderungen, die sich für die Betroffenen u. a. je nach Kontaktzeitraum und Art und Weise der Begegnung(en) unterschieden. Manche Informationen über diese Begegnungen finden sich in ethnohistorischen Quellen, allerdings sind diese oftmals einseitig und die Materiallage ist abhängig von Umweltfaktoren und Ausgrabungsmethoden. Auch Musik und Musikveranstaltungen können kulturelle Botschaften bewahren, die menschlicher und natürlicher ‚Zensur‘ entkommen sind. In diesem Beitrag werden musikalische Zeugnisse als Analyseperspektive verwendet, durch die die Kontaktreichweite der Einwirkungen auf Europäer\*innen und ‚Amerindians‘ in drei Interaktionsräumen beobachtet werden sollen.

Keywords: Musik; Politik; Neue Welt; Kolonisation; Klang

## 1 Introduction

The ideal method for documenting aural encounters between Colonial-era Europeans and Native Americans would employ an etymology understood by both groups for use in comparisons (Fig. 1). By doing this we could define soundmaking terms and systems for each of the groups covered in a manner allowing for similarities and differences, while simultaneously highlighting cases where culture-specific terms have been re-defined. To give an example of the latter; the K'iche' Maya word *k'ojom*, once restricted to drumming, has over the centuries been modified to now also mean music. This change could indicate K'iche' terminological refinement of what music mostly is, or contrarily indicate adoption of Western perceptions of K'iche' music. Either way, the term could be analyzed according to both its current and past meanings and why and when the meaning changed could perhaps be determined. There are myriad examples like these but as soundmaking in this chapter concerns measurable phenomena like pitch, volume, and timbre, a review of such terms should not be needed. One confession, however, must be made; despite the title and evidence that European dance and song forms like the *Pavanne*, *Sarabande*, and *Villancico* owe much to indigenous practices: here I do not propose to emphasize contact's impact on European soundmaking. That is a study that has been done before, and admirably,<sup>1</sup> although with new information it is one that is certainly due a revisit.

## 2 The Spanish and the K'iche' Maya of Guatemala

In 1537 the Dominican friar Bartolomé de las Casas began one of the earliest and grandest experiments in acculturation by establishing Verapaz, or the land of True Peace, in the area between the two largest Guatemalan mountain ranges, the Cuchumatanes and the Chuacus (Fig. 2). He chose this region, formerly known to the Spanish by its Mexican name *Tezulutlán*, "Place of the Owl"; corrupted to mean Land of War for its untamed reputation, and marked it as a conspicuous testing ground for his revolutionary alternative to war, which he proposed to the Spanish monarchy as a Christian doctrine of conquest through God.<sup>2</sup>

1 Laird 1997; Stevenson 1960; Stevenson 1962.

2 Akkeren 2000; Carmack 1981. The reader may be familiar with Las Casas' debates with Sepulveda on

the nature of Amerindian civil rights, a polemic nominally won by the humanitarian but which did little to alter imperial policy; Wood 2002, 269.

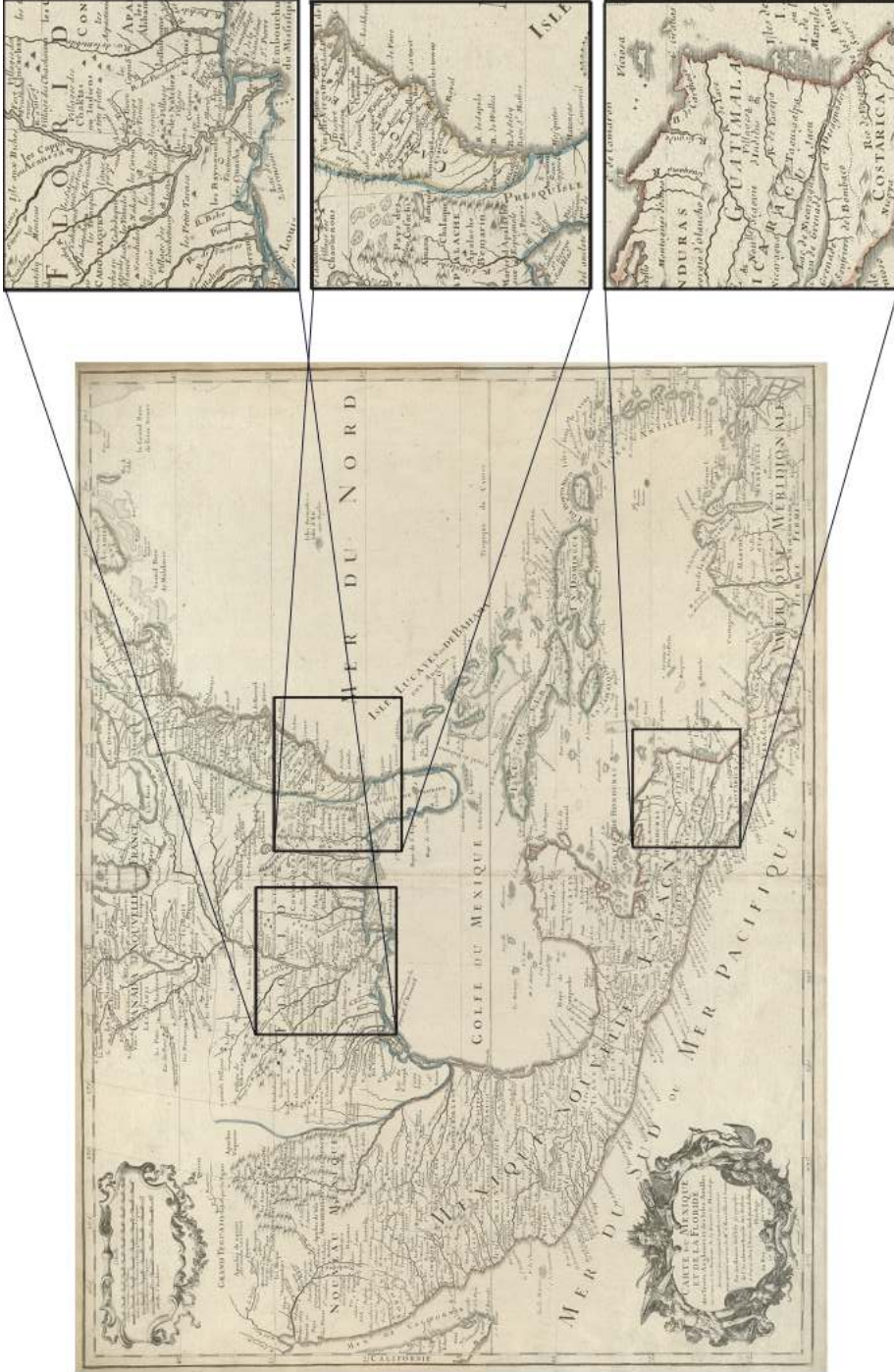


Fig. 1 The three areas of interaction. DeLisle and Baldwin's "Carte du Mexique et de la Floride" (1703). Highland Guatemala is located at the bottom close to the second "E" in "Espagne". The Lower Mississippi River Valley juts out from the central northern Gulf Coast, and the Cherokee homeland sits along the green line running parallel to the Mer Du Nord coast.



Fig. 2 Map of Guatemala showing the locations of Alta and Baja Verapaz.

Las Casas' experiment lasted officially for only a few decades, but in the lower half of the land of peace, Baja Verapaz,<sup>3</sup> it continued unofficially for some 200 years more.<sup>4</sup> The dominant ethnic group in this area was and remains K'iche' Achi Maya, famous for a mock sacrifice dance-play called the *Rab'in al Achi*; known by this name since 1855, which has been performed somewhat regularly in its namesake town until as recently as January of last year, 2015 (Fig. 3). The *Rab'in al Achi* dance-play, or *baile*, is of a type locally called *tun*, which has specific and unique characteristics, including a plot of capture-captivity-trial and sacrifice, references to pre-Columbian Guatemalan history, costumes

3 Even in the mid-20th century the central valley of Baja Verapaz was approached by only a single mule trail, which was improved shortly before 1945 at the order of the then president Jorge Ubico to facilitate military suppression of uprisings against his right-wing government. In spite of the improve-

ment this trail remained unpaved until the 1950s. 82 % of the 24 063 residents speak K'iche'-Achi (a highland Maya dialect), and for many this is their primary or only language; Howell 2004.

4 King 1974, 21.



Fig. 3 Rab'inal Achi' performance excerpt, 2001.

and masks, ensemble dances between speeches, and an accompanying ensemble of valveless trumpet(s) and/or slit drum that play for the dances and cue the speeches. Of all of the *baile* dance-plays currently performed in Guatemala, such as variously named animal bailes, conquest bailes, and conversion bailes, the *tun*, or sacrifice baile, is the best candidate for having originated in pre-Columbian times. Anthropologist Dennis Tedlock notes iconography on pre-Spanish pottery from the Guatemala highlands that replicates its sequence of capture-captivity-trial and sacrifice.<sup>5</sup> And Ruud Van Akkeren lists evidence for the baile's antiquity in several Colonial-era documents indicating its origin at least 100 years before the arrival of the Spanish.<sup>6</sup> What is more, the instruments used in accompaniment, the slit-drum, and the valveless tube trumpet, are often depicted in pre-Hispanic images accompanying sacrificial rites.<sup>7</sup>

Along with its musical and theatrical elements are the circumstances of performance. The *Rab'inal Achi*, like other bailes in the Maya highlands, is featured in Catholic saint-day celebrations where it is performed at various sacred locales, including churches, graveyards, and religious brotherhood, or *cofradia*, houses. In many of these settings it is enacted simultaneously alongside other bailes presenting their own stories and sounds. Typically, bailes compete with one another for space, often intruding into areas set aside

5 Tedlock 2003, 127–28.

6 Akkeren 2000, 476–480.

7 Howell 2004.

for rival dance-plays. Most, if not all, will also be paraded through a town's streets in processions going from one performance area to another.

In addition to being known from iconography, the instrument types used in the *Rab'in al Achi'* are archaeologically attested. Scores of wooden slit-drums have been found during controlled excavations throughout Mexico and Central America, including Guatemala, while a handful of ceramic tube trumpets have been similarly recovered.<sup>8</sup> Slit-drums used today resemble their pre-Columbian predecessors, while the valveless trumpets – once apparently made of wood or gourd, as well as clay – are now made of brass, an obvious consequence of Spanish influence (Fig. 4). Both the slit-drum and valveless tube trumpet are among a small number of instruments with ancient roots still used in ritual contexts, a list that also includes flutes, skin drums, and container rattles. However, for some rituals and other indigenous purposes, introduced instruments have replaced the originals, although there appears to have been an attempt to at least preserve the timbres (tone colors) of the latter. Take for example the *chirimía*, a double-reed instrument invented in Europe and prevalent in 16th-century Spain and Spanish America that is now only used in Spanish-speaking countries of the Americas (Fig. 5). Its nasal-like timbre is similar to the tone quality of the Mesoamerican *mirliton* flute, equipped with an exterior buzzing membrane (sometimes made from the web of the funnel-wolf spider *Lycosidae sosippus*). The similarity in tone between the two instruments might explain the *chirimía*'s continued appeal to the Maya some 500 years after its introduction – it is prominent in the Guatemalan version of the *Baile de la Conquista*. In addition to buzzing sounds, there is a Maya fascination with sounds made by edgetone instruments, such as flutes and whistles. In one particular case, single chamber duct flutes used for the modern highland Maya version of the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* often have modified apertures, which duplicate those found on certain pre-Columbian specimens, a modification affecting the number of harmonics audible in a sound (Fig. 6). In my research I have found examples of cut plastic (PVC) plumbing pipe made into flutes, with bees' wax kneaded around the apertures used to replicate pre-Columbian versions. Again, like the buzzing sound of the *chirimía*, the idea seems to be the perpetuation of a specific Maya-preferred timbre.

The contexts of use of soundmakers like the slit-drum, valveless tube trumpet, and aperture-modified duct flute illustrate the retention of another probable pre-Columbian characteristic – exclusivity – whereby specific instruments and their sounds are restricted to certain dance-plays, games, and prayers.<sup>9</sup> Conquest-themed dance-plays like the *Baile de la Conquista* require flutes (or *chirimías*) and skin drums, and tun dance-plays require trumpets and/or slit-drums. This level of sonic specificity seems to have flown under

8 Howell 2004.

9 Howell 2004.



Fig. 4 Rab'in al Achi' musicians with slit-drum and valveless tube trumpets, 2001.

the radar of Spanish awareness, and subsequently of most archaeologists for that matter, which is why these aspects are now so revelatory. However, in Latin America the Colonial-era Spanish were at least able to exert control over the performances themselves, or so they assumed.

Records indicate that during the time of Las Casas' True Peace experiment there were more *tun* bailes in Alto and Baja Verapaz than the *Rab'in al Achi'* (theorized by Van Akkeren, Mace, Edmonson, and Tedlock to have been present at that time, whether called by that name or not). Some of those in addition were the *Lotzo Tun*, *Tun Teleche*, *Trompetas Tun*, and *Quiché Uinac*.<sup>10</sup> The Colonial-era vitality of *tun* bailes may explain the eleven official edicts enacted against them in Guatemala between the 16th and 18th

<sup>10</sup> Akkeren 2000; Edmonson 1976 [1965]; Mace 1967; Tedlock 2003.



Fig. 5 Guatemalan *chirimía*.



Fig. 6 Mesoamerican duct flute with raised aperture.

century, the first in 1593 and the last in 1770.<sup>11</sup> In 1625 they were even banned in the two Verapazes.<sup>12</sup>

In an attempt to fight the bans, the Maya periodically defined *tun* bailes to Colonial administrators as historical dramas, apparently cognizant of the fact that this was a theatrical genre respected and thus hopefully tolerated by the Spanish. In 1676, citizens in San Juan Sacatepequez (San Miguel Milpa Duenas today) used the historical nature of the *Trompetas Tun* to attempt to overturn the prohibition of its performance, characterizing it as an “entertaining history in song.” The Maya further noted the baile to be a “very common dance among all the Indians.”<sup>13</sup> The two adjectives used imply

11 Tedlock 2003, 201.

12 Bans are recorded in 1593, 1624, 1631, 1632, 1650, 1678, 1679, 1684, 1748, 1749 and 1770; Tedlock 1998. They apply to dance-plays performed in the towns of San Bernadino, Sanayac, Putalul, Mazatenango, San Martin Zapotitlan, Retalhuleu, Alo-

tenango, and the above mentioned San Miguel; Tedlock 2003, 201. In addition, there was a plea by colonial-era authorities for the prohibition of a similar dance-play performed in Tabasco, a southern gulf coast state of Mexico; Tedlock 2003, 200.

13 Acuña 1975, 109.





Fig. 7 *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* procession, Coban, Guatemala, 2000.

two possible – not mutually exclusive – strategies for baile re-instatement: one, that it was entertaining and common, and thus benign in character, not demanding serious concern; the other, that its widespread popularity could be used to Spanish advantage – as a distraction perhaps, while more serious papal or bureaucratic business could be tended to. Yet despite appeal to Spanish tastes and administrative aims, authorities proved less interested in preserving Maya histories than in eradicating all indigenous customs. With this resolve, one would think that sacrifice dance-plays would have been completely eliminated. They certainly celebrated the most conspicuously anti-Christian of all Mesoamerican practices, human sacrifice. Yet along with Rabinal, six other highland towns allegedly hosted *tun* bailes well into the twentieth century.<sup>14</sup>

As illuminating as this type of dance-play is, using it as the sole barometer of cultural resilience minimizes the importance and extent of the dance tradition zeitgeist in Maya Guatemala. There are at least 25 other baile types currently performed there. Most are hybrids, combining Spanish Catholic and Amerindian traditions, such as the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* and *Maximon*, and most can be traced to the early Colonial period. Because of the marriage of indigenous beliefs to Christian symbolism it could be argued that hybrids were as subversive as *tun* bailes (Fig. 7).

14 These six are San Pedro Laguna, San Juan Ixcay,

Aguacatán, Momostenango, Santa Catarina Ixtahua-

In a survey of the 314 major Guatemalan towns in the 22 departments of the country, 150 or 47 % regularly present bailes, and over half of these present two or more. When broken down by department, Alta Verapaz presents the most. Of its fourteen major municipalities, thirteen host dance-plays, meaning 96 % of the towns in Alta Verapaz have a baile tradition. Six of the eight towns in Baja Verapaz do the same. Only two other departments have a comparably high average: Totonicapán and El Quiché (each in the high 90 % range). The latter, being the population center of Guatemala, and the former, being situated in rugged terrain, perhaps explain why these departments preserve Maya colonial and pre-colonial traditions.<sup>15</sup> A few departments in the extreme north present none.

Whatever the ultimate explanations for the retention and high number of tun bailes and Colonial-era hybrid dance-plays in the two Verapazes, we should at least partially credit a progressive Spanish Colonial policy of tolerance; effective for however briefly in time and imperfect in application. But a more critical question, especially for music archaeologists, is: did Las Casa's isolation of Verapaz help preserve pre-Columbian instruments? This is hard to prove, but the survival of slit-drums, valveless tube trumpets and aperture-modified duct flutes owes much to cultural insulation, whether engendered through official quarantine, rural immigration, or prohibitive location. And beyond the preservation of the material instruments themselves is the preservation of the sounds they make. Here, there is substantial evidence for timbral retention throughout areas where Maya traditions remained strong. The maintenance of such a culturally relevant sonic diagnostic for nearly five centuries seems to lend a measure of credence to Lü Buwei's theory of an intertwining of governments with the musics they promote, support, and suppress.<sup>16</sup>

### 3 The French and the Natchez and Tunica in the Lower Mississippi River Valley

In 1700, when Louis XIV's Colonial governor Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville made his way up the Mississippi River to re-establish French contact with the Tunica, Natchez, and

can, and Samayac. San Pedro Laguna and Santa Catarina Ixtahuacán are both in the department of Sololá. San Juan Ixcóy and Aguacatán are both in the department of Huehuetenango. Momostenango is in the department of Totonicapán and Samayac is in the department of Suchitepéquez. If true and indicative of the survival of a pre-Columbian tradition, it is noteworthy that none of these six towns are located in Verapaz (Baja or Alto) and that the

only apparent similarity between them and Rabinal is their locations in mountainous regions in the west of the country; areas that only recently became accessible to outsiders and are still home to relatively large Maya populations noted for maintaining cultural traditions.

<sup>15</sup> Departamento 1971.

<sup>16</sup> See Monson 1996; Journeau, this volume.

other tribal groups met with twenty years earlier by Sieur de la Salle, the party noted in the water a red cypress tree purposely stripped of its bark, which the French called “le baton rouge.”<sup>17</sup> This marker, though originally placed to delineate the boundary between Houma and Bayou Goula hunting grounds, effectively fixed the southern border of Mississippian culture, pre-Columbian mound builders and agriculturalists whose settlements were centered along the eponymous river and its tributaries.

During the time of their adventures the French largely remained in the river’s flood plain, and their approach to colonization adhered to expected French hierarchical affiliations – country first, independent entrepreneur second. Their loyalty to this system implies that the full weight of the French government was behind the colonists, which was the case initially and was a goal always, but the level of intercontinental commitment eventually placed too much of a strain on overtaxed French bureaucracies involved in seemingly never-ending conflicts in Europe – King William’s War of 1689 to 1697; Queen Anne’s War of 1702 to 1713; The Seven Years’ War of 1756 to 1763 – and as a result the colonists were often left to fend for themselves. None liked this outcome and several attempts were made to find more workable solutions, including the outsourcing of the colonial enterprise to The Company of the West Indies between 1717 and 1731, but the lack of direct involvement in Native affairs proved to be the downfall of the French in the American south.<sup>18</sup> By 1763 the lands they controlled east of the Mississippi River, save New Orleans, were ceded to Great Britain (by the Treaty of Paris) while those west were ceded to Spain (by the Treaty of Fontainebleau). France would occupy the river valley one final time, starting in 1800 (following the Treaty of San Ildefonso), but only three years later the emperor Napoleon Bonaparte sold those possessions to the United States of America. During their brief time in the valley, the most significant French relationships were with the Natchez and Tunica, neither of which now exists as a tribal entity.

17th and 18th-century reports by Frenchmen describe Natchez and Tunica agricultural practices, commerce, rituals, and other aspects of life.<sup>19</sup> An account and accompanying ink drawing of the funeral of the Natchez war chief Tattooed Serpent, for instance, shows individuals nested together, and rotating from that small nucleus in a continually circling route – similar in appearance to the spiraling arms of a galaxy. This has been used by archaeologists in countless ethnographic analogies to elucidate centuries-earlier

17 J. F. Barnett personal communication 2011. Baton Rouge is now, of course, the capital of the state of Louisiana.

18 The French had originally entered the Lower Mississippi River Valley from Canada in the 1670s and over the ensuing years wrestled not only with the

English but with the Spanish for control of the river and the adjacent lands and waterways of the northern Gulf of Mexico.

19 Barnett 2007. D’Iberville, Jean-Françoise Buisson de Saint-Cosme, André Pénicaut, and Antoine-Simone Le Page du Pratz provided many of these accounts.

Mississippian funerary rites.<sup>20</sup> Other accounts (philological and iconographical) highlight, among other things, dancing, singing, and instrument playing. As if in response, among the standard items traded to Amerindians of the Lower Mississippi River Valley were brass and silver bells of the crotal (jingle) type and tinkling cones. The desirability and use of these soundmakers is noted in ethnohistoric accounts. “When dancing they don their best clothes; and, they wear a belt made up of about 40 *potin* (brass) hawk-type bells.”<sup>21</sup> The extent of bell trade is also recorded in shipping inventories, such as in a 1701 entry for the Biloxi fort, “for the presents to be made to the Indians of said county, are six gross (864) of Hawk’s bells;” and for the fort at Mobile, “two gross (288).”<sup>22</sup> In addition to being documented in ledgers and reports, a number of European bells and ‘tinklers’ have survived archaeologically. Recovered in just one mound at the Natchez Grand Village site were 33 brass bells, two silver bells, and 13 conical brass tinklers.<sup>23</sup> At smaller nearby Tunica sites: 18 or more brass bells were found at Trudeau, 16 or more were found at Bloodhound, 11 at Gilbert, and at least 6 at Angola Farms.<sup>24</sup>

Before the advent of European metal bells, Amerindians in the valley made use of shell shakers for similar purposes (Fig. 8).<sup>25</sup> In a casual review of 32 site reports, I located in excess of 12 shell-artifact assemblages indicating their primary or secondary use as soundmakers. In fact, one of the most intriguing examples in North America of reverse acculturation concerns metal tinklers cut and fabricated by Amerindians out of European brass objects, like plates and kettles, then re-made to resemble and function as cone-shaped shell tinklers similar in appearance and function to those used in pre-Columbian times (Fig. 9). But trading bells provide us perhaps with our best insight into Native American-French commerce, indigenous sonic preferences, and changing culture (Fig. 10).<sup>26</sup>

20 Barnett 2007; Swanton 1979 [1946]; Wells 1994.

21 Brown 1979.

22 Brain 1979, 291.

23 These bells and tinklers were all found in Mound C.

24 In addition to the bells Trudeau yielded at least 13 tinklers and there were dozens found at Angola Farms. One reason for the lack of specificity regarding the numbers of the latter is that the tables of artifacts and the lists in the text of site reports do not always match up. Strangely, the Tunica, the most loyal of all French allies in the valley, had a large number of English-derived bells, a situation unique for French affiliated Amerindians; Brown 1979.

25 Brain 1988. Though it is possible that pre-Columbian southeastern Amerindians made copper bells, metal soundmakers did not appear in substantial numbers until the 17th century. Still, several copper beads from Mississippian and predecessor

sites possibly served a secondary or even primary function as soundmakers. Small copper beads are reported for some Marksville sites of the southern Hopewell, 200 BCE–400 CE, (Brookes 1976, 25–26), and pieces of rolled copper (possibly bells or bell preforms) are known from the pre-Marksville at Jackson Landing (Williams 1987, 55–56, 59).

26 Brass bells were first brought to the southeast in the 16th century by the Spanish, ostensibly as attachments to horse harnesses, and a substantial number have been found at sites associated with Hernando de Soto’s *entrada* (1539–1543). In most cases trade bell origin can be determined through bell maker marks, site contexts, and metal alloy analysis. Still, it might surprise some that a type of 16th century Spanish bell was stamped with the *Fleur de Lis* (J. Connaway personal communication 2011). Metal bells destined for the Lower Mississippi River



Fig. 8 Conus shell-tinklers.  
Collection of the Arizona State  
Museum, Catalog No. GP 4243.  
Photo: Emily Brown.



Fig. 9 Brass cone-tinklers (be-  
low) and conus shell-tinklers  
(above).

Valley were usually inventoried for trade as “sleigh bells,” “hawk bells,” or “Morris bells”; Brown 1979. In Europe they had practical and recreational uses; such as tracking livestock and for use in the sport of falconry, explaining the term hawk bell. (It is not known if falconry was ever practiced in the Colonial-era new world.) Colonial-era metal bells

found in the Lower Mississippi River Valley are almost always globular with a slot in the bottom and internal free-floating clapper, typically of iron. The majority were either cast in a mold or hammered into a cup-shaped mold. These two manufacturing processes produce what have been grouped as bell



Fig. 10 Brass bells from the wreck of *La Belle*, a sample of all maker-mark types.

In a report on Tunica migrations, archaeologist Jeffrey Brain tangentially tracked bell distribution patterns and noticed among other things that bell circumferences decreased in size over the course of the 18th century.<sup>27</sup> One economic explanation supposes that Native Americans cared little about the sizes of bells, and as more were exported French cost concerns dictated that they be made smaller so that less copper, zinc and/or silver would be used in manufacture. An acoustic corollary, however, is that – other factors such as density being equal – smaller bells produce higher pitches, and consequently the decrease in size over time may have been due to Amerindian sonic preferences rather than European manufacture and shipping costs. There are several reasons for supposing the latter to be the case.

Colonial-era Native Americans interacting with the French were more often compelled to travel to French trading posts for transactions than not. These posts were semi-permanent settlements (some like New Orleans and Mobile still remain) and offered a larger assortment and quantity of goods than would have been available through export to Native settlements, the preferred English approach. With more choices of merchandise offered at French posts, Amerindians trading at these could have been more

classes that are subdivided into types and varieties; Brown 1979, 197, 201. Bells of cast brass are classified as either key types, arch types, or dome types, with these names representing the shapes of the small handles on the bells; while those of sheet brass are classified as either flush-edge type, flange-edge type, or lapped-edge type, with the differences having to do with how the two bell hemisphere halves are joined. The two most important trading bells were the flush-looped variety, which is a sub cate-

gory of the flush-edged sheet-brass bell type, and the Saturn variety, which is a sub category of the flange-edged sheet-brass bell type. Both are almost always found on sites associated with French occupation; Brain 1979, 205.

<sup>27</sup> Sheet-brass class, flush-edge type, flush-loop variety bells have the largest spatial and longest temporal distribution of any historic trade bell, Brain 1979, 203; John Connaway personal communication 2011.

discriminating. Thus the increasing number of smaller bells over time in Lower Mississippi River Valley Amerindian settlements suggests that Native Americans may have been exercising choice regarding bell size and not merely having small ones imposed upon them, as would be assumed with a Franco-centric economic distribution model. But whether Amerindians were choosing bells for their pitch or for their small size is unclear, as some larger ones can be high pitched; and an analysis I did on a large bell collection from the wreckage of La Salle's flagship (destined for the Mississippi River Delta in 1685) only partly clears up the matter. However, since I have already presented the results of this analysis elsewhere, here I will limit my discussion primarily to bell sizes and pitches.<sup>28</sup>

Thirteen hundred ninety nine brass bells in excellent shape were recovered from the hold of La Salle's flagship (coincidentally called *La Belle*) and their sounds were digitally recorded and analyzed. All but a small number had one of five maker-marks engraved on their surfaces: either the Roman letters 'N' or 'S'; or designs resembling an arched cat, bow-tie, or snowflake; and all were between 12 and 19 mm in diameter. The smallest were those engraved with the maker-mark 'Cat', at an average diameter of 12,4 mm, and the largest were those with an N, at an average of 19,2 mm. The majority of bells were in the category with maker-mark S, totalling 633 specimens. The smallest bells, the Cats, were second fewest in number, 84, only the slightly larger Snowflakes being fewer, at 23. This is interesting since though low in number in this sample, bells of the latter two types would be the most coveted later in the century. Cats were also the highest in pitch. They have a mean frequency of 6,6 kHz. The largest bells, those with an N, have a mean frequency of 3,3 kHz, an octave lower than the Cats. This is expected based on the relative diameters of the two bell types, with larger bells usually pitched lower; but what is surprising is that the second largest, S bells, were nearly as high in pitch as the smallest. S bells average 5 kHz. S's are thus higher in pitch than their size might suggest, being only a fraction of a millimeter smaller than the largest bell type, N's, which again are the lowest in pitch. In explanation, though dissimilar in diameter, the density of metal in S's and Cats might be similar. Whether or not this is so (few tests regarding thickness have been conducted), S's, the greatest in number, combined with the similarly pitched Cats, means that the majority of bells from La Salle's ship have a mean frequency of 5,8 kHz, a higher pitch than an average for the other bells in the sample (3.6 kHz). La Salle's bells were shipped to the New World at the beginning of the 18th century, but the preference for smaller bells culminates after the middle part of that century. There were not many small bells in La Salle's shipment, perhaps indicating the taste at that earlier time. But there were, as shown, a large number of high-pitched bells – the largest

28 The broader treatment was read to the 2006 Berlin conference of the International Study Group on Music Archaeology; Howell 2008.

in number in the collection in fact – but as these bells never made their way to French trading posts, we are unlikely ever to know if the large high-pitched bells would have been as preferred as small high-pitched bells.

#### 4 The British and the Cherokee of the Southern Interior

After several failed attempts at establishing a presence on the American continent, in 1607 the English founded a permanent colony at Jamestown, on the Atlantic coast of what is now the state of Virginia.<sup>29</sup> Other British colonial communities sprang up north and south of there, providing bases for interior reconnaissance and opportunities for trade. Due west are the interior piedmont and high mountains of the southern Appalachians, which are among other things the ancestral home of the Cherokee (although most now live on tribal land in Oklahoma). Like the Natchez and Tunica, these were descendants of Mississippian mound builders.

The British approach to trade began as a matter of trial and error, with traders operating first as independent agents and second as representatives of the Crown, the direct opposite of the French approach.<sup>30</sup> To counter this libertarian streak British governments established a series of trade regulations that traders themselves eventually supported since it helped those so authorized to monopolize the business. By circumstance, therefore, British traders were calculating businessmen as well as independent frontiersmen – experts at exploration and wilderness survival.

Before Europeans arrived on the continent one of the ways that Native American authority figures like chiefs maintained control over their populations was by granting or limiting access to coveted resources. After arrival, when tribal hierarchies underwent profound changes due to introduced diseases and wars, old Amerindian hegemonies began to quickly collapse. This destruction, of course, played into the hands of European traders who were not as interested in preserving tribal traditions as in maximizing profit. As the early trade network revolved around animal skins, primarily deer, traded for utilitarian European objects like iron pots, knives, and wool blankets, it was a network where one could substitute any number of Amerindian or European actors with results that would largely be the same. Over time, however, British traders maneuvered themselves into privileged positions within certain tribal groups by marrying Amerindian women

29 British sailors explored the southern Atlantic Coast of North America as early as the 1497 voyage of John Cabot.

30 It is noteworthy that the first seeds of Colonial independence were sown by Englishmen in the British

south: John Pott's Virginia rebellions in 1635, Nathaniel Bacon's in 1676, and John Culpeper's Carolina revolt in 1677. Andrews 1958; Greene 1905; Washburn 1957.



and/or by assisting in the elevation of Native business partners into positions of authority. They did this as the chiefs had earlier, by granting or limiting access to resources, in this case European ones. The individuals so elevated, 'Big Men' (as they were called), began to exert control over less well-connected Amerindians, both in intra-tribal and inter-tribal affairs.<sup>31</sup> One of the most intriguing remainders of this time is a ritualized Cherokee dance-play called the 'Booger Dance.' In structure and costuming it is remarkably similar to post-Conquest Maya dance-plays, like the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* and the *Baile de la Conquista*.<sup>32</sup>

The Booger Dance is a performance within a performance. Its beginning is traditionally a formal winter social dance that includes Cherokee of both sexes and all ages. Not long after the social dance has begun, outsiders, called 'Boogers,' intrude into the dance area. They wear costumes resembling Colonial-era clothing and have wooden or gourd masks with exaggerated features that make them appear non-Cherokee (Figs. 11–12). Some Boogers distort their postures and carry dead animals, indicating that they are hunters or frontiersmen. It is assumed by the attendees that the outsiders are "people from far away across the ocean."<sup>33</sup> Because of their clothing and their place of origin it is apparent that the Boogers are meant to represent Europeans. I posit that beyond the generality of a European origin they are specifically meant to be British. There are two reasons for this. First, the earliest recorded Cherokee legends relate that Europeans initially entered Cherokee land from the east, the direction of the British colonies.<sup>34</sup> Second, the reason the Boogers give for invading the dance ground is because they are looking for women. British traders were those renowned for marrying high-ranking Native American women, partly to establish familial connections to tribal groups with which they desired long-term trade relations. In doing so they were consciously taking advantage of matrilineality endemic to southeastern tribes. British men married to elite Cherokee women also inherited membership in one of the tribe's clans (though not necessarily the wife's), which granted them kinship with members of the same clan in

31 One by-product of the new Colonial-era hegemony was an Amerindian slave trade that began by 1670. Powerful tribal groups or Big Men within these groups expanded an already existing slave tradition by slave-trading for profit (not for prestige, as had been practiced in pre-Columbian times). The British manipulated slavery by arming their Cherokee and Chickasaw allies with firearms, something the French were reluctant to do, and only later did with theirs. The Native American slave trade ended in 1715 when a relatively small Amerindian group, the Yamasee, rebelled against slave traders and were

able to convince other Amerindians to follow suit; in essence refraining from participating as buyers or sellers; Barnett 2007, 30–33.

32 The term 'Booger' is said to be equivalent to ghost (or spirit). Despite my assertions (in the text), the dance may very well possess elements of a mechanism compensating for national decay and military and cultural defeat; R. Cain personal communication 2011.

33 Mooney 1995; Speck and Broom 1983.

34 Mooney 1995, 350.



Fig. 11 Booger mask.

other tribes. Whether or not on the whole these marriages were marriages in the modern conventional sense of the word – for love, companionship, families – they certainly served political purposes for all involved.

Having established their probable nationality, how do the Boogers act and how are they perceived? They arrive unannounced and begin harassing the others in attendance. This activity is discouraged by the designated leader of the social dance, called the ‘Driver,’ who eventually corrals the Boogers into a central spot and calms them down. After accomplishing this, the Driver asks each Booger his name, which they whisper to him in a non-lexical language that he translates into Cherokee (or more often today, English). Their names are sexually provocative or relate to some body function, and are generally met with amusement. Representative examples are “Big Testicles,” “Rusty Anus,” and “Black Buttocks.” After the introductions, the Driver asks the Boogers if they want to dance, they say they do, and each performs a humorous and/or frightening and aggressive solo dance until all have had their turn.

The name of each Booger is the first word of the song for his dance, with the name repeated four times while that individual dances with stomping motions and other exag-



Fig. 12 Booger mask.

gerated movements meant to suggest a clumsy white man imitating a Native American dancer. During this dance, the same song is repeated seven times, and as the dancer's name is mentioned all in attendance applaud and yell. After all of the Boogers have danced, the women choose those they will dance with so that they can teach them the proper Cherokee way to dance.<sup>35</sup>

What do these actions tell us? The Boogers are boorish and hostile foreigners, yet they are chosen by Cherokee women who teach them how to be Cherokee. Rather than being ostracized by Cherokee society, they are apparently being initiated into it. Further evidence for this is that the Boogers wear masks. The other participants do not. Masks transform their wearers, transporting them to liminal, sacred realms, and are typically reserved for important members of the society and for important transitions in life.<sup>36</sup> The Boogers also do not speak Cherokee; they communicate in a non-lexical language that a casual observer may conclude to indicate ignorance. But for Amerindian peoples of the southeast, auxiliary languages, so-called vocables, were used by supernaturals and their employ meant access to knowledge. The transcendent power of the Boogers is reinforced by the symbolic numbers associated with them. Their naming song is sung seven times, and during it their names are pronounced four times. Four is also the number of repeats of the 'teaching song' of the Cherokee women. Culturally, seven is the number of tribal clans, and four stands for the cardinal directions, iconographically represented

35 Worn on the legs of the women dancers are turtle-shell rattles, a prominent female instrument for many southeastern tribes.

36 There are also red masks worn to represent Amerindian characters and black ones to represent

African American characters. Even in these cases the Boogers are considered foreigners. Amerindians and African Americans depicted as Boogers are thought to represent one-time allies of the British.

as the shape of two perpendicularly stacked logs signifying fire and its celestial embodiment, the sun. The initiation is confirmed at the end of the Social Dance, when one or more of the Boogers are asked by the Driver to perform an animal dance. The Bear or the Eagle Dance are more often chosen, with the latter being one of the most sacred and ritually complex dances of the Cherokee: a dance that only a person entrusted with power would be given the opportunity and more importantly the accoutrements (like totemic eagle feathers) to perform.

Are there pre-Columbian elements in the Booger Dance, or is it a creation of modern times, a revivalist reaction to the social disruptions attributable to colonization? Accounts of Early Colonial Cherokee performances suggests that many of the elements in it existed prior to widespread English involvement with the Cherokee. The best descriptions are from the American botanist William Bartram, one of the first non-Native persons to travel in Cherokee country (beginning in 1776). Bartram wrote: "The Cherokee have a variety of dances. The men especially exercise themselves with a variety of gesticulations and capers, some of which are ludicrous and diverting enough." Later, in what could be a description of a proto-version of the Booger Dance, he wrote: "Indeed, all their dances and musical entertainments seem to be theatrical exhibitions or plays, varied with comic and sometimes lascivious interludes: the women however conduct themselves with a very becoming grace and decency".<sup>37</sup>

What of its accompanying soundmakers? All southeastern dances are accompanied by singing, with one or more percussion instruments sometimes added. This is the same for the Booger Dance, but it is significant that it is the only Cherokee dance with accompaniment provided by a water drum (framed out of hickory or fired clay and topped with deer skin) paired with gourd-container and turtle-shell rattles. These three instruments are listed in ethnohistoric accounts – so they are old – but in the Appalachians only the turtle-shell rattles have been found archaeologically. Since there is no evidence for the Colonial or post-Colonial introduction of a water drum or turtle-shell rattles, their indigenous origins in a pre-Columbian past are almost certain. It is therefore important to emphasize that the Booger Dance, which draws so heavily on European characterizations, uses no European-derived instruments. We can contrast this with the highland Guatemalan Maya conquest baile dance-plays, which are accompanied by the skin drum and European-introduced *chirimía*. There is, however, one introduced sound maker whose employ in another Cherokee dance provides critical sonic information relating to Colonial-era culture contact.

In one of the summer dances centered around an important annual event known as the Green Corn Ceremony, the primary harvest festival of southeastern tribes, a leader is followed by a column of between ten and twenty men carrying guns. They circle

<sup>37</sup> Doren 1955, 299–300.

counter-clockwise, the leader singing to a gourd-rattle rhythm while the guns are discharged at intervals throughout. The Cherokee say that the gunshots are not celebratory but are meant to mimic the sounds of thunder, which in earlier times was believed to be produced through supernatural means.<sup>38</sup> This is an interesting and informative juxtaposition of function. The guns in the Cherokee Green Corn Ceremony do not reflect their European use as weapons but are instead used to produce special sounds needed for a specific ritual of the pre-Columbian Cherokee. In this way the Cherokee, like the Maya, are preserving a pre-Columbian timbre (thunder sounds) even when they adopt a European soundmaker: the gun.

## 5 Consequences of these encounters

For the Maya, musical traditions were rich before the time of Conquest, but Spanish authorities were not as concerned with songs and music instruments as much as with the indigenous performances they accompanied. Highland Guatemala Maya strove to hold onto their performances and were able to embed many pre-Columbian elements into Spanish Catholic rituals to save them. But syncretism varied by degree; one extreme being the barely altered *Rab'inal Achi* and the other, the all but completely adopted *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos*. The K'iche' Maya treated music instruments similarly: retaining some originals, adopting others, and adjusting the remainder by combining Maya and Spanish attributes. Nevertheless, there is a perception by many non-specialists, based on superficial impressions, that the level of acculturation in music, as in performance traditions, is relatively high. A more critical examination of one fundamental component, instrument timbre, however, suggests otherwise. There is ethnohistoric and archaeological corroboration of a significant retention of indigenous tonal preferences (buzzing sounds, altered harmonics), which were so prevalent they were applied even to adopted instruments: the *chirimía* and valveless brass trumpet.

For the Natchez and Tunica, coping strategies are also evident in material remains, where we find indigenous fabrication of European-manufactured metal objects made into copies of culturally significant shell tinklers, and a trend to smaller, higher-pitched metal bells (although this latter possibility is not confirmed). Such adoptions demonstrate strategies for preserving cultural memory and are perhaps suggestive of indigenous soundmakers and pitch preferences, particularly choices of higher versus lower pitches. By exerting an influence over the items traded of the French, these Mississippian descendants may have created sonic references to a more stable past. If so, it was a sonic rebellion acted out during a period of profound cultural change. Sadly, proof of this is that

38 Speck and Broom 1983.

during the 18th century the Natchez and Tunica went on to lose their homelands, their tribal identities, and most of their populations. For the Cherokee, the Booger Dance represents an indigenous view of Europeans of the Colonial period. Components in a possible Booger Dance prototype include the combination of music and theatre, humor and parody. All of these are present in the historically and currently performed Booger Dance, along with European clothing and behaviors attributable to Europeans. Thus, although the Booger Dance might seem to be a parody, it is actually a trope on the impact of individuals – likely, specific British men – on Colonial-era Cherokee communities. These men married into the tribes and brought with them not only a modicum of the wealth and power of Britain but also its social structure of ownership and special forms of violence. Instruments and music sounds in the Booger Dance are completely indigenous, which for cultural retention is significant, while a dance done during the Green Corn Ceremony uses sound itself as a trope. In that dance the Cherokee discharge a firearm, not as a weapon but as a soundmaker whose timbre and volume are similar enough to sounds once made by a pre-European shaman to allow substitution. Pitch preference, timbre retention, and the use of introduced items to preserve indigenous sounds: all provide evidence that nostalgia and/or adaptation were used to varying degrees by different Amerindian groups so as to retain and continue to assert cultural identities in the face of European onslaught. Both of these political uses of sound have been documented for other societies around the world, such as in China during the period of the Warring States<sup>39</sup> and in Iraq during the second millennium BCE.<sup>40</sup> History, now joined by archaeology, proves that anthropomorphized sounds are part of the arsenal used by controlling forces in societies, and in so doing may lend weight to Lü Buwei's premise that "in an age that possesses the Dao one has only to observe its music to know [a state's] customs, to observe its customs to know its government, and to observe its government to know its ruler."<sup>41</sup>

39 Furniss, this volume; Journeau, this volume.

40 Shehata, this volume.

41 Lü Buwei, *Annals*, Book V, Chapter 4, 4; transl. Knoblock and Riegel 2000, 145.

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Arnd Adje Both

## Musical Conquests: Encounters in Music Cultures of Aztec and Early Colonial Times

### Summary

This paper explores the socio-political and religious dimensions of sound and music making by comparing two culturally distinct but intimately connected time periods related to the same place: the Valley of Mexico. First, Aztec practices of musical domination and control over conquered societies in the Late Postclassic period of Mesoamerica (1325 to 1521 CE) are revised. Then the Hispanic strategies of musical domination and control over the conquered Aztecs in the Early Colonial times (1521 to 1600) are reviewed and compared with the Aztec model. The paper asks which differences are present and whether there are structural similarities in musical conquests.

Keywords: sonic warfare; musical conquest; Aztecs; proselytization

Dieser Artikel untersucht die sozio-politischen und religiösen Dimensionen des Musizierens und Klangerzeugens über den Vergleich zweier kulturell unterschiedlicher, aber nah beieinander liegenden Zeitabschnitte an ein und demselben Ort: dem Tal von Mexiko. Zunächst werden die Praktiken der Azteken zur Ausübung musikalischer Dominanz und Kontrolle über die von ihnen eroberten Gesellschaften der späten post-klassischen Periode Mesoamerikas (1325 bis 1521 n. Chr.) untersucht. Darauf folgend werden die spanischen Strategien der musikalischen Dominanz und Kontrolle über die eroberten Azteken der frühen Kolonialzeit (1521 bis 1600) beleuchtet und dem aztekischen Modell gegenübergestellt. Der Artikel fragt nach den Unterschieden und strukturellen Ähnlichkeiten in der musikalischen Eroberung.

Keywords: klangliche Kriegsführung; musikalische Eroberung; Azteken; Missionierung

## I Introduction

In this short essay I will explore issues of political space and political condition embodied in the production of sound and music in situations of conflict. I will consider how the sounds and musics of conflicting states and cultures might have served in defining their identities and as tools in negotiating political change, including conquest and resistance, taking as my example two culturally distinct but intimately connected populations coinciding at a specific place and time: in the Valley of Mexico immediately before and after the Conquest. In the first part, Aztec practices of musical domination and control over conquered societies will be reviewed. Roughly speaking, this will cover the era dominated by the Aztec ‘Triple Alliance,’ a league of three Nahuatl city-states under the leadership of the Aztec capital, Tenochtitlan, which persisted from 1428 CE until its defeat by the Spanish Conquistadores and their native allies in 1521.<sup>1</sup> Once established, the Triple Alliance waged wars of conquest, which resulted in a rapid expansion of its empire throughout most of central Mexico, as well as large coastal areas along the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific. I will ask which roles sound and music making may have played among the Aztecs in the specific context of their expansion.

In the second part, I will discuss the part music played during Colonial times in Hispanic strategies designed to achieve domination and control over the conquered Aztecs. I will focus on the Early Colonial period of Mexico, from 1521 to around 1600, a period characterized by consolidation of Spanish holdings in the Americas. During this time the pre-existing tribute system of Aztec political control was replaced by a feudal system in the manner of medieval Europe, the so-called *encomienda*. The Council of the Indies and mendicant religious orders together laboured both on behalf of the crown of Spain and to convert the native populations to Christianity. In spite of the Catholic character of that mission, during this period a process of religious syncretism evolved in which native pre-Columbian traditions became combined with Spanish ones. I will ask what role music may have played in this process, and will compare Spanish and Aztec strategies of spiritual conquest involving music. The differences between the distinct cultures will be explored, together with any structural similarities.

1 Nahuatl is a name for the indigenous Nahuatl-speaking peoples living in central Mexico at the

time of the conquest. It is used interchangeably with the more common term Aztec.

## 2 Aztec strategies of musical conquest

### 2.1 Spanish experience of the sounds of Aztec warfare

On 21st April 1519, Hernán Cortés reached the coast of what is now Veracruz with an expeditionary force consisting of eleven ships, carrying about a hundred sailors, six hundred soldiers and a few hundred Cuban and African slaves. The indigenous coastal cultures, among them the powerful city states of the Totonac people, had been subject to Aztec attacks since the mid-15th century, and had continuously rebelled against the Aztecs. The Totonac capital, Cempoala, with an estimated population of around 80 000, was the first pre-Columbian city-state of importance visited by Cortés. As a counter to Aztec oppression, the Totonac ruler Tlacochealcatl welcomed Cortés, and after an exchange of presents an alliance between the parties was formed. Tlacochealcatl went so far as to offer the support of his warrior élite against the Aztec Emperor Motecuhzuma II. With this addition Cortés' expedition now included about a thousand Totonac warriors led by forty warrior chiefs, and a body of two hundred commoners whose task would be to drag the Spanish cannons and carry the supplies, as related by arguably the most important chronicler of the conquest, Bernal Díaz del Castillo (1490–1584), in his *Historia Verdadera de la Conquista de la Nueva España* (1568).<sup>2</sup> Although this initial cross-cultural encounter includes no descriptions of soundmaking I will shortly describe first-hand accounts which show the important role that music played.

Two weeks later the combined expeditionary force set off for the Aztec capital and soon entered foreign territories with deep valleys forming part of the eastern slope of the Sierra Madre mountains. Here the expedition came under surprise attack from an advance party of six thousand warriors from the kingdom of Tlaxcala, an independent enclave almost completely surrounded by the Aztec Empire (subsequently, Tlaxcala would also join forces with Cortés against Motecuhzuma). For the Spaniards this was probably the heaviest attack since traversing the coastal areas of the Yucatán peninsula, and further along the Gulf Coast, where encounters between the expedition and local indigenous groups had led to fighting. The Tlaxcallan attacks and later attacks by the Aztecs generally followed the same pattern, with battles carried out by means of ambush. In these carefully prepared stealth attacks, silence would suddenly be interrupted by a frightening 'wall of sound', produced by the ambushing warriors on all kinds of portable instruments: mainly drums and trumpets, shell horns and ceramic whistles. The instrumental noise was accompanied by ear-splitting trills, which the eyewitness Bernal Díaz later describes onomatopoeically as "alala, alala". In astonishingly vivid accounts from his *Historia*, the old soldier records the fear and panic that such sounds induced in the

2 For Díaz's account see Carrasco 2008.

Spanish ranks during these attacks.<sup>3</sup> To Díaz, the sound they produced was nothing less than an infernal outbreak of noise, absolutely strange and intimidating to the unaccustomed ears of a 16th-century European.

Bernal Díaz not only describes the sounds of indigenous signals used to announce an attack, but also states that during such battles the instrumental noise never ceased. And as relayed in Friar Bernardino de Sahagún's *Historia general de las cosas de la Nueva España*,<sup>4</sup> Aztec warriors employed chanting to animate themselves, and each other (similar to Díaz's exemplary account of the conquest is Sahagún's (1490–1584) post-Conquest description of Aztec life). In addition to the functions of chanting as described by Sahagún, are those ascribed to the drums, whistles, and specifically shell horns, which were used for long-distance communication, especially to convey tactical signals during hostilities. Probably, the instruments used for this latter purpose were carried by the chiefs of the 'Eagles' and the 'Jaguars,' the two Aztec warrior societies; but the sources on this topic are not clear. Indeed, one passage in Díaz's work indicates that the last Aztec ruler, Cauhemoc, gave orders himself, with his own shell horn. In the *Codex Ixtlilxochitl*, a 17th-century manuscript, the ruler Nezahualcoyotl is shown with a blue-painted war drum with gold ornamentation, which usually formed part of the dance and battle costume of the Aztec rulers and their allies, demonstrating the importance of the drum in relation to war.<sup>5</sup> The so-called 'gold drum' (*teocuitlahuehuetl*) appears to have been a token or insignia which was sent to the Aztec allies as a call to war.

The Spanish experience of Aztec battle sounds is far from unique, it seems. Throughout documented history, the psychological power of sound has been exploited as a military device. Its use to distract the individual from his or her own anxiety, while at the same time introducing fear in the mind of the opponent, appears to be a constant in violent human interactions. Numerous music-archaeological and ethnomusicological examples can be counted, but we need go no further back than the time we live in for a demonstration. In his book *Sonic Warfare: Sound, Affect, and the Ecology of Fear*, Steve Goodman explores sound manipulation as a tactic of irritation, of intimidation, even inflicting permanent psychological harm, in contemporary situations of conflict.<sup>6</sup> Among the examples he cites are oscillators that have been employed as sonic weapons because they are capable of causing damage to the eardrum, even leading to deafness; and sound systems capable of excessive volume levels, which have been used not only in warfare but also in anti-riot policing. All such devices today transmit noise that is considered by

3 For a discussion see Moreno 1961.

4 For Sahagún's text see Anderson and Dibble 1950–1982, vol. 12, chapter 34.

5 See for picture of Nezahualcoyotl, the ruler of Tetzcoco, in military dress, from the Codex

Ixtlilxochitl, folio 106 recto. Manuscript. Mexico, early 17th century CE: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nezahualcoyotl\\_\(tlatoani\)#/media/File:Nezahualcoyotl.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nezahualcoyotl_(tlatoani)#/media/File:Nezahualcoyotl.jpg) (visited on 19/07/2019).

6 Goodman 2009.

those who are subjected to them to be extremely disturbing and disorientating. Might we infer that analogous techniques were known to the Aztecs?

## 2.2 The power of sound: accounts of Aztec warrior dances

While Aztec invasions of foreign territories were in progress, wooden slit-drums were played all day and night in the temples of Tenochtitlan in order to spiritually strengthen the power of the warriors abroad. And even before warriors departed on an expedition, processions and dances of the warrior societies would be held within the sacred temple precinct of Tenochtitlan. A Spanish account relates that several hundred warriors of the Eagle and Jaguar societies gathered in a great circle dance lasting several hours, and that during this dance the warriors constantly played their shrill-sounding whistles. Through aurally-induced stimulation, and ecstatic dance movements, it seems a state of trance was achieved that could make dancers lose control. Such dancing warriors received close attention from accompanying guards since, left to their own devices, they might harm themselves and even their fellow warriors. In fact, the account relates that the mood in these dances could become so aggressive that resultant casualties were not uncommon. We may already have enough information to justify a proposition that acoustic stimulation played a part in the preparation of Aztec warriors for battle. For examples of this technique, again, numerous historical and recent accounts can be found.<sup>7</sup>

## 2.3 Music as tribute: incorporating the strange

Aztec rule over conquered societies can best be described as ‘hegemonic’ or ‘indirect’. Rulers of conquered city states were left in power as long as they agreed to pay tribute and to provide military support in wars with enemy states. Once a city was conquered, its main temple, the socio-political and socio-religious centre, would be looted and set on fire. This was a powerful symbol and signal of Aztec victory, yet usually no further destruction followed. According to Sahagún and the Dominican friar Diego Durán (1537–1588),<sup>8</sup> the principle statues of the local gods were ‘captured’ and brought to Tenochtitlan, where they were stored in the “Temple of the Serpent”, *Coacalco* or *Coateocalli*. Also meaning “Temple of Many Gods”, this building functioned expressly as a place of imprisonment for the foreign gods. Conceivably, in a similar way, the songs of conquered societies may have been considered part of the loot, to be performed at the Aztec court by specific court musicians familiar with foreign languages.

7 Goodman 2009.

8 For Sahagún see Anderson and Dibble 1950–1982, vol. 2; for Durán see Heyden 1994, ch. 58.

Thus, in addition to songs composed to commemorate battles and victorious conquests, the Aztecs applied strategies to incorporate the strange or 'exotic' through a process of musical assimilation and adoption, which became a symbol of Aztec hegemony not only of the material but also of the spiritual world. Unfortunately, we do not yet know enough about these practices, since accounts of them are scarce. Similarly, it is not known if these so-called 'captured' songs, which once formed part of the Aztecs' loot, were subsequently forbidden or could still be performed in the lands of their origins.

There is equally little information as to whether the conquered societies went on to adopt musical and dance practices from their conquerors. However, some Zapotec song texts of the early 18th century were discovered in the *Archivo General de las Indias* (General Archive of the Indies, Seville), employing syllabic notation to represent drum patterns.<sup>9</sup> These turn out to be basically the same as the syllabic drum notation recorded in the *Cantares Mexicanos*, a 16th-century manuscript compendium of Aztec songs. As the syllables given in the Zapotec songs derive from Nahuatl, the language of the Aztecs, some measure of assimilation of Aztec syllabic codification is clearly indicated. This assimilation must have taken place after the Aztec conquest of Zapotec territories during the second half of the 15th century, and apparently it was still preserved in Oaxaca until the beginning of the 18th century. Instead of demonstrating a mnemotechnical notation device for drum patterns, which was native to the people of several pre-Columbian cultural areas, as Gary Tomlinson has proposed in *The Singing of the New World*,<sup>10</sup> it seems increasingly likely that the system originated in Central Mexico and was introduced in Oaxaca as a result of the late 15th-century Aztec military expansion and cultural domination of the area.

### 3 Spanish strategies of musical conquest

#### 3.1 Sixteenth-century military music

It is disappointing that there are no modern studies on Spanish military music of the 16th century. No scores of Spanish military music are preserved, and the only sources that can be brought to bear are iconographical. The best known images show the procession of a triumphant army entering a city, or the arrival of the king. Usually, small musical ensembles with three valve-less trumpets, one kettle drum, and a fife or a bagpipe may be depicted. The only score of which I am aware that can give us some musical clues to this is a piece by the 16th-century composer Mateo Flecha (1481 to 1553) called

9 Tavárez 2005.

10 Tomlinson 2007, 92.



*La Guerra* ("The War"), in which he evokes the sounds of a battle through the use of march-like drum rhythms and flute melodies.

Compared to Aztec practices, the Spaniards in Mexico seem to have employed sound expressly as a means to frighten and confuse, particularly the loud and explosive sounds produced by cannons and small firearms which were unknown to the indigenous people of the Americas before the arrival of the Conquistadores. In his *Historia verdadera*, Díaz mentions use of fife and drum to control the pace of marching, and possibly to relay orders. If kettle drums were also used during battles to transmit orders, this use is unclear. One passage in Sahagún's *Historia general* indicates that in one of the battles of Tenochtitlan the Spaniards preceded their attack by playing trumpets and beating drums.<sup>11</sup>

### 3.2 Higher education: teaching music and composition

Shortly after the Conquest, the Aztecs' education system was abolished and replaced by a church education based on convent schools. These schools followed the Franciscan model which, as a rule, included the teaching of music and instrument making along with doctrinal and grammatical instruction. This inclusion of music in the curriculum was based on the experience of other religious orders, which had already demonstrated that music was a very valuable medium for religious conversion. Like the *calmecac*, the former Aztec school for talented youths, the convent schools could be described as places of 'advanced studies'. Comparable processes took place further south, in the conquered kingdom of the Incas in Peru.

In 1524, only three years after the Conquest, some sons of the Aztec nobility, who would later receive the status of Spanish noblemen, entered the first school founded by the Franciscan friar Pedro de Gante in the city of Texcoco. Shortly afterwards, another school, the Colegio de San José de los Naturales, was founded in Mexico-Tlatelolco. First, a group of about a hundred ten- to twelve-year-old boys was selected from Tenochtitlan and the principle neighbouring cities in and around the Valley of Mexico. At its height in the 1530s, the Colegio de San José de los Naturales had between five hundred and six hundred pupils. All day they performed a procession from the Colegio to the Capilla de San Jose, which was situated atop the former Aztec sacred precinct near the Great Temple, already being demolished, to obtain building material for the new cathedral.

The type of musical training given at the convent schools was orientated towards enhancing the liturgy. Both plainsong and polyphony were taught, as well as the art of playing and of making various musical instruments. Friar Gerónimo de Mendieta (1525–1604) reported in his *Historia Eclesiastica Indiana* of 1596 that after only a few

11 For Sahagún's account see Anderson and Dibble 1950–1982, vol. XII, ch. 34.

years of education, Aztec pupils began to compose polyphonic carols, masses, and other works, which, when shown to accomplished Spanish singers, were taken to be by European experts and not possibly by Indians.<sup>12</sup> Thus, music became a prime aid in the task of conversion, just as it had a thousand or more years earlier in Europe.

The use of all kinds of musical instruments in church practice – which partly originated from the lack of organs during the first decades after the conquest – was supported primarily by the convent schools. Instruments mentioned are flutes, shawms, trumpets, lutes and bowed instruments. An account related by Friar Toribio de Benavente (1482–1568), better known as Motolonía, in his *Historia de los Indios* is interesting, because it indicates ensemble flute playing in church practice in order to imitate the organ.<sup>13</sup> In the beginning of the second half of the 16th century, the increasing number of indigenous musicians and increasing use of native instruments in church services finally became controversial and eventually anathema to the church, and restrictive rules were employed.

### 3.3 Idols behind the altars: the incorporation of pre-Columbian music and dance practices into Christian liturgies

Pedro de Gante (born Pieter van der Moere in 1480, and who died in 1572) was among the first friars to recognize the importance of music in the indigenous pre-Columbian societies and saw it as a potential aid in the work of conversion. In a letter to the Spanish king Philip II, dated 23rd June 1557, he wrote:

We were here more than three years, as I told you, without ever being able to attract them. Instead they fled from us, and much more from the Spanish, like savages. But by the grace of Almighty God I began to perceive their mentality and to understand how they should be dealt with. Their whole worship had consisted in dancing and singing before their own gods. When the time came to make sacrifices for victory over their enemies or for the supplying of their daily wants, before killing the victims, they first must needs dance in front of the idol. Upon comprehending this and realizing that all their songs were composed to honour their gods, I composed a very elaborate one myself, but the subject-matter was God's law and our faith that Christ was born of the Holy and undefiled Virgin Mary. About two months before Christmas I also gave them some designs to paint on their dancing togs because they always danced and sung [*sic*] in costumes that bespoke happiness, sorrow, or victory.<sup>14</sup>

12 For Mendieta's text see Solano Perez-Lila 1973, IV, 14–15.

13 For Motolonía's remark see Lejarza 1970.

14 This translation is given in Stevenson 1968, 93.

As a result of these insights, which became widely acknowledged, the Spanish missionaries adopted de Gante's educational plan. Many prepared Christian texts in Nahuatl for musical performances composed in the native style. For a better understanding, crucial parts of the Bible were graphically expressed in the manner of pre-Columbian codices. One such manuscript which survives is a catechism by de Gante himself, dated around 1525. The introduction of Christian songs in the native style required some sort of research on the autochthonous music which still could be observed in public dances throughout the country. Specially designed for this purpose were large walled yards in front of churches, a prominent feature of early Colonial church architecture. These yards enabled church-centred community celebrations, in which dances with pre-Columbian-style costumes and Christian symbols were permitted. The church and its walled yard were frequently erected on top of the old sacred temple precincts, thereby establishing and emphasizing not only the spiritual but also a spatial continuity.

Throughout the 16th century, indigenous dances and music played on pre-Columbian and/or European musical instruments were still performed in non-religious festivities. In his *Historia de los Indios* Motolinía states that in 1530, during the foundation celebrations for the city of Puebla, large crowds of Indians entered the city dancing and singing with their flags, and playing little bells and drums.<sup>15</sup> After such festivities, the places of the dances were carefully cleaned, as they had been in pre-Columbian times when ritual cleaning of dance courts was part of the religious office.

Sources indicate that several friars, including Pedro de Gante and Diego Durán, collected native songs, but the collections have since been lost. Only two 16th-century compendia of Aztec songs, the *Cantares Mexicanos* and the *Romances de los señores de la Nueva España* have survived. During the 16th century and later, songs and dances in which pre-Columbian elements persisted, were then heavily suppressed and sometimes even forbidden. This was because such practices were considered too powerful an expression of pre-Columbian religious thought. Nevertheless, as an expression of cultural resistance, hidden from European eyes and ears and vigorously pursued by agents of the Spanish Inquisition, pre-Columbian music and dance practices were still widely performed in secret. They still survive among several indigenous groups in Mexico today.

### 3.4 Legacies

To help in the process of conversion, some friars also employed pre-Columbian musical instruments in the church service. One source indicates that Pedro de Gante played the Aztec hand-rattle, *ayacachtli*, while the use of the popular slit-drum (*teponatzli*) could never be entirely prohibited. Indeed, in some rural towns, specimens from Colonial and

15 Lejarza 1970.



Fig. 1 Ceramic whistle and rattle from Michoacán, Mexico. Early Colonial times.

even pre-Columbian times are still guarded and played today. Nevertheless, by a strange twist, the large tripod skin-drum (*huehuetl*) was soon replaced by the European lute, although the Aztecs literally called it by their own name *mecabuehuetl* (“string drum”). It is possible that the tradition of the *Danzantes*, a syncretistic religious group based in and around the Valley of Mexico, in which lute ensembles play a prominent role in processions and circle dances, can be traced back to transformations of this kind.

Legacies of the retention and absorption of pre-Columbian music and dance practices in Early Colonial times can also be found in extant musical instruments, revealing true amalgamations of pre-Columbian and European music cultures. Objects from Michoacán include a whistle with the head of a Spaniard and a clay rattle in the form of a bell, the latter probably used in 16th-century church services (Fig. 1). Worth mentioning as a parallel are Peruvian whistling vessels with a chamber in the form of a Spaniard, and other extant specimens with glazed surfaces, a decorative technique introduced by the Europeans.<sup>16</sup> It seems that such instruments were produced for at least some decades after the Conquest.

#### 4 Conclusions

A comparison between these two music cultures, pre-Columbian American and Colonial Spanish, which were so vastly different in regard to their historical backgrounds, reveals many points of contrast but also some striking structural similarities. In both societies music served as a means of achieving cultural domination. Sound as a weapon, a means to frighten and to confuse, was noted primarily for the Aztecs, while the intimidating sound of the Spanish gunfire was more a result of the fact that such weapons

<sup>16</sup> Donnan 1992; Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera 2010.

were unknown in pre-Columbian times. The Aztecs also incorporated foreign musical styles and even texts, which were probably considered the spoils of war along with other, more material booty; and yet, in the Aztec case, prior to the Spanish Conquest foreign music was only performed in the milieu of the court and it seems to me unlikely that it was transmitted by them to other levels of society. Except for the possible adoption of an Aztec syllabic notation of drumming patterns among the Zapotecs, there is no evidence that the Aztecs 'exported' musical styles or knowledge. The fact that the same basic instrumentarium was shared among all pre-Columbian cultures adds additional difficulty to the study of such relations, at least through the material record.

On the other hand, we know that the Spanish friars introduced European music traditions and musical instruments. And as a means for better conversion they also combined pre-Columbian musical aesthetics of musical structure (rhythms, melody) and sound (instruments) with Christian textual content (song, some of it still sung in native languages). Beyond the short period of such cultural amalgamations in Early Colonial times, however, there was no adoption of any indigenous foreign musical songs or structures. Instead, music education became an important part of the curriculum of the convent schools, and educated Aztecs soon learned how to compose, play, and sing in European styles.

The first phase of musical encounter and amalgamation which I have described here came to its end during the second half of the 16th century. Both cultures were capable of borrowing elements from each other's repertoire, but because their agenda were very different they did so in different ways and to different degrees. For the Aztecs, music was a mechanism for cultural domination, initially their domination of other, non-Aztec peoples. In a sense this was true also for the Spanish friars, since for them it would prove a means to achieve cultural pre-eminence. Through their clever use and manipulation of music a lasting spiritual conquest would be achieved, and integration of native elements would only help to achieve this goal faster.

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## Illustration credits

1 Peter Crossley-Holland collection. Photo: Adje Both.

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Dahlia Shehata

## Religious Poetry and Musical Performance under King Hammurāpi of Babylon and His Successors

### Summary

At the beginning of the 2nd millennium BCE Mesopotamia enters into a new period which is marked by changes taking place on political, social and religious levels. Incoming Amorrite dynasties take over political power in central Babylonia, subsequently establishing their own essentially 'Akkadian' heritage. Throughout this process, former Sumerian traditions are maintained, overlapped or abandoned. There are many conspicuous innovations under King Hammurāpi and his successors. This chapter analyzes cuneiform manuscripts with the aim of identifying changes of temple and court music in terms of song genres, tuning systems and performance. It further searches for the initiators of these processes and their possible motivation on political and cultural grounds.

Keywords: cultic song repertoire; temple musicians; king; Akkadian vs. Sumerian; religious change; Babylonia; 2nd millennium BCE

Mit Beginn des 2. Jt. v. Chr. erlebt Mesopotamien einen historischen Wandel auf politischer, sozialer und religiöser Ebene. Aus dem Westen einwandernde so genannte amurritische Dynastien übernehmen die politische Macht in Zentralbabylonien, wo sie ihr eigenes ‚akkadisches‘ Erbe begründen. Ursprüngliche sumerische Traditionen Südmesopotamiens werden dabei entweder aufrechterhalten, überlagert oder aufgegeben. Vermehrt sind Neuerungen unter König Hammurāpi und seinen Nachfolgern zu verzeichnen. Basierend auf der keilschriftlichen Überlieferung werden in diesem Kapitel Wandlungsprozesse mit Auswirkungen auf die Tempel- und Hofmusik identifiziert und analysiert. Hierbei wird auch der Frage nach den Initiatoren solcher Prozesse und ihrer politischen wie kulturellen Motivation nachgegangen.

Keywords: Kultlieder; Tempelmusiker; König; Akkadisch vs. Sumerisch; religiöser Wandel; Babylonien; 2. Jt. v. Chr.

## 1 Introduction

Ancient Mesopotamian music has long been silent. Nevertheless, surviving textual and iconographic evidence provides insights into many of its facets, including its performance.<sup>1</sup> Since the region was a melting pot of ancient cultures, it is unsurprising that its music was under constant change throughout the four thousand years of Mesopotamian history. It therefore offers a useful background against which to explore relevance of Change to the subject of this volume. Changes are clearly discernable in the iconography. There, for example, new types and shapes of musical instruments indicate changes in musical performance and sounds over time. In most cases these changes seem linked to shifts in political power, or to the migration of peoples. Historic descriptions of Mesopotamian music therefore generally refer to ‘Sumerian’, ‘Babylonian’ or ‘Assyrian’ music, making clear distinctions between the different periods of ethnic and political history. Fig. 1 and Fig. 2 show two examples of Mesopotamian musical instruments that frequently appear in different Ancient Near Eastern periods.

This chapter takes as its primary case study the written evidence of songs, hymns and prayers performed in public ceremonies and divine rituals.<sup>2</sup> From the information contained in these texts, which I will call the vocal repertoire of priests and temple musicians, I will isolate and discuss a change in ritual music performance which took place in the 2nd millennium BCE, or more precisely, contemporaneous with the reign of King Hammurāpi of Babylon and his successors. Further, I will explore a range of political and social motives which may have led to these changes. They both had an effect on the language and form of religious vocal repertoire, as well as on the institutional organization of poets and actors for public performance.<sup>3</sup>

## 2 Historical background

King Hammurāpi of Babylon was the central political figure in the cultural period which today is called ‘Old Babylonian’. The period began a few hundred years before his rise to power, and is marked by the demise of the third dynasty of Ur, in or around 2004 BCE. The end of the Old Babylonian period corresponds to the fall of the city of Babylon, King Hammurāpi’s capital, to the Hittite invasion of 1595 BCE (Fig. 3).<sup>4</sup>

1 This article draws on ideas explored in my dissertation *Musiker und ihr vokales Repertoire*; Shehata 2009. It is intended as a generally comprehensive version of an in-depth study in preparation.

2 Most of these texts can be reviewed on Sources of Early Akkadian Literature at <http://www.seal.uni-leipzig.de/> (visited on 19/07/2019).

3 In this chapter the character š in Sumerian and Akkadian approximates sh in English. Š is an emphatic s. Vowels with a macron, such as ū indicate a lengthening of the sound. Accented vowels such as ũ indicate a lengthening by ‘assimilation’.

4 All dates given in this article follow the so-called

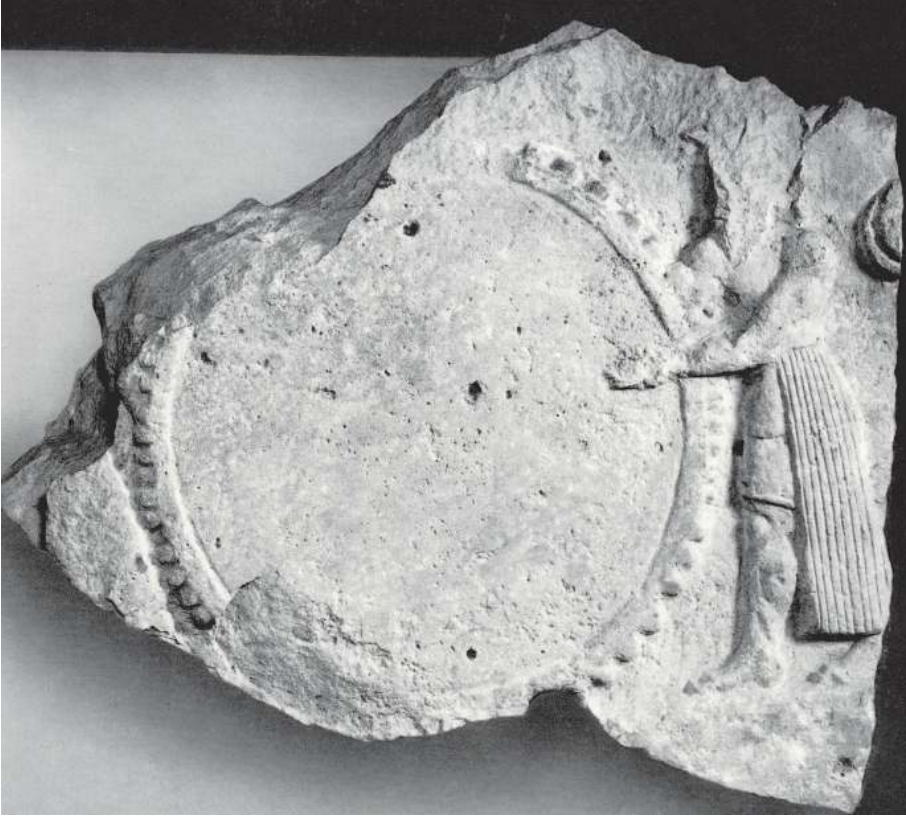


Fig. 1 Giant frame drum. The enormous drum depicted here in a music scene from the stela of Lord Gudea of Lagash (2122–2102 BCE) is only known from three other iconographic attestations, the latest of them dated to the reign of King Ur-Namma (2112–2095 BCE), the founder of the Third Dynasty of Ur. Nevertheless, from written sources we know that giant drums called *alû* in Akkadian were still in use until the Old Babylonian Period, i. e. the middle of the 2nd millennium BCE (see now Mirelman 2014). From the information given in the texts it remains unclear whether they looked exactly the same as their forerunners from the end of the 3rd millennium BCE. The fragment from the Gudea-stela was found in Girsu (modern Tello, Iraq) and is now held in the Musée du Louvre (AO 4573); for more information see Rashid 1984, 70–71.

The Old Babylonian Period circumscribes a cultural turning point which marks the end of a ‘Sumerian Era’ and the rise of several more or less independent Akkadian-speaking Amorrite dynasties in the major cities of Mesopotamia (Fig. 4). In contrast to the Sumerians, Amorrites migrated into central Mesopotamia over many decades, coming – as their name indicates – from the West.<sup>5</sup> Among their many local royal dynasties spread

Middle Chronology; a general overview of this period of Mesopotamian history is given in Mieroop 2004; with more details in Charpin 2004.

<sup>5</sup> Akkadian *amurru* means ‘West’; for the Amurru see further the introduction in Streck 2000, 21–76.

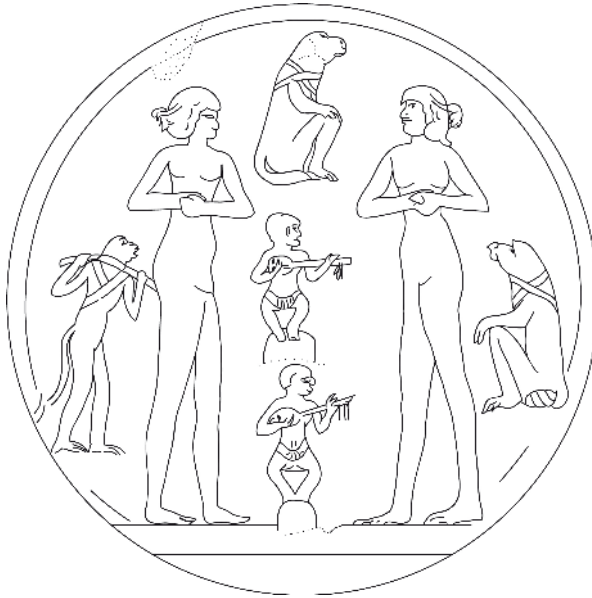


Fig. 2 The 'dancing dwarf'. This famous terracotta plaque, 15,5 cm in diameter, was purchased by the Iraq Museum of Baghdad in the 1930s (IM 32062). It shows a procession scene with female dancers, evidently trained monkeys and dwarf musicians. The 'dancing dwarfs' are a frequently represented in Old Babylonian iconography, especially in terracotta reliefs. In many instances they appear playing the lute, an instrument that is only verified for Mesopotamian music performance by the time of the great rulers of Akkade (2334–2193 BCE). Even though it was known to later Sumerian dynasties, still it was never shown in their music scenes. It obviously was not part of traditional Sumerian music performance; for more information about dwarfs and the Mesopotamian lute see Rashid 1984, 74–75 and Eichmann 1988.

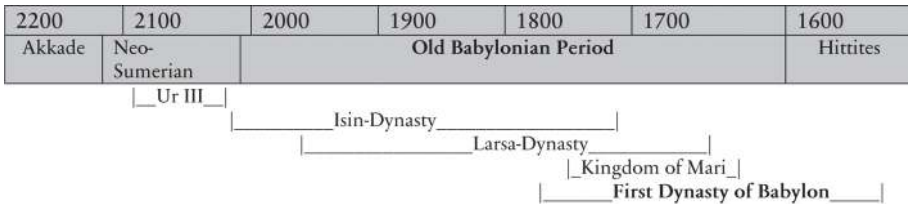


Fig. 3 Timeline for the Old Babylonian Period.

across Mesopotamia, three gained significant political power: the dynasty of the city of Isin in central Mesopotamia, which lasted for approximately two hundred years (2017 to 1793 BCE), the Larsa dynasty of King Rīm-Sîn, its last and most enigmatic figure (2025 to 1763 BCE), and finally Hammurāpi’s own Babylonian dynasty (1894 to 1595 BCE).

Even though the historical impact of the Amorrite dynasties conquering Mesopotamia essentially signalled the end of all Sumerian culture, the Sumerian language remained. It was taught in scribal schools, used for formulaic language in administrative texts, and kings continued to compose their royal inscriptions in it. Nevertheless, since Sumerian was already a dead language in this period, scribes either added Akkadian

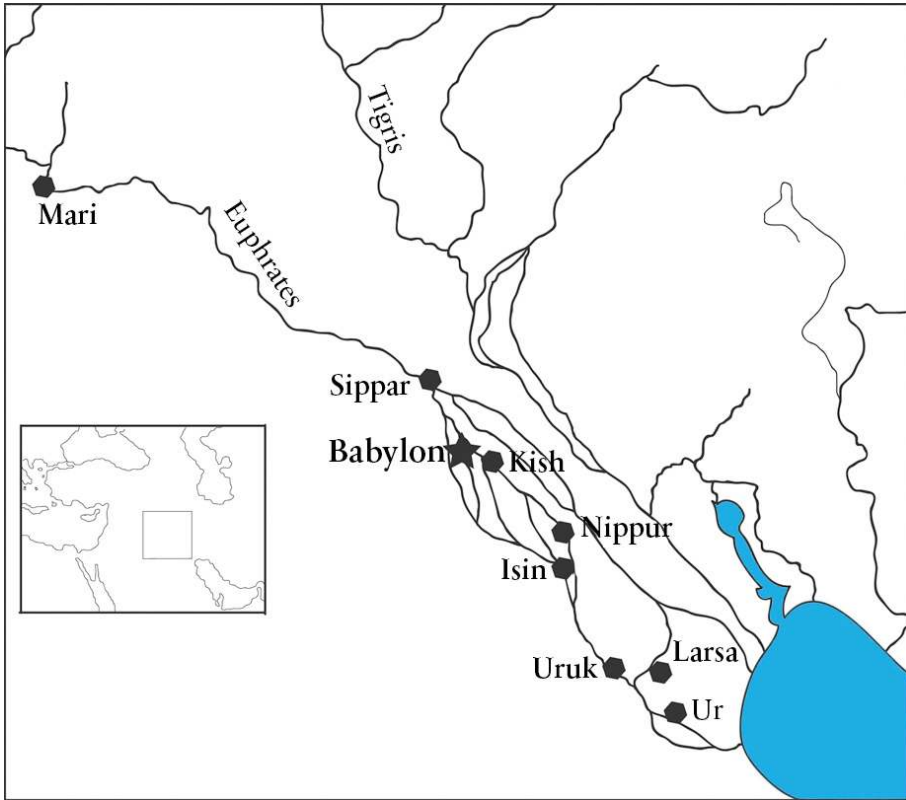


Fig. 4 Babylonia at the time of King Hammurâpi.

translations to originally Sumerian texts or wrote their new Sumerian compositions as Bilinguals. Though representing an extinct culture, the high status of Sumerian in the preservation of ancient traditions remained unaffected, a phenomenon which may be compared to the use of Latin in medieval times. Most remarkable however is its use as a spoken language: Sumerian and especially its register the Emesal,<sup>6</sup> became the main language of liturgy, a function which persisted until the Seleucid period (320 to 60 BCE).<sup>7</sup> In contrast to Sumerian, the dominant language in 3rd- and 2nd-millennium literary tradition, Akkadian was only widely introduced into literary writing at the outset of the

<sup>6</sup> In this chapter the word ‘register’ is used in the linguistic and philological sense of *Sprachstil*, signifying a variant form of a language particular to a certain situation, such as a profession or an environment. It is distinct from ‘dialect’ which typically indicates a variant that is defined by geographical

region or ethnic group.

<sup>7</sup> There has been much discussion of the demise of all living Sumerian language. For an overview and a different opinion, see Woods 2006; for Emesal see recently Schretter 2018; for 1st-millennium prayers and cultic laments: Gabbay 2014.

Amurrite dynasties in 2nd-millennium Babylonia. Still the earliest known written evidence of a mythical poem written in Akkadian – the famous hymn to the sun-god *Šamaš* – dates to the 25th century BCE and comes from Southern Mesopotamia.<sup>8</sup> We therefore have to consider the existence of an Akkadian oral tradition including not only myths and epics but also hymns and prayers, which might have partially found its way into the Old Babylonian literary corpus.

After the fall of Ur as the capital city of the last Sumerian dynasty in central Mesopotamia, the legacy of Sumerian tradition was largely cared for and even cultivated by kings of the Isin dynasty. Most remarkable is their imitation of former Ur III hymns and prayers, which were written exclusively in Sumerian using the same poetic genres and phraseology.<sup>9</sup> In order to confirm their Sumerian heritage the kings of Isin had even established a Sumerian school (*edubba'a*) in their capital city following Sumerian prototypes in Nippur, the traditional centre of Sumerian scholarship, and in Ur, the former capital.<sup>10</sup> There is nevertheless some evidence of innovation in Isin music. Several very fragmentary clay tablets, which most probably preserve the lyrics of a royal hymn, bear the earliest evidence for the often-discussed heptatonic and diatonic scale system known mainly from later Babylonian and Assyrian texts.<sup>11</sup> Some of them seem to function as a kind of rudimentary music notation.<sup>12</sup> Unfortunately, the tablets are poorly preserved and the date of their creation has not yet been fully determined. Therefore, no further statements can be made here about the totality of their meaning.

The first hymn known to us which is fully written in the Akkadian language was composed under King Gungunum of Larsa (1932 to 1906 BCE). Despite the poor preservation of the text, it was probably composed for the occasion of a royal votive to the moon god Nanna/Sîn.<sup>13</sup> By this time Akkadian was used for everyday language while Sumerian was reserved for religious literature so the appearance of this unique cultic song written entirely in Akkadian strongly points to some significant change in religious cult performance. Still we have to keep in mind, that its primary concern is royal ideology and not daily liturgy.

Better preserved are religious songs composed during the reign of the last king of the same dynasty, Rīm-Sîn of Larsa, about a century later. Among them is a hymn dedicated to the god Amurru, a deity who was newly introduced to the Sumerian pantheon during the Amurrite migration, at the earliest, towards the end of the 3rd millennium

8 Krebernik 1992.

9 For translations see Black et al. 1998–2006: *The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature* (ETCSL) online at <http://etcs1.orinst.ox.ac.uk/> (visited on 19/07/2019), Oxford 1998–2006, Text numbers 2.4.1-5 and 2.5.1-8. For an elaborate study of Ur III and Isin royal hymns see Klein 1990; see also Brisch 2007, 19–31, for alternative opinions.

10 George 2005.

11 Kilmer 1993–1997.

12 Kilmer and Civil 1986; Kilmer and Tinney 1996; Kilmer and Tinney 1997.

13 van Dijk 1976, 9, 41; see Groneberg and Hunger 1978. Sources of Early Akkadian Literature File 2.1.21, and its recent edition see Wassermann 2018.

BCE.<sup>14</sup> The text is entirely written in Akkadian. Like many other hymns and prayers of that time it bears a subscript. A subscript is a paragraph at the very end of the text preserving information either about the scribe, the date of composition or the genre and dedication of the hymn. In our case, the subscript might denote the text as a *Tigi*-song in an unusual spelling (Example 1). This type of song is otherwise only attested in subscripts of Sumerian hymns.<sup>15</sup> It shows us that whilst the composition itself is devoted to an Amurrite god and is written in Akkadian, its form and performance are those of a traditional Sumerian song-type.

Example 1: Subscript of the Rīm-Sîn hymn to the Amurrite god Amurru, ll. 46f.

Translation:

‘It is a [Ti]gi<sup>2</sup>-song for the pleasure of habitations, in the name of the shepherd of the subjects of Sîn.’

Transliteration:<sup>16</sup>

Line 46: [t]i<sup>2</sup>.gi<sup>2</sup>(KI).am<sub>3</sub> i-na ga-ma-al šu-ba-tim i-na šu-mi-im

Lower edge: ša re-i bu-la-at i<sup>d</sup>.EN.ZU<sup>1</sup>

The ‘shepherd of the subjects of Sîn’, the moon god, is none other than King Rīm-Sîn himself who has commissioned this hymn to Amurru. Interestingly, there are no other Sumerian *Tigi*-songs known from the reign of this king, but only one single *Adab*, a song-type similar in form and content.<sup>17</sup> However, innovations in poetry composed under the kings of the Larsa Dynasty are not restricted to the Akkadian language. Poets of the same period are responsible for the creation of a whole new genre of Sumerian royal prayers hitherto unknown to the Sumerian literary tradition.<sup>18</sup>

### 3 Babylonian innovations in poetry and musical performance

Many more religious compositions written in Akkadian are known from the reign of King Hammurāpi of Babylon and his successors (ca. 1792 to 1595 BCE) than from any previous period. The best example, because of its innovative character and uniqueness,

14 Gurney 1989, 15–19, no. 1; Edzard 1987–1990.

15 Shehata 2009, 251–257.

16 Reading after Gurney 1989, No. 1, and Sources of Early Akkadian Literature File 2.1.2.2, line 46–47 with emendations by the present author.

17 Black et al. 1998–2006, 2.6.9.8; Brisch 2007, 241–244; Shehata 2009, 251–257.

18 Referred to after their refrain as *lugal-mu*-prayers; newly edited and discussed by Brisch 2007.

is a narrative song called *Agušaya*, after its Akkadian subscript, which may be translated as ‘the whirling [one]’.<sup>19</sup> *Agušaya* is an epithet, signifying the Akkadian goddess of war and love, Ištar.

In essence, this mythical song tells of a newly created war goddess named *Šaltu* who threatens all divine orders and the world’s existence. In the end, Ea, the god of wisdom manages to calm *Šaltu* down and averts all the threats posed by her. It is important to note that the story is not known from any other written source. In fact, it has no known Sumerian forerunner. Nevertheless the nub of its plot, the soothing of an outraged goddess who has been bringing danger to the world order, is a common enough motif amongst Sumerian liturgical compositions, especially for the Emesal-prayers *Balaġ* and *Eršema*.<sup>20</sup> Prayers and lamentations on this topic presumably had an apotropaic purpose.<sup>21</sup> They are perhaps to be seen as tools for influencing raging gods or goddesses in order to avert evil and the destruction of mankind. According to the last lines of the song *Agušaya*, it was composed on behalf of King Hammurāpi:

Example 2: *Agušaya* B, Column V, 23–29

‘And the king, who has heard me  
with this Song  
[which is] a sign of your (Ištar’s) warriorship,  
a praise of yours! –  
Hammurāpi, with this Song  
your praise has been fulfilled  
under his reign,  
let him live forever!’

Although the text is written in Akkadian, its function conforms to Sumerian archetypes. Furthermore, the narration is interspersed with rubrics: technical terms with various meanings subdividing the narration into episodes or paragraphs. Such rubrics are typical of Sumerian poetic literature. The poem of *Agušaya* especially contains those appearing in the Emesal *Balaġ*-prayers. Altogether *Agušaya* has ten numbered ki-ru-gu<sub>2</sub> sections, literally the ‘place of opposing,’ each followed by an antiphon, the Sumerian ġiš-gi<sub>4</sub>-ġal<sub>2</sub>.<sup>22</sup> As to our current knowledge, the ki-ru-gu<sub>2</sub> rubric marks episodes of the song

19 The title is related to the Akkadian verb *gāšum* ‘to run, hasten.’ The text was re-edited by Groneberg in 1997; important additional comments are made by Streck 2010. For speculations on its ritual background in connection to cultic whirling dances dedicated to the goddess, see Groneberg 1997, 71–72.

20 Shehata 2009, 72–78; Gabbay 2014.

21 Gabbay 2014, 15–16; Groneberg 1997, 59, has already pointed to the apotropaic function of *Agušaya*, which may also be indicated by the sentence on the tablet’s edge *uttār MUŠ*, ‘the snake has been driven back.’

22 Groneberg 1997, 61–62, 71–72.



which were to be performed at different cultic places.<sup>23</sup> Interestingly, the closing rubric usually appearing in Sumerian liturgy, the *ki-šu<sub>2</sub>* ‘place of covering(?)’, is missing in the Akkadian *Agušaya*.

In the case of *Agušaya*, we may reasonably conclude that it was performed in much the same way as in Sumerian liturgy, namely in the *Balaĝ*-laments. It might have been an attempt to replace formerly Sumerian traditional prayers in divine ritual dedicated to the Sumerian counterpart of the goddess Ištar, which is Inana.

As I stated earlier, the song of *Agušaya* is unique in form and content. There is no other example of an Akkadian song using these particular Sumerian rubrics. Interestingly too, the text has so far survived in only one version. It seems not to have been copied and handed down for later generations of scribes or priests. Only its title reappears, in a literary catalogue dating to the Middle Assyrian period. I will return to this later.

A second example of Akkadian songs meant for liturgical use is preserved in a catalogue of lamentations addressing the mother goddess Dingirmah, or Mami.<sup>24</sup> It is a single tablet listing the titles of eight songs altogether, with only two of them in Sumerian. Their main topic is lamentation about destroyed cities or temples, and they bear titles like ‘Woe! Her temple’ or ‘The temple’s plight’. According to the tablet’s subscript the songs are attributable to the mourning women, a group of cultic performers whose profession – according to the evidence – was not obviously present in earlier texts, at least with ownership of its own written repertoire. Written evidence for mourning women in second-millennium Babylonia is extremely rare, presumably because they did not belong to the literate class in society. Their absence from temple administration may point towards a greater private demand of their mourning activities, accompanying private funerals or other similar occasions.<sup>25</sup> The song catalogue presented in the following Example is preserved on an undated cuneiform tablet, but according to form and style it must have been composed somewhere around the time of King Hammurāpi’s reign over Babylonia.<sup>26</sup>

Example 3: Ancient song-catalogue of the genre *Amerakūtum* ‘(Art) of the mourning woman’

2 tablets:<sup>27</sup> ‘Like a cow which roared like a bull!’ (*Akkadian*)

4 one-column-tablets: ‘Alas! Song of Woe! It has become a devastated haunted

23 Shehata 2009, 348–349.

24 Shaffer 1993, 209–210.

25 For the evidence see Shehata 2009, 104–106.

26 Two hitherto unpublished cuneiform tablets held in the British Museum, London, preserve the lyrics of such a song (Sources of Early Akkadian Litera-

ture File 3.1.2.5). Its content conforms to the titles preserved in the aforementioned catalogue. The edition of the tablets is separately in preparation by the present author as well as by Takayashi Oshima.

27 Each catalogue line begins with a scribal note of the number of tablets that the composition occupies.

place? (*Sumerian*)

4 one-column-tablets: 'Woe! Her temple!' (*Akkadian*)

7 one-column tablets: 'Her mercy is praised!' (*Akkadian*)

7 one-column tablets: 'Like a cow which roared like a bull?' (*Akkadian*)

8 one-column tablets: 'The duties of the house?' (*Akkadian*)

6 one-column tablets: 'I consulted the city?' (*Akkadian*)

1 one-column tablet: 'Woe! she says. Woe! she says?' (*Sumerian*)

Two tablets and 37 one-column tablets of the '(Art) of the mourning woman' of Dingirmah.

City laments are a common genre known primarily from Sumerian literature. Apart from five such compositions dedicated to major Sumerian cities like Nippur and Ur,<sup>28</sup> the topics of city laments are dealt with in the already mentioned *Balaḡ*-prayers. These liturgical prayers in Emesal Sumerian belonged to the repertoire of the lamentation priest (Sumerian *gala*, Akkadian *kalû*) and remained in use in divine ritual until the Seleucid Period (320 to 63 BCE). The Akkadian city laments presented here through a literary catalogue are unique. As a result, their interpretation remains rather difficult. Nevertheless they again seem to point towards the same development, of a changing religious repertoire. As in the poem of *Agušaya* mentioned above, so also the Akkadian laments to the Mother Goddess are an expansion of former Sumerian liturgy. I assume they were composed and collected under Babylonian supervision. Possible reasons for such an innovative programme might be to strengthen the presence of mourning women in public religious ceremonies. Nevertheless, since no other sources seem to confirm such a development, it remains conjectural.

New Akkadian poetry, hymns and prayers to be performed on religious occasions continued to be written during the reign of Hammurāpi's successors. King Samsuiluna (1749 to 1712 BCE) for example initiated the composition of a hymn dedicated to the Akkadian goddess Nanaya.<sup>29</sup> Great myths and narratives were also compiled, like the Akkadian flood story *Atrambasīs*, written during the reign of King Ammišaduqa (1646 to 1626 BCE). Under Hammurāpi's grandson King Ammiditana (1683–1647 BCE) there is evidence of highly skilled poets writing eloquent and unique compositions like the *Hymn to Ištar*<sup>30</sup> or the Babylonian *Man and his God*.<sup>31</sup> Still, regarding their form and content, they seem to imitate Sumerian compositions, for example the Akkadian *Hymn to Ištar* reminds us of Sumerian hymns belonging to the genres *Tigi* and *Adab*, while the Akkadian *Man and his God* also has a Sumerian counterpart (ETCSL 5.2.4). However, genuine Akkadian song types were also introduced for ritual use. This is the case with

28 See Black et al. 1998–2006, 2.2.2–6.

29 Von Soden 1938.

30 Thureau-Dangin 1925.

31 Lambert 1987.

an emergent genre called *irtum* (literally ‘bosom’ or ‘breast’).<sup>32</sup> Only five of these songs are affirmed and these are on a very badly preserved tablet dating from the reign of King Ammiditana (Example 4). They are quite short compositions dealing with topics of love and fertility connecting the king with the goddess Ištar. The only remaining Sumerian rubric these songs contain is <ĝiš-gi<sub>4</sub>-ĝal<sub>2</sub>>, the ‘antiphon.’ From this clue we may reasonably conclude that they were performed by at least two opposing singers or choruses.

Example 4: Example of an *irtum*, a ‘bosom’-Song (Late Ammiditana, 1683 to 1647 BCE) Column IV, 6’–11’

‘The signs of your well-being;  
and the ever-lasting of your life;  
may Ištar give as a gift to you, Ammiditana. [...]’

Antiphon (ĝiš-gi<sub>4</sub>-ĝal<sub>2</sub>)

a ‘bosom’-song, belonging to the song-series: ‘Where is my Lover, the exalted one?’

The only other evidence for *irtum*-songs comes from the Middle Assyrian literary catalogue mentioned above, dating from about five hundred years later (ca. 1200 to 1100 BCE). This extensive catalogue, known as KAR 158,<sup>33</sup> has eight columns, with some 350 lines listing the titles of Sumerian and Akkadian songs. In its summation of column viii the catalogue assigns *irtum*-songs to each of the seven diatonic and heptatonic scales we know for Babylonia from the beginning of the second millennium onwards (Example 5). As I have already described, the earliest evidence for these scales dates from the Isin-Dynasty (2017 to 1793 BCE). Apart from the *irtum*-songs, there are only two other occasions assigning the otherwise unknown Akkadian *šitru*-songs to the diatonic and heptatonic scales or modes. Altogether, the seven scales seem to be a feature of a music performance first introduced in course of the Amurrite immigration. As was first proposed by Anne Kilmer,<sup>34</sup> it might therefore be referred to as an “Akkadian” music in contrast to previous “Sumerian” forms of music. Moreover, it seems that these songs were not used in public divine ritual until the complete demise of all vestiges of Sumerian culture in Mesopotamia.

32 Groneberg 1999; Wasserman 2016, 104–107; Sources of Early Akkadian Literature, File 4.1.3.4.

33 No. 158 in KAR (Ebeling 1919/1920). For a translit-

eration and translation see Sources of Early Akkadian Literature, File 10.3 and Hecker 2013.

34 Kilmer 1993–1997, 472.

Example 5: Middle Assyrian Literary Catalogue KAR 158 Column viii, 45–52

23 *irātu ša ešerte akkadû*

‘23 ‘bosom’-songs of the mode *Išartu*, Akkadian

17 *irātu ša kitme*

17 ‘bosom’-songs of the mode *Kitmu*

24 *irātu ša ebbūbi*

24 ‘bosom’-songs of the mode *Ebbūbu*

4 *irātu ša pīte*

4 ‘bosom’-songs of the mode *Pītu*

[...] *irātu ša nīd qabli*

[...] ‘bosom’-songs of the mode *Nīd qabli*

[...] *irātu ša nīš tubri*

[...] ‘bosom’-songs of the mode *Nīš tubri*

[...] *irātu ša qablīte*

[...] ‘bosom’-songs of the mode *Qablītu*’

According to all the examples given above, the first steps taken towards a change in religious repertoire occurred under the last kings of the Larsa dynasty. Larsa poets did not only enlarge the curriculum of song types within Sumerian liturgy, they were also the first to create hymns written entirely in Akkadian, even though their compositions were at first restricted to royal praise.

King Hammurāpi of Babylon himself seems to have compelled poets and composers to continue this tradition, commissioning for example a mythic song of Akkadian origin to be prepared for cultic performance. But even though the text of *Agušaya* was written in Akkadian, the manner in which it was performed still seems to have followed Sumerian archetypes. Under the reign of his grandson Ammiditana (1683 to 1647 BCE) a sophisticated repertoire of Akkadian liturgy using hymns, prayers and myths was created, establishing new types of songs and cultic hymns to be performed on religious occasions.

Even if Sumerian had not yet been abandoned from all Babylonian music performance and had been used continuously for royal hymns and prayers,<sup>35</sup> still the cultic repertoire used in divine ritual performance had clearly undergone a fundamental change, most certainly in the language used, perhaps in other aspects too.

At this point it is necessary to consider the possible motives lying behind this development. If King Hammurāpi really initiated the creation of new Akkadian myths and

35 See Black et al. 1998–2006 under *Royal praise poetry of the First Dynasty of Babylon* 28.8.2-5; royal inscriptions, a very traditional Mesopotamian genre, were written as bilinguals, i. e. in Sumerian with an Akka-

dian translation, or entirely in Akkadian; for bilingual royal inscriptions, written in Sumerian with an Akkadian translation, see Frayne 1990, 332–438.

God	Hymn	Lament	Love Lyric
Marduk	3	1	–
Ištar/Nanaya	7	1	16
Mami/Bēlet-ili /Dingirmah	2	9	–
Other	7	10	–
King	3	1	–
Unknown	7	5	8
Bilinguals	20	8	–

Tab. 1 Overview of the topics of Old Babylonian Akkadian religious compositions and the persons to whom they were dedicated.

hymns, what were his reasons? Why did he not follow former Sumerian poetic tradition, as had the kings of Isin before him?

The question I would raise is whether there might be other motives underlying this development than the general spread of Amurrite and Old Babylonian Akkadian in everyday speech and the dying out of Sumerian. One possible explanation may be found in the change of everyday cult and its addressees. Actually the rise of Hammurāpi and his Babylonian dynasty caused not only important political but also religious change. With the rise of the city of Babylon, its protector god Marduk became the chief god of all Babylonia.<sup>36</sup> This obviously introduced a need for new cult songs, hymns and prayers that addressed him in divine ritual and public performance. As was shown above, this was obviously true in the case of the god Amurru/Martu, favoured by King Rim-Sin of Larsa.

The table 1 gives an overview of the topics of Old Babylonian Akkadian religious compositions and the persons to whom they were dedicated. Songs to the god Marduk are not many, though the reason for this might be a lack of textual evidence.<sup>37</sup> Instead, we may notice the many love lyrics for Ištar and Nanaya, two important Akkadian goddesses of Love. Along with the already mentioned *irtum*-songs most compositions labelled as love lyrics are genuine Akkadian genres. The only Sumerian genre comparable to them are *Balbale*-Songs.<sup>38</sup> But in contrast to the Akkadian songs they hardly ever address a ruling king by his name.<sup>39</sup> In the case of the god Marduk, the newly composed Akkadian songs dedicated to him are still too scarce to be put forward as a leading motive for the change of Babylonian religious repertoire, especially since the same god Marduk was also addressed in Sumerian.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>36</sup> See in general Sommerfeld 1987–1990, 363–364.

<sup>37</sup> Unfortunately the Old Babylonian Period is very badly documented in the capital city itself, but we

may expect more pieces of Babylonian poetic literature to appear in the course of future archaeological

A useful next step would be to review the actors involved in the invention and performance of poetic texts. What part did they play in the introduction of new song material? How far were they bound to traditions? Or did they act rather more freely and may thus be referred to as the initiators of the observed change?

#### 4 Professions and institutions

Responsibility for the composition and performance of religious cult songs and liturgy was traditionally in the hands of an élite consisting of highly skilled scholars, priests, liturgists and musicians. Despite the large number of ancient compositions, including hymns, prayers and epics, not much is known about the composers of these texts. In fact, attribution of human authorship was almost certainly inconceivable in Mesopotamia. It was believed that religious songs, hymns, epics or myths were created, or at least inspired, by the gods themselves.<sup>41</sup> The god primarily responsible for such inspiration was Ea, the god of wisdom and art. Professions under his protection included priests and scholars as well as musicians.

Ea was also a patron of an institution called *mumum*, which is attested for the first time in the Old Babylonian period.<sup>42</sup> A *mumum* is attested for the city of Mari in western Syria, and also most obviously for Babylon.<sup>43</sup> Better documented is the one for the city of Mari, where it was attached to the palace, with the musicians and poets acting within its walls under the direct control of the reigning king. The same must have been the case with the *mumum* of Babylon, where scholars, scribes and musicians accomplished their creative work most probably for the contentment of their sovereign, Hammurāpi.

In his famous study on priests and other temple personnel in the Old Babylonian Period Johannes Renger had already observed a serious change taking place with the beginning of Hammurāpi's reign. While former influential positions like the en-priest(ess) – the traditional head of a temple in the Sumerian south – disappeared, new priestly offices were introduced. Renger therefore believes that King Hammurāpi may have re-

excavations there.

38 Sefati 1998; Shehata 2009, 293–297, with a general overview.

39 Shehata 2009, 327–333.

40 Sumerian hymns to Marduk (or Asalluhi, another name for Marduk), dating from the reign of Hammurāpi and his successors, are rare and badly preserved. See Black et al. 1998–2006, 2.8.2.1–2.8.5.

41 See Foster 1991 on authorship in Mesopotamia.

42 Pruzsinszky 2010, 113, and Michalowski 2010, 201–203, have shown that *mumum* is the equivalent of the Sumerian *umun/m* which housed musicians, opposite to the *edubba'a*, where scribes were trained. Still, since *mumum* is a genuine Akkadian word, I assume also the institution to be of an 'Akkado-Amurrite' origin.

43 Ziegler 2007, 77–78; Shehata 2010.

organized the temple's clergy, adjusting and replacing them according to his own preferences.<sup>44</sup>

Such changes also involved the 'creative' personnel of a temple. Before Hammurāpi's conquest of southern Babylonia – formerly Sumer – each major Sumerian cult city had its own chief musician associated with its principal temple (Sumerian *nar-gal*, Akkadian *nargallum*). This situation seems to have changed under Hammurāpi. From his time onwards there is evidence that the chief musician, in particular, became increasingly attached to the royal administration and to the king. In addition we read of quite a few musicians receiving land as a present from their kings. Such properties were given to subjects as a reward for special duties.<sup>45</sup> At the same time the recipient became obligated to the benefactor and his interests. Assuming that priests and chief musicians were responsible for the composition of religious texts, this might be evidence for Hammurāpi's progressive direction of creative processes.

The best documented example of such patronage is in the city of Mari. Not only were common musicians gathered by the palace, but also liturgists or lamentation priests; and there they were educated by the king's chief musician.<sup>46</sup> By engaging in this practice, the king of Mari could have gained control over the composition and performance of religious repertoire, actions which would normally have remained within the purview of the temple.

The situation in Mari raises the question of how such liturgists, especially the chief lamentation priests (Sumerian *gala-mah*, Akkadian *kalamabhum*), were treated under the rulers of the Babylonian Dynasty. Here, it is quite astonishing that there is not a single attestation of this position at any temple during the reign of Hammurāpi,<sup>47</sup> even though – both before and after – there is evidence for at least one such representative at every major temple in former Sumerian cities.<sup>48</sup> Such a remarkable gap in the evidence clearly demands an explanation. Was Hammurāpi himself responsible for it? Did he dismiss all the chief lamentation priests from their positions? Why would he do that? The traditional repertoire of lamentation priests consists of prayers and laments written entirely in Sumerian. If we assume that the Akkadian *Agušaya* – a composition commissioned by Hammurāpi himself – replaced Sumerian liturgical compositions in religious performance, might not the temple's traditionalists have balked? Is the sum of evidence then presenting us with a conflict taking place between Hammurāpi and the temple's liturgists? Again, since we lack documentation of Hammurāpi's acting towards lamentation priests, these suggestions must for the time being remain conjectural.

44 Renger 1969, 115–116 and Renger 1975, 110.

45 Shehata 2009, 25.

46 Ziegler 2007, 64–65.

47 Shehata 2009, 63–64.

48 For single attestations see now also the French online archive ARCHIBAB at <http://www.archibab.fr/> (visited on 19/07/2019).

Interestingly, evidence for the presence of chief lamentation priests can be found under Hammurāpi's successors. The reign of his immediate successor Samsuiluna was marked by a period of military and economic disaster.<sup>49</sup> This situation led to gradual decline for all the major cities in southern Babylonia. Ur, Nippur and Isin, former centres of Sumerian tradition, were adversely affected. The last text found in southern Babylonia dates from Samsuiluna's thirtieth reigning year. As a consequence of this decline, religious institutions, including cults and their attendants as well as the gods to whom they were dedicated, were transferred to the major cities in northern Babylonia, among them Sippar, Kiš and the capital, Babylon.

From this time forward there were many more priests and musicians assembled in one Babylonian city than ever before. Each of them was assigned to a different temple and its god. Hitherto, each major city had had only one chief lamentation priest and one chief musician who were responsible for all the city's temples and their ritual performances. The new situation, including many more chief musicians and lamentation priests within one city, must have demanded the reorganization of the old religious hierarchies within the city's temples. This in turn seems to have offered scope for new relationships to develop between the king and the chief lamentation priests. One indication of this changing relationship might be in the new expressions formulated in seal inscriptions. These show a new allegiance to the reigning king (Example 6) whereas previously the so-called 'servant line' of such inscriptions had contained the name of a god or goddess as a means of ascribing the seal's priestly owner to a particular temple. This change might offer a clue as to a different way of binding a new generation of priests to the king's interests.<sup>50</sup>

Example 6: Seal inscriptions of chief lamentation priests/liturgists during the reigns of Kings Ammišaduqa and Samsuditana.

(1) Chief lamentation priest of the god Zababa in Kiš (1639 to 1620 BCE).<sup>51</sup>

*Old:* Nanna-šalasad, son of Mea'imriagu, servant of the god Nergal.<sup>52</sup>

49 For an overview see Pientka 1998, 6–21.

50 This devotion to the king expressed in seal inscriptions is also attested for other priests; see for example Frayne 1990, E4.3.11.2001–2005 and Tanret 2010, 207. There the expression 'servant of King Hammurāpi' appears only twice (ibid. No. 8). In the case of the sanga, which is to say the highest priestly office at a temple traditionally in northern Babylonia, Tanret has deduced, that this process started

after Hammurāpi's eighteenth reigning year; Tanret 2010, 247–249. Contemporaneously the Marduk temple gained more power. Old Babylonian seal inscriptions can be searched on ARCHIBAB at <http://www.archibab.fr/> (visited on 19/07/2019).

51 Shehata 2009, 217–218, 389.

52 Seal J of tablet Finkelstein 1972, 13, 203: <sup>d</sup>šeš.ki-ša3-la2-sud / dumu me-a-im-ri-a-ġu10 / ir3 <sup>d</sup>ne3.eri11.[gal].



*New*: Nanna-šalasud, chief lamentation priest, son of Me'a-imriagu, servant of King Ammišaduqa.<sup>53</sup>

(2) Chief lamentation priest of the goddess Inana from Uruk, worshipped in Kiš around 1624 BCE.<sup>54</sup>

Riš-Marduk, chief lamentation priest, son of E-[,...], servant of king Samsuditanā.<sup>55</sup>

Finally, changes are not restricted to musicians and liturgists. There is further evidence for the introduction of new cultic personnel in religious performance. In addition to the mourning women already mentioned, there was also the cultic dancer, the *huppû*, whose origin was most probably in Syria where the profession is already affirmed during the third millennium BCE.<sup>56</sup> Nevertheless, in Mesopotamia the involvement of the *huppû* during public religious festivities is first attested during the Larsa dynasty.<sup>57</sup> *Huppû*-dancers were also active under Hammurāpi of Babylon, at which time, like musicians, they received royal grants of land. Indeed, their supervisor during public religious ceremonies was the king's chief musician. Again, this further demonstrates the palace's increasing control over many of the temple's religious performance activities.

## 5 Conclusion

A change of music and its performance taking place in Mesopotamia at the beginning of the second millennium BCE is clearly evident in the iconographical record (see for example Fig. 2). Both the iconographical and philological evidence demonstrates that the new Amurrite rulers reigning over major Mesopotamian and former Sumerian cities developed their individual identities and their own ways of expressing themselves through language, art and music. Nevertheless, not all of these independent dynasties seem to have been able, or willing, to establish their own wholly exclusive socio-cultural identities. The kings of Isin in particular devoted themselves to the former Sumerian culture, imitating the last Sumerian rulers of the city of Ur by composing similar hymns and

53 Seal of tablet Finkelstein 1972, 13, 268: <sup>d</sup>ŠEŠ.KI-ša<sub>3</sub>-la<sub>2</sub>-sud / gala-mah / [dumu] me-a-im-ri-a-ġu<sub>10</sub> / ir<sub>3</sub> am-mi-[ša-du-qa<sub>2</sub>]. Though the tablet itself dates from the accession year of the following king, Samsuditanā, the seal was already in use under Ammišaduqa.

54 Shehata 2009, 218, 390.

55 Seal C of tablet Finkelstein 1972, 13, 90: ri-iš-

[<sup>d</sup>AMAR.UTU] / gala-mah / dumu e-[,...] / ir<sub>3</sub> sa-am-[su-di-ta-na].

56 Ziegler 2007, 261–276; Shehata 2009, 40–51.

57 The Seven-Day Ritual is attested on a single tablet listing deliveries of offerings and participants, among them musicians, liturgists and dancers; it is published by J. G. Westenholz and A. Westenholz 2006, no. 1 and discussed in Shehata 2009, 136–146.

prayers, and continuing to express them in the Sumerian language. It must surely be motivated by the fact that the Isin Dynasty had emerged directly from the Ur III-Dynasty. Its founder King Išbi-Erra (2017 to 1985 BCE) had utilized his position as governor of Isin and general under the last Ur III King, Ibbi-Suen, and had practiced deception upon his sovereign in order to assume rulership over Sumer. Keeping Sumerian traditions alive would have been a powerful tool in the new king's legitimization, when he himself was not of Sumerian origin. Similar phenomena are discussed elsewhere in this volume: for example by Ingrid Furniss who considers the Chinese dynasty of Chu, its retention of the ritual music *yayue* ('Refined Music') of the previous Zhou dynasty, and how Chu music in turn continued to influence music of the Han after Chu's demise in the 3rd century BCE.<sup>58</sup>

Akkadian religious literature first surfaces during the reign of the kings of Larsa, especially during the time of their last enigmatic ruler Rīm-Sîn (1822–1763). But their songs still seem to have drawn their style and form from Sumerian song types. Further steps in developing an Akkadian liturgy were undertaken under the reign of King Hammurāpi of Babylon. The mythical song of *Agušaya* dedicated to the goddess Ištar is a remarkable example of innovative Akkadian poetry, initiated by the king himself. So, even though Sumerian prayers continued to exist, it seems as if scholars and poets were encouraged to compile new liturgy in their own language for use in public religious festivities. The new compositions might in some instances have replaced former Sumerian songs. The king himself may have initiated and supported this development by establishing a new institution for creative work, under his own control, by reorganizing the temple's personnel and by binding individual musicians to himself. His primary aim in doing this might have been to gain more control over the processes of creating and performing public religious vocal repertoire. One reason for his direct involvement might have been to establish a new cult for the Babylonian god Marduk and native Akkadian goddesses, especially Ištar and Nanaya. During the course of this development new cultic personnel not attested in Sumerian tradition were introduced, to act in religious ceremonies. However, whether or not this development was in some way connected with the absence of chief lamentation priests during King Hammurāpi's reign has still to be determined.

Under Hammurāpi's grandson Ammiditana, who managed to stabilize the now shrunken Babylonian empire, many more religious compositions of indigenous Babylonian origin were performed. Furthermore, it was only at this time that we have evidence that the system of seven diatonic scales found its way into public religious music, based on the *irtum* love-songs. Finally, it seems that a new generation of liturgists was

58 See Furniss, this volume.

established among the Babylonian temples, perhaps so that liturgical practice would be more closely controlled by the king.

Further evidence will be needed in order to test such theories fully. However, I have tried to show that changes taking place in the written material of the Old Babylonian Period are not only a concern of literary history but are also relevant to music history. The appearance of new song compositions for public religious festivities hints at the emergence of a new system of music performance. This is further confirmed by new imagery depicting different musical instruments and performers in cultic contexts. By reviewing this change through different perspectives I have tried to deduce what might have been the underlying motivation. Admittedly, it is a matter of debate as to whether this should be interpreted as representing a political conflict that arose in Babylon between the king and the temple's élite, or whether we might speak of a reform of religious performance undertaken by the kings in order to establish their own gods and cults in public ceremonies. In this connection the Babylonian Creation Myth *Enūma eliš* may be relevant.<sup>59</sup> Although it is known only from sources of the 1st millennium BCE, it is nevertheless an innovative Akkadian composition, celebrating the Babylonian god Marduk as the chief god of all former Sumerian panthea. This newly established position would surely have served to reflect and display the extensive power of an earthly sovereign reigning over all his subjects.<sup>60</sup>

It should not escape our attention that the new hymns and prayers were now able to be understood by a larger number of the Akkadian-speaking public than before, not only because of the nature of the words used but also because of the way they were expressed musically. During the reign of King Hammurāpi and his successors the vocal repertoire and its performances were evidently adjusted to the musical expectations of a mainly Amurrite population. There is no question but that this was a superior way to communicate to the public the king's self-appraisal and his positions on issues. Furthermore, it signalled a separation from old traditions – whether it suited traditional priests or not – especially since this area of public music performance was an ideal medium for generating and disseminating royal propaganda.

Interestingly, most of the innovative Babylonian compositions initiated by Old Babylonian kings are what scholars call 'unique,' meaning that no later copies of them have yet surfaced. Still, new knowledge continues to be gleaned from the texts to this day. At least some of these compositions, among them the *irtum* love-songs and probably also *Agušaya* were cited in the already mentioned Middle Assyrian catalogue KAR 158. Unfortunately, we do not know anything about the compiler or the owner of this catalogue, let alone his intentions in compiling it.

59 Lambert 2013; Gabriel 2014.

60 See for example Maul 1999.

The ultimate effect of this change, in which Hammurāpi of Babylon was one of the most important and influential figures, was finally realized at the end of the 2nd millennium BCE. By this time there was a separation of all royal religious repertoire from the temple's daily liturgy. While liturgy was written in a special liturgical register of Sumerian, namely Emesal, and remained rather static, aiming to hand down the prayers from ancient times in their exact wordings, all royal poetry reserved for the king's self-portrayal was in contrast creative and innovative in regards to its form, language and most likely also to the manner of its performance in public.

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1984, 75, fig. 57. 3 D. Shehata. 4 D. Shehata after Wasserman 2003. **TABLES:** 1 D. Shehata.

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Cristina-Georgeta Alexandrescu

# Images of Music and Musicians as Indicators of Status, Wealth and Political Power on Roman Funerary Monuments

## Summary

Investigations of pictorial representations of Roman musical instruments and musicians have established that in funerary contexts they were used by the artist as a tool to draw attention to the wealth and the political or social status of the dead person or his/her family. This article provides an overview of the results of this analysis based on examples from Republican, Imperial and Late Antique contexts. Its purpose is to explore some of the changes that can be observed, affecting both the meanings of the topics that were selected to ornament funerary monuments and their implications for the changing role of the musician in everyday life

Keywords: musicians; instruments; symbolic meaning; iconography; identity; political status; *familia*; Roman Empire

Untersuchungen bildlicher Darstellungen von Musikinstrumenten sowie Musikantinnen und Musikanten haben ergeben, dass sie in Grabkontexten benutzt wurden, um auf den Wohlstand sowie den politischen oder sozialen Status der verstorbenen Person oder ihrer Familie hinzuweisen. Dieser Beitrag gibt einen Überblick über die Ergebnisse der Analyse, basierend auf Beispielen aus republikanischen, imperialen und spätantiken Kontexten. Ziel des Beitrags ist, Veränderungen zu untersuchen, die sich sowohl auf die Bedeutung der für die Grabmäler gewählten Themen als auch auf die Rolle der Musikantinnen und Musikanten im Alltag auswirkten.

Keywords: Musikant\*innen; Instrumente; symbolische Bedeutung; Ikonographie; Identität; politischer Status; *familia*; Römisches Reich

## 1 Introduction

In Roman society music was as constant and ubiquitous a part of life as it was in any ancient civilisation. The value Romans attached to it is clearly and richly evidenced by various kinds of sources from pre-Republican times through the Republic and Empire to the Late Roman period. One of its most remarkable applications appears to have been in the formation and maintenance of kinship identities and family reputations. Amongst conspicuous instances of its exploitation was its use by officials of the Empire, of the provinces or of individual communities: people who valued their reputations as patrons of the performing arts or other manifestations for the delight of a large audience (like gladiatorial games) and – sometimes – as their skilled exponents. But such cultural use also permeated the wider social and institutional fabric of Roman life, finding frequent expression in the no less political milieu of family and community, especially amongst those families which had status to consolidate or further advancement to pursue. It is this aspect, music's aptness to the politics of social class and mobility, that will form the context of this chapter. I will provide evidence to show that, perhaps echoing Greek theorists, Roman families recognised the political impact of certain kinds of music, and sought to project something of their own prestige through their choices of particular musical topoi for their funerary monuments. Musical taste was an aspect of character by which they wished to be remembered and themselves to be measured.

## 2 On the state of research

Some scholars of Roman culture today pursue thematic investigations into different aspects of music, such as its role in the army, in the various cults and in sports, including gladiatorial games. Others focus their attention on organology: on the materiality of specific types and 'families' of musical instrument, such as stringed and so-called 'brass' instruments.<sup>1</sup>

From a methodological point of view, research on Roman music draws its evidence from a variety of ancient sources: epigraphical, philological, iconographical and archaeological. An important difference between these disparate approaches lies in the procedures chosen to evaluate each type of information.<sup>2</sup> Early researchers tended to regard each piece of information as self-evident, without seeking corroboration from other sources; others have since preferred to validate each piece through correlation with other extant evidence. Today many accept the awkward truth that all of this information is to

1 For example: Fleischhauer 1964; Pinette 1993; Fless 1995; Vendries 1999; Landels 2001; Alexandrescu 2010.

2 Behn 1912; cf. Vendries 1999, 19–40; Alexandrescu 2010, 20–33; see also Homo-Lechner 1998.

a greater or lesser extent problematic, sometimes due to its scarcity and often because we still lack the full knowledge necessary to establish its original meaning.

This contribution will focus on aspects of the iconography of musicians and musical instruments found on Roman funerary monuments.<sup>3</sup> Bearing in mind the specific focus of the meeting and of the present volume, relationships between sound and political condition will be stressed. This will allow exploration of the ‘soundscapes’ of Roman society as they changed throughout history. Funerary monuments provide specific information on individual Romans: a particular person within a family, a *familia*,<sup>4</sup> with a specific relationship to the community in which he or she lived. The random character of the preserved information, as well as the small number of people who could have afforded to commission funerary monuments with elaborate sculpted reliefs, delineates the parameters of research, while at the same time informing us of a particular characteristic in our observations. These may be compared and contrasted with other kinds of *realia* (such as archaeological finds of objects) and other categories of persons commemorated, in order to place conclusions within a broad theoretical framework: taking into account motives that may underlie choices of subject and evaluating the extent to which realism has played a part in the portrayal of individuals, situations and objects.

### 3 Funerary monuments bearing information relevant to this discussion

In the chambers of Etruscan tombs of the 4th-century BCE decoration was applied to the walls in the form of painting, sometimes in painted relief. The commonest subject involving musical instruments and/or musicians are wedding and banquet scenes.<sup>5</sup> Later, during the 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE, tombs came to include urns and coffins with relief decoration indicative of thematic change: processions of city magistrates,<sup>6</sup> wedding ceremonies (showing processions or escorts of the bride and groom), or myths. During this time, one constant and significant element was the presence of weapons and noise-making items, like trumpets, which were used in war. These could have been displayed as actual objects of personal inventory or shown in depictions near the entrance of the chambers. In this period the presence of two musical instruments (conventionally called

3 The paper summarizes a larger survey by the author, of which publication is now in preparation.

4 The Roman *familia* was the basic political and social unit of ancient Rome. It included the members of the immediate family as well as grandparents and slaves who lived in the same household.

5 Blanck and Proietti 1986; Steingraber 1985, nos. 48

(Tomba Bruschi, Tarquinia); 34 (Tomba degli Hescanas, Orvieto); 33 (Tomba Gollini II, the ‘Tomba delle due Bighe’, Orvieto).

6 For urns, see Körte 1916, pls. 84.2, 85.3–4, 86.5, 92.5. For sarcophagi: Herbig 1952, nos. 5 (Boston); 83 (Vulci).

*cornu* and *lituus*, due to their resemblance to later Roman examples) was indicative of the personal wealth which the head of a family enjoyed.<sup>7</sup>

In Rome and in fact throughout Italy during the Republican and early Imperial era, funerary buildings with relief friezes, as well as urns and gravestones in the shape of altars,<sup>8</sup> continued an Etruscan tradition of depicting on friezes one of the most important gifts an individual could give to a community: games and gladiatorial displays. Such gifts were made either in celebration of important events in the life of the community or as part of funerary celebrations organized by a family. The Roman era is also one that sees the production of the first examples of gravestones and sarcophagi of musicians (both men and women), some of them depicted with representations of instruments and/or portraits.<sup>9</sup> Later, in the 2nd and 3rd centuries CE, almost every category of funerary monument period offers examples of interest to music archaeologists. The richest group comprises sarcophagi, especially those with more complex iconographic compositions, while gravestones and funerary altars continued to be decorated with musical instruments and portraits. Ornamental motifs were chosen from the thematic elements associated with the rich Dionysiac and Apollinic repertoires, but with prominence given to elements related to the afterlife. Therefore the presence of an individual type of instrument, such as panpipes, *tibiae* or cymbals, can rarely be interpreted as more than a convention of funerary iconography.

The original locations of the different kinds of monument do not follow general rules. They could be on display along the streets, in funerary precincts or chambers, or in *columbaria*.<sup>10</sup> The present context of placement is not always relevant, or indeed a reliable indicator of origin, due to the tendency to recycle stone monuments as building materials, a practice that was already current in Antiquity.

In the provinces there are specific funerary constructions, with a customized iconographical program that mainly comprises scenes of everyday life and funerary banquets, but which might also include untypical scenes such as games and subjects related to the main activities of a family or of the specific person commemorated: for example, in commerce, in navigation or in agriculture. In the Late Roman period examples are rather rare. Sarcophagi<sup>11</sup> remain our main source, showing examples of processions, domestic scenes and complex mythological schemata such as (often ambiguously) Orpheus singing to the animals.

Besides representations of musicians on gravestones, musicians' figures were used by artists as a symbol to indicate to the viewer which stories, scenes or particular moments

7 Alexandrescu 2008.

8 Alexandrescu 2010, cat. P21–24.

9 Pinette 1993, cat. no. 83.90.91; Vendries 1999, 296–303.

10 An eloquent example is provided by the wall paint-

ing in the *columbarium* under the Villa Doria Pamphili in Rome; Bendinelli 1941.

11 Reinsberg 2006, no. 115, pl. 103/3–4; Wegner 1966, cat. 83, pl. 112 c.

were being depicted, especially in scenes which combine more than one action (such as battle and sacrifice). The artist may have highlighted, for example, the most important figure in a scene, or represented a particular moment of the narrative by showing the musician playing or holding an instrument. Written sources make it clear that the instruments they name were capable of carrying such symbolic meaning.<sup>12</sup> In both images and texts it was probably assumed that the viewer or reader would understand the significance of the details. But since those meanings are no longer available to us, the true connotations of depicted instruments may remain obscure.

#### 4 Musicians and musical instruments

Based on the extant corpus of monuments it is possible to distinguish several categories of musical instruments and the people playing them. Mythological themes remain problematic, for the meanings they attracted in Antiquity are not yet clear; consequently any interpretation must be regarded as subjective.<sup>13</sup> ‘Brass’ instruments, which we assume to represent the *cornu*, *tuba* and *lituus* of the ancient writers, are shown in the context of processions of different kinds, of *funus*,<sup>14</sup> of battle, or in the arena.<sup>15</sup> The *tubicen* is also present in scenes of mythological battles, usually in one of the upper corners of the composition, on the principal face of a sarcophagus. Stringed instruments of various shapes are very common in compositions with a mythological theme. These instruments also appear on some of the so-called *vita Romana* sarcophagi, depicting scenes from everyday life chosen in order to emphasize the virtues and good life of the deceased.

Amongst the most popular musical instruments, exhibiting numerous variations in shape and mechanisms, are the double pipes or *tibiae*. Such instruments are depicted in sacrificial scenes, near the altar,<sup>16</sup> in banquet scenes, where they are usually accompanied by other musical instruments, but also in religious processions, real or mythical. One of the variants of *tibiae* (the Phrygian *tibiae*) is known to be part of the cult inventory of the Great Mother Goddess, Cybele, in which context it is depicted together with the tambourine and the cymbals. It is shown among other defining elements on funerary monuments of her priests.<sup>17</sup> For the Egyptian goddess Isis the typical instrument shown

12 For for a detailed summary of different instruments and circumstances, see Wille 1967, passim.

13 Zanker and Ewald 2004, 9–27.

14 The term *funus* describes the whole ensemble of actions and processions that go to make up the funeral ceremony. For the procession led by a musical ensemble shown on a late 1st century BCE relief from a funerary monument in Amiternum, Abruzzo, see Fleischhauer 1964, fig. 25.

15 For a procession of Cybele-worshippers shown on the lid of a sarcophagus of about 360 CE, see Reinsberg 2006, pl. 103.3–4

16 For a sacrificial scene on the sarcophagus of an army general in the Palazzo Ducale, Mantua, from about 170 CE, see Reinsberg 2006, pl. 1.2.

17 The musical instruments used are known from written evidence: for example, from inscriptions and

is the *sistrum*. Its presence on funerary monuments is largely interpreted as an indication of the relationship of the deceased person to the Egyptian cults.

When the deceased was a musician and his or her instrument is referred to in an accompanying inscription, the depiction benefits our discussion to the extent that it connects a particular type of instrument with a particular instrument name. On military musicians' gravestones, which form an especially important category of evidence, inscriptions and visual representations may even identify the individual's name, rank or position. Funerary monuments of military musicians thus form a good starting point for identifying types of instruments used in the army, especially trumpets, since epitaphs from the late 1st century CE onwards mention the function of the deceased. On the other hand, it can be observed that funerary inscriptions of civilian trumpeters usually do not mention their profession.<sup>18</sup>

One should also bear in mind that each customized gravestone was uniquely made, and shaped and decorated according to diverse circumstances. The clients' tastes, the skill of the artist, regional fashions, trends in design and iconographical schemata, all no doubt contributed to the appearance of a monument, while even the seemingly straightforward representation of a musician on a gravestone accompanied by an inscription mentioning his or her profession has to be tested by means of comparison with further iconographic sources, in order to identify the specific shape of an instrument with its name.

Funerary monuments of players of wind instruments either show the instrument being held, but not played, or the instrument alone is represented, more often revealing only its essential identifying elements. By contrast, for players of stringed instruments the situation is somehow reversed, in that, at least on the monuments which we know, the deceased person is depicted either playing or preparing to play.<sup>19</sup> A stringed instrument is rarely shown on its own, but is more often seen together with the other instruments that the deceased played.

from the description of Catullus' *carmen* 63, 19–23 (1st century BCE). For an example of a funerary relief of a priest of Cybele, see Fleisshauer 1964, no. 40.

18 For depictions without mention of the instrument in the associated inscription, see Pinette 1993, cat. no. 40–41, 83, 90; Alexandrescu 2010, cat. G30. For inscriptions without a depiction of the mentioned

musical instrument in the associated imagery: CIL III 10501.

19 For funerary monuments (mostly gravestones) of musicians that played wind instruments see Alexandrescu 2010, cat. G30–40, 43–49; for probably civilians: cat. G56–59; for grave monuments of musicians playing stringed instruments: Vendries 1999.

## 5 The meanings of the images and the roles of musicians and musical instruments portrayed

The importance which the Romans attached to the decoration of funerary monuments is known from several written sources, the best known of which is to be found in the writings of Petronius.<sup>20</sup> Several aspects may impact on the meanings we may read into such decoration.

The wealth of the deceased person together with his/her (usually his) social and sometimes political status, could all be expressed through images representing the spectacles and gladiatorial games which he/she had financed.<sup>21</sup> Since the number of musicians a family had been accustomed to hire was a further sign of its wealth and status, this too could be referenced, and it seems that it was. We often see, for example, groups of three musicians playing the same type of instrument: perhaps three *cornicines* (*cornu* players) or three *tubicines* (*tuba* players).<sup>22</sup>

Since at least the middle of the 1st century CE, *cornicines* are depicted performing in the arena, either alone or together with *tubicines*, accompanying the gladiatorial games; or with *tubicines* on the funerary monuments of municipal officials who had organized such games even in the 1st century BCE, before the amphitheatres became commonplace in city architecture. In Etruscan depictions of the 4th to 2nd centuries BCE the curved trumpet later designated *cornu* is often shown together with the straight trumpet *lituus*, typically playing a role in the so-called processions of magistrates. The proposition that the representation of these musicians must be indicative of status is confirmed by finds of actual instruments in the graves of wealthy Etruscans.<sup>23</sup> Later, the *cornu* was used by the Romans to signal the movements of standards and banners in military situations. Together with other instruments, mainly *tuba* and *bucina* (another curved trumpet), the *cornu* call in military camps was a part of the *classicum* signal ordered by the commanding officer. This call sounded every evening and occasionally at other times, as when the commanding officer issued orders to the entire unit. It is clear that this represents the adoption of an older, Etruscan tradition, where such signalling had been closely associated with the duties of the commanding officer, the *imperator*.

Representations of processions of magistrates and other officials are confined to Etruscan, late Republican or early Augustan monuments. Their purpose seems to have been to emphasize the political status of the deceased person as officer or magistrate. One difference in iconography is shown by the accompanying musicians who are depicted. Conventionally termed *cornicines* and *liticines* (*lituus* players) these musicians provided

20 Petronius, *Cena Trimalchionis* 71–72. Mid-1st century CE.

21 For the reliefs of the tomb of the *sevir* Lusius Storax, see Ronke 1987, cat. no. 2. For the procession with

musicians on a funerary monument from Pompeii, 20–50 CE, see Köhne and Ewigleben 2000, fig. 32.

22 Alexandrescu 2010, 101.

23 Alexandrescu 2008.

the musical accompaniment for different ceremonies and processions of the Etruscans, while in Roman times they were depicted playing together on only one representation of a *prothesis* (funerary procession).<sup>24</sup> The two instruments played a role representing the Etruscan magistrates: their players were included in the magistrates' staff, as were the *lictors* (the attending officers who carried the ceremonial devices known as *fascēs*). On the other hand, only *tubicines* are to be seen on Roman funerary monuments, and then only in the context of circus ceremonies, the *pompa circensis*.<sup>25</sup>

Processions led by brass-instrument players are to be found on only three monuments: on the frieze of the Temple of Apollo Sosianus in Rome, on the small frieze of the Arch of Trajan in Benevento<sup>26</sup> and on the lid of a late Roman sarcophagus from Rome.<sup>27</sup> On Italic tombs of city magistrates we find only the *pompa circensis* represented, in which the portrayal of musicians bears similarities to that of musicians shown in the triumphal procession, or *pompa triumphalis*.<sup>28</sup> A triumphal procession consisted of three parts: the part featuring the plunder and captives; the part featuring the victor, followed by sacrificial animals and by officials, and finally the part featuring the army or representative elements of it. According to the texts, musicians seem to have accompanied all three parts. It is unclear what each of the three groups was meant to play; but it is conceivable that the *cornicines* and *tubicines* walked alongside the soldiers, the *tubicines* were stationed at the beginning of the procession as well as with the sacrificial animals, with the victor, and with the *fercula*: the carrying platform bearing the booty and prisoners. It cannot be concluded from the evidence whether the procession was accompanied only by the official musicians of the city or whether – at least for the third part – there were military musicians as well. Nevertheless the *tubicen* is the musician otherwise connected most closely with war, victory and triumph,<sup>29</sup> both in real and in mythological representation.<sup>30</sup>

Wealth, epitomised by contentment and the enjoyment of life, was represented through other iconographic choices on funerary reliefs. One of these choices was to

- 24 For the relief from Amiternum (end of the 1st century BCE) see Franchi 1966; Fleischhauer 1964, fig. 25. Now in the museum at L'Aquila, it shows the funerary procession led by a musical ensemble. For the relief from the funerary monument of the Haterii (Vatican, Museo Gregoriano Profano, end of the 1st century CE): Sinn and Freyberger 1996, no 5, pl. 8.
- 25 For the relief from a funerary monument in Pompeii (Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, 1st century CE), see M. Junkelmann in: Köhne and Ewigleben 2000, 72 with figs. 32, 58, 59.
- 26 For a description of the musical instruments and further literature see Alexandrescu 2010, cat. S14 and S9.

- 27 Rome, basilica of San Lorenzo Fuori le Mura, ca. 360 CE. Reinsberg 2006, no. 115, pl. 103/3–4.
- 28 Künzl 1988, 14–18; Alexandrescu 2010, 100–102.
- 29 For an athlete and *tubicen* (trumpeter) shown in the act of performing, on a fragment from the sarcophagus of an athlete, second half of the 3rd century CE, see Amedick 1991, pl. 86.2.
- 30 Relevant topoi include actual combat, for example on sarcophagi bearing scenes of battle, and the imagined fights and contests that are to be seen in depictions of Amazonomachia, Achilles and Penthesilea. For imagined fights and contests, see for example one 'garland sarcophagus' in Ostia (1st half of the 2nd century CE): Herdejünger 1996, no. 50.



insert an image of a banquet or scenes typical of daily life, involving such additional persons as ensemble musicians (playing the panpipes, *tibiae*, tambourine, *scabellum*,<sup>31</sup> sometimes a stringed instrument) and dancers.<sup>32</sup> Such elements are also to be found in the interior decoration of Roman houses.<sup>33</sup> The Roman citizen had to fulfill and demonstrate the fulfilment of certain civic duties and virtues, and this too could be expressed. One such aspect could be exemplified by the so-called general's (i. e. army commander's) sarcophagus or *Feldhernsarkophag*, of which a fine example is preserved in the Palazzo Ducale in Mantua.<sup>34</sup> There the deceased is presented in three scenes that we suppose are meant to be representative of key elements of his life: performing a sacrifice, attending his wedding and acting as a merciful general. The same virtues (*virtus, fides, clementia*) could also be expressed through mythological subject matter.<sup>35</sup> One of the most eloquent cases of a musical instrument with persistent mythological association is the *tuba*. Since Hellenistic times this straight, trumpet-like instrument had been a symbol of warfare and, *in extenso*, of battle, of athletic contests and of victory. Its Greek equivalent was the *salpinx* – characterized by the hollow, globular shape of its bell and depicted on many red-figured vases where it is shown being played by the Greeks, Amazons and Barbarians. Later Hellenistic tradition passed down a slightly different instrument, of several parts attached by rings and with a more or less conical bell. Such instruments are shown in representations of mythological scenes, historical battles, and on *tropaia*.<sup>36</sup> The Romans seem to have adopted them (in their Hellenistic form) from one or another of the Mediterranean peoples, perhaps by way of the Etruscans, who had apparently borrowed it from a similar source earlier. The famous 'Tyrrhena tuba' much praised in the ancient sources and an instrument considered by Roman authors to be an Etruscan invention, is in my opinion a different one whose Etruscan name is not known. Some modern scholars call it a *lituus*, an ancient Roman word, but the instrument is clearly

31 An ancient percussion musical instrument consisting of two metal plates hinged together, and so fastened to the performer's foot (like a sandal) that they could be struck together as a rhythmical accompaniment.

32 For a standing figure flanked by a *tibicen* (*tibia*-player) on a gravestone from Matrica (Százhalombatta), Hungary, 120–150 CE, see Topál 1981, fig. 10.

33 For the gravestone from Matrica (Százhalombatta, Matrica Museum, 120–150 CE) see Topál 1981, 98 no. 1, fig. 10; for the funerary monument from Intercisa (Budapest, Hungarian National Museum, 2nd century CE): Barkóczi et al. 1954, no. 103.

34 The corpus of known examples was dated to around 170 CE and includes a range of scenes showing the four main virtues (*virtus, clementia, pietas* and *con-*

*cordia*) together with a general's principal achievements in relation to family, gods and community: see Reinsberg 2006, 19; Muth 2004. For the example in Mantua see Reinsberg 2006, no. 33. Also illustrative is one 'column sarcophagus' (sarcophagus with columns) in the Villa Albani; Reinsberg 2006, no. 123) where the very small figure of a *tibia*-player or *tibicen* completes the musical elements of the composition. The composition also includes a scene of sacrifice being performed by the deceased and his wife, as a manifestation of their *virtus* and *pietas*.

35 Zanker and Ewald 2004, 37–61.

36 *Tropaia* were monuments set up to commemorate a victory. Typically they take the shape of a tree, sometimes with a pair of arm-like branches (or, in later times, a pair of stakes set crosswise) upon which is hung the armour of a defeated and dead foe.

pre-Roman and its origin is disputed. The *tuba* is shown in representations of both historical battles and mythological conflicts. It can be found, for instance, in depictions of the famous Greek scene detailing the discovery of Achilles among the daughters of king Lycomedes, on the island of Scyros.<sup>37</sup> There, the story goes, the future hero is dressed as a girl and hidden by his mother Thetis. Intending to find him and bring him to the Trojan War, Odysseus and his companions offer presents, including some weapons, to the king and the princesses. After Odysseus' companions give a signal (a battle call) on the *tuba*, the king's daughters are then asked to choose from among the gifts something for themselves. On hearing the *tuba*, Achilles, still in his woman's attire, picks out the shield and the sword from among the presents and thus reveals himself to be a man and a warrior. This subject was a favourite theme of artists for almost a thousand years, between the 6th century BCE and the 5th and even 6th century CE. Moreover, it decorated the most diverse objects; from painted walls and mosaic floors, to sarcophagi, silver plates, pottery and glassware. Although the scenic compositions vary greatly, the figures of Achilles, Odysseus and the trumpeter, are always present.

The decoration of sarcophagi also embraced contemporary topics. Successful athletes, for example, would commission depictions from athletic contests. Well represented among surviving examples are scenes showing the moment when the winner was announced, a moment which we know was preceded by a tune played by the *tubicen*.<sup>38</sup>

Details of scenes that include a *tubicen* indicate that their iconographical compositions were partially or completely based on earlier models. It seems that the human figures in such scenes could be interchanged, since examples include individuals wearing clothes or armor, indicating gestures, or adopting body positions that are identical to those seen in some other representations. Likewise, the mythical battle scenes on some sarcophagi, depicting subjects like Achilles and Penthesilea, and the Amazons, were made using the same general compositional elements found in the scenes on other sarcophagi showing historical battles, whereas the figure of the musician was sometimes taken from a different tradition: for example those shown on sportsmen's sarcophagi.

The customized compositions of the late 2nd and 3rd-century 'Great Battle Sarcophagi', such as the Portonaccio and Ludovisi, are special cases.<sup>39</sup> On these the musicians – who are always placed in the upper part of the composition – point out the

37 Alexandrescu 2007, 101–110; Rogge 1995.

38 A very detailed depiction of the *tuba* can be seen on a fragment of a sarcophagus of an athlete (Vatican, Museo Chiaramonti, 2nd half of the 3rd century CE): Amedick 1991, cat. no. 276, pl. 86.2. For other examples of sarcophagi of successful sportsmen, see Amedick 1991, 88–90; Rumscheid 2000, 68–70; cat.

no. 94, 99, 102 a, c; 107, 139.

39 For the Portonaccio battle sarcophagus (Rome, Museo Nazionale Romano, 180–190 CE) see Alexandrescu 2010, cat. P38; for the Great Ludovisi Sarcophagus (Rome, Musei Nazionale Romano, ca. 260 CE): Lachenal 1983, cat. 25; Alexandrescu 2010, cat. P36.

principal actor in the ‘story’ and the particular moments to be emphasized: the victorious *imperator*, the victorious Roman army. *Cornicines* it seems were never depicted in mythological scenes, and their depiction in battle scenes, especially on sarcophagi, indicates that such scenes were meant to represent real events. Moreover, the *cornicen*, being exclusive to Roman iconography, can be taken to indicate that a particular battle scene is, for example, not Hellenistic. By depicting real contemporary instruments, along with contemporary items of clothing and weapons, it was possible for the artist to link an unspecific scenic composition to a real and specific cultural milieu. In other words, the presence of the *cornicen* with his instrument and a Roman military standard identifies an otherwise generic battle scene as Roman. In sum, in Roman iconography the *cornu*, unlike the *tuba*, seems to serve a purely functional role, with no mythological or other connotations. Significantly, this also seems true of its treatment by Roman authors.

For music archaeologists, ancient descriptions of the Graeco-Roman myths can also be a useful source of evidence in trying to identify depicted instruments and explain their functions in more detail. Artists tend to portray a musician’s torso, hands and head adopting more or less standardized positions. Application of the methodology of iconological analysis, especially to representations with similar or identical subjects, makes it possible to identify musicians or musical scenes represented even on fragmentary reliefs. For example, the presence of musicians can point to the overall subject matter, such as a battle or a particular myth, or even to a specific moment within the depicted story: a siege, perhaps, or a victory. This is an important asset in interpreting scenes where several successive events may be summarized in one representation.

One further aspect of Roman life in which music played a significant role was education.<sup>40</sup> In the Late Roman period the importance of emphasizing to the viewing public the educational level and general knowledge that an individual had attained seems to have been quite significant, judging from the number of monuments with depictions of men (and also, albeit rarely, of women) holding a scroll, known as a *volumen*, a sign not only of a person’s ability to read and write but also of his/her intellectual and philosophical activity. Among women the evidence for educational achievement seems to have been more commonly expressed through musical activity, especially the ability to play a stringed instrument. However, there are also examples of men playing the same.<sup>41</sup> Among the existing examples mentioned here are the portrait on a sarcophagus in Civita Castellana of a young boy shown together with the Muses, depicted as virtuous *citharoedus*<sup>42</sup> and the group of sarcophagi with portraits of the so-called ‘ménage

40 On the differences and the disputes regarding this aspect see Delattre 1998, 230–234; Vendries 1999, 327–333.

41 For the grave stone of M. Cincius Nigrinus from Selymbria, see Pfuhl and Möbius 1977, no. 306.

42 The deceased – a young boy, according to analysis of the skeletal remains – is depicted as one of the nine Muses or as Apollo. Museo Archeologico dell’Agro Falisco, mid-2nd century CE: Zanker and Ewald 2004, 239–240.

d'intellectuals':<sup>43</sup> the man as philosopher, the wife playing a lyre, a lute or a some other complex stringed instrument. On the 'sarcophagus of P. Caecilius Vallianus,' so called for its later owner, the composition on the principal face combines a particularly rich and detailed banquet scene, including a portrait of the wife playing the lute, accompanied by a *tibicina*.<sup>44</sup>

How literally the depictions on these funerary monuments reflect reality – indeed, in what regard the ancients held such representations – is something that, at least within the period under study, underwent changes. Thus on the early monuments, the deceased is shown frontally, in full or three-quarters view, as if posing for a photograph in a studied attitude while focused on the viewer and not on other elements or characters in the field of representation. The image is intelligible to the viewer allowing scope for observation of the details and specific elements which have been chosen as characteristics of the deceased. Most of the monuments of musicians conform to this scheme.

On early monuments in regions such as Gallia Belgica, where the portrait of the deceased is placed within his/her family while simultaneously engaged in acts which represent his/her own field of work, both subject and family are presented facing the viewer.<sup>45</sup> In the ensuing centuries, the interaction between the characters in the scene is emphasized; indeed, scholars often remark on the 'joy of narrative' that characterizes this region and time. On sarcophagi and monuments found in Rome and throughout Italy, aspects of family life, and private life, are also rendered thematically. In the north-western provinces of the Empire, the difference is that the deceased is shown positioned in the middle of the group. Clearly, in such cases family life is being emphasized. During the second half of the 2nd century a transformation of 'visual language' takes place, resulting in numerous representations of the funerary banquet. In addition, a change can be observed in the scheme of the funerary architecture, which becomes a standardized and simple façade, without ornament, in which the benches of the *stibadium* form an integral and prominent part. The trend of the funerary milieu therefore becomes one of introspection, in which it becomes a place of commemoration for the family. In Gallia Belgica, on the contrary, the monument continues to address a public audience, even while the family theme becomes emphasized. The audience thus becomes, in a sense, a passive participant in *scènes de genre*, an indoors theme, in which the portrayal of a musician provides imagined sound and atmosphere. Whether in mythological compositions or in the series portraying the 'intellectual household,' it is a scene which the viewer is invited to observe but not to participate in.

43 Marrou 1964, 210.

44 The main person depicted – the deceased on the *kline* – seems to have been a woman, judging by her breasts, and yet she is represented in portraiture as if she were a man (Vatican, Museo Gregoriano

Profano, ca. 270 CE). See Amedick 1991, no. 286, pl. 15; for the stringed instrument see Vendries 1999, 128–130.

45 Rose 2007.

## 6 Sound in funerary reliefs, and soundscapes of societies

The narrative strategy of each picture is usually to combine several successive events into one scene, in which the differences between scenes and the identification of the precise moment is in each case made possible through the figure(s) of the musician(s), especially where they are shown playing their instrument(s). Naturally, their presence also gives an acoustic dimension to the representation. One example of this in practice can be observed on the official (historical) reliefs in Rome in which is shown a sacrificial ceremony, the *suovetaurilia*. This ceremony begins with a parade of the sacrificial animals and the sacrifice of incense and wine, then continues with the sacrifice of the animals. Musicians are at the head of the procession, in effect leading the ceremony. The emperor, the principal figure in the scene, is the focal point at all stages. However, in scene LIII of Trajan's Column in Rome he is shown standing near a small altar, celebrating the first, bloodless sacrifice. The fact that this particular sacrifice is the one taking place is marked by the figure of the *tibicen*, and its stages are indicated by the particular participants represented: the musicians leading the sacrificial animals while playing their instruments, and the persons who are to perform the sacrifice bearing the tools of their office.

Perhaps surprisingly, the moment of sacrifice of the animals is not itself depicted; indeed, it is a scene rarely found in any Roman representation. The most likely reason is that ancient viewers, being familiar with the structure of the ceremony, needed only a few symbolic details in order to identify the relief's intended meaning. For our present purposes, it is also important to note that the musicians shown playing instruments are always a part of the ceremony. From an iconographical point of view, they offer both a spatial reference (marching as they did at the head of the parade) and a chronological one (since their playing and processing inevitably transcends a mere moment in time), thereby allowing us to identify those episodes in the ceremony that are combined in the depiction. The composition of this scene, in this case depicted on an official monument in Rome, can also be found on monuments in Rome's provinces, such as in northern Italy and in Britannia.

In Rome and throughout Italy, as well as in some of the remoter provinces of the Empire, some funerary monuments bear representations of musical instruments that are of such high quality that they even contribute valuable details to our interpretation of excavated instruments. The especially large number and excellent condition of the depictions known from Italy may partly be explained by the long history of research there and partly by medieval and later peoples' interest in and awareness of such monuments that still survived. On the other hand, in other Roman provinces epigraphy attracted still more interest amongst scholars and collectors. Comparative analysis of these two sets of evidence, images and texts, is still needed in order to appreciate fully the different

viewpoints that they offer.

It should be noted however, that although chosen from similar thematic elements, the scenes may differ in the way figures as well as depicted instruments are structured within the overall composition. In most cases the instruments are those which seem to have been common to the geographical region where the monument was erected or where the artist came from;<sup>46</sup> that is, unless the choices were determined by the client (in other words, by the person commissioning the monument, and for reasons peculiar to that individual). When groups of musicians are found in mythological compositions, their instruments correspond to those depicted in real banquet scenes, on gravestones and mosaic floors.<sup>47</sup> The presence of the musician(s) in this case can be regarded as fulfilling the traditional requirements by showing the observance of the proper procedures: for sacrifice, for military discipline, and for any other activity with an established acoustic component. Musical sounds announced a procession's location as it progressed along a street, becoming louder as it got closer. One practical effect of this sound-making was that the sounds themselves helped all who heard them to be aware that the procession was in progress, and thereby to avoid accidental injury. Different tunes also marked and identified the different components of the event. The same can surely be imagined for manoeuvres on the field of battle and for day-to-day life in military camps.

## 7 Conclusion

The artistic depiction of music and musicians in funerary reliefs thus seems to have been used to indicate and often publicly celebrate the status, power and wealth of individuals and families, while the artistic conventions that they followed were more or less common in pre-Roman and Roman times. Standard forms of representation were used, paradoxically, to customize ancient iconography, in order to show due respect for the traditional requirements of specific ceremonies. They would also have conferred a new and original quality upon the relief itself, according to the particular way in which the artist composed and executed the representations. Given the subject of this volume, it is naturally tempting to see the quality of the sounds that are implicit in such scenes as a potential source of information about Roman society, and to wonder how far such sounds may have impacted upon, and may have been impacted by, official policy and legislation. From time to time we hear Roman authors reveal, for example, how high levels of sound emanating from processions and other public acts could be considered acceptable or unacceptable, according to circumstance and viewpoint. Unfortunately

46 A similar situation has been revealed for the painters of the Greek vases. See Béliis 1999, 210.

47 E.g. Kranz 1999, cat. 72, pl. 52.3.

the extent of official regulation, if any, is unclear from the surviving records. However, one might usefully ask whether the musical iconography of funerary monuments could tell us something equally useful about the political effect such monuments and their auditory implications had, or were intended to have, on the perception of viewers – since these would have included not only participants in family ceremonies but also the public at large. At the very least, we see sculptors using attainment and accomplishment as a means of publicly establishing identities and reputations, and by their compositions revealing music and sound to be among the most potent and favoured *topoi* appropriate to this image-building process. By the very permanence of their choice of medium too, marble, it is clear that they intend to project such image far beyond the familiar, transitory Roman present to posterity: a posterity of which, as it happens, we ourselves form part. It is therefore remarkable, and perhaps significant, how even for us some of their depictions bring the past so much to life, and draw us so effectively back towards their world. This is particularly true of those images that combine successive scenes into narratives, and those where musicians are shown in the very act of playing their instruments. Like silent films and comic strips, imagination lends them a virtual acoustic; and the more we learn of the instruments and music that they portray the more vivid these multimedia impressions become. However, for the present, our common heritage remains highly fragmented, and although the images may sometimes appear to offer suggestive clues, in the absence of written testimony they need to be interpreted with a critical eye as well as an imaginative ear.

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## Music and Political Space in Ancient Egypt

### Summary

In Ancient Egypt, music was an important element of the public space, structuring military parades, royal festivals and religious processions. At the same time, all these settings can be understood as political space, inasmuch as they always served political communication as well. The present paper investigates how music and musical instruments were employed to this effect and how political realities and their changes are reflected in the choices involved.

Keywords: ritual; symbolism; political change; ceremony; dance; instruments; Hyksos; Tutankhamun (tomb)

Im alten Ägypten nahm Musik durch die Strukturierung von militärischen Paraden, königlichen Festen und religiösen Prozessionen eine wichtige Rolle im öffentlichen Raum ein. Alle diese Situationen können gleichzeitig auch als politische Räume verstanden werden, da sie immer auch zur politischen Kommunikation dienten. Der vorliegende Artikel untersucht, wie Musik und Musikinstrumente zu diesem Zweck verwendet wurden und wie politische Wirklichkeit sowie ihre Veränderungen sich in deren Auswahl widerspiegeln.

Keywords: Ritual; Symbolismus; politische Veränderungen; Zeremonie; Tanz; Instrumente; Hyksos; Tutanchamun (Grab)

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To paraphrase the famous Chinese author Lü Bu We in his *Spring and Autumn Annals* I.VI.3, knowing the music of a country means knowing its customs and its ways of thinking.<sup>1</sup> Ultimately, he asserts, the type of music practised indicates whether a state is in good order or has become decadent. At the same time, with harmonious music it is possible to incite the populace to righteousness. Thus, in Lü Bu We's opinion, political and social change is intimately linked to music and musical change, pertaining both to the effects and to the causes of this change.

As Lü Bu We's text was a major inspiration for the workshop *Sound, Political Space and Political Condition*, which in turn formed the starting-point for this volume, it seems appropriate to wonder what the Ancient Egyptians would have thought about this relationship. Unfortunately, texts like this are not known from Ancient Egypt. However, sources on Egyptian music are amply represented, and these do show certain links with the political sphere. This paper will explore some of these links.

The first and foremost instance in which music played a major role in political space was royal representation, more especially in the context of military music. Most of the sources for this date from the New Kingdom, because in this period it was customary to decorate temples with scenes of victorious battles<sup>2</sup> as well as processions and military parades.<sup>3</sup> Other such scenes come from the tombs of high officials. The instruments that dominate in this context are, perhaps not surprisingly, trumpets and large barrel-shaped drums.<sup>4</sup> The character of these instruments certainly fits a military setting because of the large volumes of sound that they can produce and which make them ideal for communication on a battle field. Also, the sounds, particularly of drums, can easily be imagined stimulating the aggressiveness of one's own troops while at the same time inspiring fear in the enemy.<sup>5</sup> But while drums are shown in processions of soldiers, they do not actually figure on the battlefield.<sup>6</sup> Therefore the sentence "I spent (three?) years striking as a drummer every day" in the famous inscription of Emhab of Edfu,<sup>7</sup> describing his military exploits as a follower of one of the kings of the 17th dynasty, is just a poetic way to describe a hard and continuous struggle,<sup>8</sup> but it does not mean that Emhab himself actually was a drummer. As his titles *ir̄-p' t ḥ3.tl-'w* and *im.ṯ-r' pr wr* indicate, Emhab was

1 Wilhelm 2006 [1928], 92–93.

2 Heinz 2001.

3 A good example would be the depiction of the Opet Feast in Luxor Temple, see Survey 1994.

4 Hickmann 1946; Hickmann 1961b, 75; Manniche 1975, 6–9, 31–35.

5 On the importance of drumming in cross-cultural comparison, see Störk 1993.

6 Importantly remarked by Klotz 2010, 233.

7 Text: Černý 1969; Helck 1975, 97–98; the correct interpretation of the crucial passage first in Grimm 1989, most recently Morenz 2005; Klotz 2010, esp. 231–233 (the latter, with new photos, epigraphic drawing and complete bibliography in note 1, can be considered the definitive edition).

8 As proposed by Grimm, *contra* Störk. On the details of the reading see Klotz 2010, 231–232.

in fact a nomarch<sup>9</sup> of Edfu and also a great steward of the residence, i. e., a member of the uppermost elite, not simply a military musician.

## 1 Music and political change

In terms of musical change, it is unfortunate that only tiny remains of battle scenes are preserved from the time before the New Kingdom,<sup>10</sup> so few, in fact, that sometimes it is even assumed that this type of scene did not exist in the older periods. While battle scenes certainly did exist, the surviving remnants are so meagre that it is impossible to know whether they also would have shown musicians, and if so, which types of instruments they would have played. In the New Kingdom, significantly, not only are Egyptian soldiers shown, but Nubian battalions can also be seen integrated into the imperial army of Egypt. Some types of large sub-Saharan drums might even have been introduced together with these persons,<sup>11</sup> but that cannot be proven.

In terms of music reflecting political change, the classic example from Ancient Egypt would be the introduction by the Hyksos of the lute and the lyre from the Near East to Egypt in the Second Intermediate Period. The Hyksos, i. e., the *ḥkꜣ-ḥꜣ.wt* “rulers of the foreign countries” were the descendants of immigrants and prisoners of war from Palestine who had come to Egypt in the Middle Kingdom. When the power of the native Egyptian 13th dynasty waned, they assumed control and ruled the country for almost a century, from their capital Auaris in the delta.<sup>12</sup> When they were finally defeated by Ahmose, the first ruler of the 18th dynasty and thus the founder of the New Kingdom, the Egyptians were happy to retain many of the goods and manners introduced by them.<sup>13</sup> This is true for useful commodities like the horse and chariot but also for more, so to speak, pleasurable things like the lute and the lyre. While there is no way to prove it conclusively, it is to be expected that, by then, not only would the foreign instruments have made their way into mainstream Egyptian culture, but also foreign music including, of course, any rhythms and melodies associated with them.<sup>14</sup> Yet, despite the change, there is no ancient text bemoaning a loss of true Egyptian music. Ironically, this gap is filled

9 I. e. the ruler of a *nome*, one of the 42 or so (the number varies over time) counties into which Egypt was divided for administrative reasons. Next to the king and the vizier, a *nomarch* would thus have been among the most powerful persons within Egyptian society.

10 Schulz 2002.

11 Compare Manniche 1975, 7–8; Brack and Brack 1980, pl. 47, 51.

12 Modern Tell el-Dab'a, which has been excavated since 1966 by the Österreichisches Archäologisches

Institut under M. Bietak (and since 2010, I. Forstner-Müller).

13 Most probably most of the foreign population stayed in Egypt and all that happened was the execution of the Hyksos ruler and, at most, a few other high-ranking officials. From the archaeological evidence, it seems rather unlikely that the whole population was expelled, as some publications have assumed.

14 The whole problem is treated in von Lieven 2008.

by Curt Sachs in his 1921 study on Ancient Egyptian music. He moralizes about it in a way rather reminiscent of Lü Bu We:

When the curtain that falls over Egyptian life at the end of the 12th dynasty rises again towards the beginning of the New Kingdom, the picture has changed. The immense wave of Asiatic culture that floods Egypt at the beginning of the Middle Kingdom has swept away the old national instrumentarium, and with it native musical tastes. The calmness, mildness and simplicity of the old Tonkunst [musical aesthetic] are gone. [...] Full, shrill and noisy, the music surges. [...] The heady, sensual music of the Asians has taken possession of the Egyptian soul.<sup>15</sup>

While Sachs' assessment implies that this Asian influence is utterly decadent and that the Egyptians had succumbed to some alien force polluting and destroying their national character, the Ancient Egyptians themselves may have felt quite otherwise: that by parading foreign musicians during Egyptian festivals they proved their dominance over all foreign countries. Elsewhere musicians and their precious instruments figure in royal lists of war booty<sup>16</sup> and are mentioned in religious texts praising the power of Egyptian deities over other countries.<sup>17</sup> While the booty lists are preserved for states in Palestine, the prominent role of foreigners and foreign music in the cult is particularly visible for Nubia. The reason for this is probably religious and symbolic rather than political. It is true that Nubia always had close ties to Egypt, but recent finds like the Elkab inscription which speaks of a Nubian invasion of Egypt up to Elkab,<sup>18</sup> and the Franco-Swiss mission's findings in Kerma,<sup>19</sup> seem to make it clear that Nubia before the New Kingdom was no less a sovereign state with a strong culture of its own than were the Palestinian city-states which were also strongly influenced by Egypt as early as the Middle Kingdom.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, the reason for the dominance of Nubia in certain religious contexts is rather to be found in its geographical position. Nubia was apparently

15 Sachs 1921, 9–10: „Wenn der Vorhang, der mit dem Ende der 12. Dynastie über das ägyptische Leben fällt, gegen den Anfang des Neuen Reiches wieder aufgeht, hat sich das Bild geändert. Die gewaltige Woge asiatischer Kultur, die im Ausgange des Mittleren Reiches Ägypten überflutet, hat das alte nationale Instrumentarium, und damit die volkseigene Musik fortgeschwemmt. Ruhe, Milde und Einfachheit der alten Tonkunst sind dahin. [...] Voll, schrill und lärmend rauscht die Musik. [...] Von der Seele des Ägypters hat die aufpeitschende, sinnentrunkenen Tonkunst des Asiaten Besitz ergriffen“ (translation A. von Lieven).

16 Helck 1955, 1305; Helck 1961, 38.

17 Gauthier 1931, 189–190; Survey 1940, pl. 203 (Medinet Habu), 213 (Ramesseum); Maher-Taha and Loyrette 1979, pl. VI; Verhoeven and Derchain 1985, 16, 22, D, M, pl. 2, 5; Darnell 1995, 64; von Lieven 2002a, 501, note 40; von Lieven 2008, 157–158.

18 N. d. G. Davies 2003; W. V. Davies 2003; W. V. Davies 2010, 223–240.

19 Bonnet 1986; Bonnet 2000.

20 Helck 1971; von Lieven 2006a; especially on music, Hickmann 1961a.

seen as an extension of Punt<sup>21</sup> in the south-east, which in itself was thought to be the land of the gods because of its products as well as because it lies in the direction of the rising sun and stars.

This is certainly the reason why Nubian dance and music figure prominently in, for example, a song from the Mut Ritual.<sup>22</sup> Still, the ability to procure such musicians for the performances would also have been a political statement. One also needs to keep in mind that in Ancient Egypt, religion and politics were always closely linked, in so far as rituals are always presumed to help the king maintain his power. This will be explored further below.

A particularly striking case needs to be mentioned; the presence of so-called ‘Giant Lyres’ during the Amarna Period, in scenes from the temple of the then new ‘monotheistic’ god Aton.<sup>23</sup> They are always shown played by what appear to be male musicians in peculiar dresses, possibly foreigners and/or transvestites. Their eyes are always blindfolded with a piece of cloth.<sup>24</sup> Not only is the attire of the musicians unique to this period, but so also is their instrument. While the deeper significance of this is as mysterious as almost every other aspect of the Amarna period, it is certainly a good example of a particular type of music being intimately associated with a particular political and religious situation. Was this association so strong that the Giant Lyre was shunned by later periods; that is, shunned because it represented the music of the despised Amarna period? After all, all the other musical instruments found in Amarna-period depictions already existed in Egypt before, and survived later. Only the Giant Lyre was newly introduced to Egypt under Akhenaten, and it disappears immediately thereafter.

At any rate, the increase in foreign musical elements can certainly be regarded as a sign of the expansion of the Egyptian empire, particularly in the New Kingdom. However, similar trends are to be seen in later periods, when Egypt herself came once again under the dominance of foreigners. This is particularly clear for the Graeco-Roman period, when, again, a huge influx of new instruments is attested. Moreover, from this time even some of the music itself is known, from Greek papyri with musical notation.<sup>25</sup>

This shows that it is not safe to equate the presence of foreign musical elements with either a weak position of the nation (or at least of its native population) or, to the contrary, with a strong expansionist empire. Of course, no-one would assume Lü Bu We’s criteria to be valid tools for cultural studies today. Yet, the quote from Sachs shows that, at least in the early 20th century, this same way of thinking was indeed being applied, even if unwittingly.

21 Probably to be located in the region of modern Somalia, see Meeks 2003.

22 Verhoeven and Derchain 1985, 16, 22, D, M, pl. 2, 5; Quack 2010b, 351–353 (and 357 for the date of the composition).

23 Manniche 1975, 88–91; Manniche 2000, esp. 234–235.

24 Manniche 1978.

25 Pöhlmann 1970; Neubecker 1977, 153; von Lieven 2002a, 501–502.

Of course, there is little to be gained from ridiculing our scholarly predecessor's work either. It seems much more interesting to consider where else in the political sphere the Egyptians themselves might have used music, in perhaps less obvious and uncharacteristic ways.

## 2 Music and political meaning: the instruments of Tutankhamun

A good point of departure for such an approach seems to be the tomb of Tutankhamun,<sup>26</sup> one of the few royal tombs to have been almost completely preserved, without the loss of too many objects to either tomb robbers or the effects of humidity in the ground. Indeed, in this tomb some musical instruments have been found (Fig. 1). In the preface to her comprehensive publication within the framework of the Griffith Institute's Tutankhamun Tomb Series, Lise Manniche writes concerning their selection "The choice appears to be arbitrary."<sup>27</sup> But is that really so? And if it is not arbitrary, why were just these few types of instruments chosen?

As it happens, all of the instruments in the tomb occur in pairs. Most famous are the two trumpets, of bronze and silver, which are decorated on the bell with scenes showing the king together with three gods.<sup>28</sup> On both trumpets it is the same gods that figure, namely Amun, Re-Harakhte and Ptah. On the bronze trumpet, Tutankhamun is shown standing between them; on the silver trumpet, the gods alone are depicted, while the king is represented merely by his cartouches placed elsewhere on the bell. Now, these three gods are the most important gods of the Egyptian state religion in the 18th dynasty, and in fact throughout the entire New Kingdom. For example, they are represented together with the king a little later, under Ramses II, in the sanctuary of Abu Simbel in Nubia. It is also known that three of the four divisions of the Egyptian army during the Ramesside Period were named after these gods, who are moreover the classical Imperial Triad of the time.<sup>29</sup> The fourth division, named after Seth, may in fact be an addition of the 19th dynasty, which especially venerated this god. If so, under Tutankhamun in the late 18th dynasty, there might very well have been three divisions with similar names.<sup>30</sup>

26 For an authoritative account of its discovery see Carter and Mace 1923–1932. The study and detailed publication of the different kinds of objects is still under way. For a complete database of the finds see <http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/4tut.html> (visited on 19/07/2019).

27 Manniche 1976, 1.

28 Manniche 1976, 7–13, pl. V–XII.

29 For 18th dynasty forerunners of the Ramesside Im-

perial Triad see Wiese 1990, 109–111. The reference to Wiese is due to J. Quack; references relating to the names of the divisions were provided by M. Müller. I would like to thank both of them very much.

30 As there is no explicit record from Tutankhamun's short reign, circumstantial evidence is all that is available. Schulman 1964, 59, note 67, names six divisions under Akhenaton (with the Atenist names to



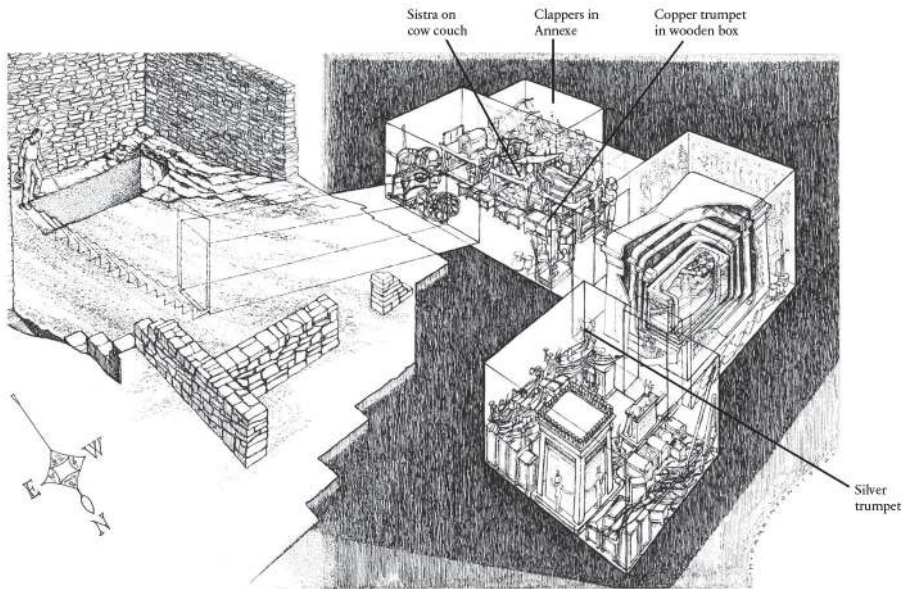


Fig. 1 Position of musical instruments in the tomb of Tutankhamun (based on a drawing by H. Parkinson).

The close linkage between trumpets and the military sphere and, more generally, the representation of royal power, has been noted earlier, thus it is unsurprising to find these instruments also in the royal tomb. Interestingly, the silver trumpet was found next to the entrance in the south-eastern corner of the king's burial chamber. It was thus situated very close to the sarcophagus, which was inside a nest of four shrines. To be precise, between the outermost and second shrines, as well as between the second and third, were twenty bows, ten arrows,<sup>31</sup> staves and other signs of authority, while between the third and fourth were two large fans adorned with ostrich feathers.<sup>32</sup> From pictorial representations it is well established that the king was always accompanied by such fans

be expected). For Seti I, the Beth Shean Stela names three divisions (Amun, Re and Seth): Kitchen 1975, 12 (text); Kitchen 1993, 10 (translation); Spalinger 2005, 189–190; Quack 2010a, 155–158; while for Ramses II in Qadesh, it is the well-known four (Amun, Re, Ptah and Seth), see e.g. Kitchen 1979, 21–23 (text); Kitchen 1996, 4 (translation). However, just because Ptah is not named in Beth Shean does not necessarily imply that there were only three divisions under Seti I. They might just have been deployed elsewhere. By the same token, it is even less plausible to extrapolate to the reign of

Tutankhamun. Still, the fact that the precise gods attested to in the Ramesside Period as patrons of military divisions (except Seth, who is a Ramesside favourite) are also attested on the trumpets of Tutankhamun makes it very likely that they were the patrons of the divisions already in the late 18th dynasty; compare Hornung 1971, 215–216.

31 McLeod 1982, 3.

32 Nos. 242 and 245 in Carter's list of finds; see <http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/carter/200-249.html> (visited on 19/07/2019).

as a sign of his rank. In fact, ‘fan-bearer to the king’s right’ was a high-ranking court title and its holders were influential officials.<sup>33</sup> The less precious copper or bronze trumpet was found inside a box in the antechamber, again associated with a great number of arrows and close to still more archery equipment.<sup>34</sup> This ensemble was positioned next to the sealed entrance of the burial chamber. Thus, for the trumpets it can already be concluded that neither their choice as such, nor their exact placement within the tomb was arbitrary,<sup>35</sup> but rather a deliberate recreation of the situation in the audience-hall in the palace during the king’s lifetime, or on an expedition somewhere in the country.

The next pair of instruments to be considered was found in the antechamber of the tomb, lying on top of the ‘cow couch.’ It is a pair of *sistra*.<sup>36</sup> From wear-marks it seems likely that they were actually used and were not merely models, although they are of an unusual undecorated shape and consist of gilded wood instead of metal. As Manniche has stated, *sistra* are most often played by women. However, as Tutankhamun seems very unlikely to have blown the trumpets himself, the presence of the *sistra* seems to the present author much less troubling than it apparently is to Manniche. While it is true that usually *sistra* are cult instruments used to appease the wrath of a deity, most often a form of the Dangerous Goddess, there is one source which adds vital interpretive information to the present case. This is the Middle-Kingdom tale of Sinuhe.<sup>37</sup> In this tale, a high courtier by the name of Sinuhe overhears, by chance, that King Amenemhat I has been murdered, and flees helter-skelter to Syria. Following some adventures there, and after he grows old, he receives a letter from the king’s successor, King Sesostris I, asking him to return home. Sinuhe is very happy, but also slightly afraid, because of the circumstances of his flight. When he reaches the court and is allowed an audience with the king, he almost faints with awe. During the time of Amenemhat I he had been an attendant to Sesostris’s queen, so the queen and the princesses first come to see him:<sup>38</sup> “She uttered a very great cry, and the royal daughters shrieked all together. They said to his majesty: ‘Is it really he, oh King, our lord?’ Said his Majesty: ‘It is really he!’ Now having brought with them their necklaces, rattles and *sistra*, they held them out to his majesty.” They then speak or sing a hymn to the king, finally asking him to pardon Sinuhe: “[...] Slacken your bow, lay down your arrow, give breath to him who gasps for breath! [...] He made the flight in fear of you, he left the land in dread of you! A face that sees you shall not pale, eyes that see you shall not fear!” As a consequence the king

33 Pomorska 1987.

34 McLeod 1982, 2. In the antechamber were also found most of the chariots, from which, according to contemporaneous depictions, the arrows would have been shot; see Littauer and Crowell 1985. In pl. I the authors give a good general impression of the spatial arrangement within the tomb.

35 It may be noted that Chérif 1988 comes to a similar conclusion for some of the staves placed in the tomb.

36 Manniche 1976, 5–6, pl. II–IV.

37 Synoptic text edition: Koch 1990; translation Lichtheim 1975, 222–235.

38 Koch 1990, 76–79; Lichtheim 1975, 231–232.

commands Sinuhe to be made a high courtier again and be given every luxury befitting his rank.

Of course, because Sinuhe is an old acquaintance of the queen and the princesses, it is hardly surprising to see them speak in his favour. It is remarkable, however, to see how, in doing this, they also use their sistra and other rattle instruments to appease the king in a way similar to appeasing the Dangerous Goddess. Elsewhere in the hymn the link between the king and this Goddess is made explicit.<sup>39</sup> Even Sinuhe himself had earlier compared the king to the Goddess, when praising him to the Syrian ruler who hosted him on his arrival there.<sup>40</sup> Actually, this ruler had already made the same comparison in reference to the king's father Amenemhet.<sup>41</sup> Still, the use of sistra and meniut<sup>42</sup> to appease human beings is not only restricted to this case or even to the king. Pictures from the tombs of high officials of the early 18th dynasty evidence this practice within their households also.<sup>43</sup>

At the same time, other textual and pictorial sources suggest that in the royal sphere, the presence of at least the queen, if not the princesses, during audiences with other persons is at the least a factor to be reckoned with. For example, in the tale of Wenamun,<sup>44</sup> when the pharaoh Smendes sends him off on his expedition to the Lebanon, once again the queen is also present, even though her presence would not have been necessary for the flow of the story. A good impression of what a really grand audience would have looked like may be gained from the depictions of rows of Ramses' II children in certain temples<sup>45</sup> – usually close to depictions of his military exploits. These typically show the sons holding a particular type of fan or a flower arrangement (*Stabstrauß*) in their hands while the daughters hold sistra and meniut. While these may be conventional depictions, it is still reasonable to assume that they were based in, and represent, some aspect of reality.

If so, then the 'appeasing' intervention of these female members of the royal family, to the accompaniment of the sistrum, could have been an established part of the protocol of such court meetings. This might well account for the presence of sistra in Tutankhamun's tomb. They would then have been used by his wife Ankhesenamun or by other female family members. The fact that there are two instruments need not be a problem, as there are also occasional depictions of queens shaking two sistra.<sup>46</sup> The lo-

39 Koch 1990, 77; Lichtheim 1975, 232.

40 Koch 1990, 36; Lichtheim 1975, 226.

41 Koch 1990, 30–31; Lichtheim 1975, 225.

42 A type of necklace with a handle-like counterpoise typically used as a rattle instrument to appease the Goddess; for a picture of its use see Manniche 1991, 63–64.

43 N. d. G. Davies 1943, pl. LXX–LXXI.

44 Text edition: Gardiner 1931, 61–76, esp. 61; transla-

tion Lichtheim 1976, 224–230, esp. 224.

45 Fisher 2001, I, 33–41, pl. 1–63, II, 1–58.

46 Queens: Desroches-Noblecourt and Kuentz 1968, pl. LIII, LIV (Nefertari); Dewachter, Aly and Abdel-Hamid 1967, G 1–6 (Tausret); Naguib 1990, pl. VI, fig. 15, pl. VII, fig. 17 (the Divine Adoratress Kamaatre); similarly goddesses: Ziegler 1979, 36 (according to the inscription, the goddess Isis, not

cation of Tutankhamun's sistra in the ante-chamber might suggest that they were not a necessary part of the royal representation like the fans and trumpets, but could be used by the queen when standing in front of the king, as she is shown in some pictures.<sup>47</sup> Manniche's observation that the sistra lack the usual religious decoration could either be explained by their production during the Amarna period, when traditional symbolism would not have been welcome, or could be related to the very fact of their being used in court for political and day-to-day purposes which somehow excluded religious ritual.

The final instrument to be considered from the tomb of Tutankhamun is a pair of clappers in the shape of hands.<sup>48</sup> These were found in the annexe, lying on the ground together with other, miscellaneous objects. As clappers need to be in pairs to sound, naturally, this is actually only one instrument. However, its interpretation is a lot less straightforward. While hand-shaped clappers are not such a rare category of objects in museums,<sup>49</sup> depictions of them actually being played are not easily found.<sup>50</sup> Strangely enough though, there are a good many representations of other types of clappers being played, some without any decoration,<sup>51</sup> others with heads of male Egyptians or Semitic foreigners,<sup>52</sup> of gazelles, in rare cases calves<sup>53</sup> or even more rarely, hawks.<sup>54</sup> From these depictions, it seems that those without decoration,<sup>55</sup> with male heads or with hawks' heads, were played by men, while those with gazelle heads were played by women. The hand-shaped clappers from the tomb of Tutankhamun are inscribed with the names of queen Tiye and princess Meritaton in a way that raises interesting questions about

the owner, the songstress Henuttaui, as Manniche claims: Manniche 1991, 126; Anderson 1976, 43 (the Meret goddesses). While these are all attestations from the 19th dynasty onward, one of the daughters of the vizier Rekhmire who served under Thutmose III five generations before Tutankhamun (N. d. G. Davies 1943, pl. LXXI) already shakes two sistra in front of her father.

- 47 Compare the scenes on Tutankhamun's small golden shrine, where Ankhnesenamun is shown several times standing in front of the king, although always just with one sistrum and one other object (flowers, a menit) in the other hand (Eaton-Krauss and Graefe 1985, pl. VIII, IX, XI and especially XVI).
- 48 Manniche 1976, 3–4; pl. I.
- 49 Sachs 1921, 17–19; pl. 1; Hickmann 1949, pl. I–X, XVII; Hickmann 1956a, XCI–XCII; Hickmann 1961b, 51, 103; Anderson 1976, 9–22, 86; Ziegler 1979, 24–29. Some of the hand-shaped pieces also have Hathor heads. A most interesting case can be seen in the two pairs which were found buried in a miniature coffin in a pit in the royal magazines

in Amarna; see Pendlebury 1951, 90, 92, 188; pl. LXXIV, CIV. On the whole subject compare the extensive study by Hickmann 1956b.

- 50 These clappers, which always come in pairs, are not to be confused with the arm-shaped wands present in some scenes (examples mentioned in Wente 1969, 86–87), which are perhaps a sign of authority and always come as a single object carried by one person.
- 51 Sachs 1921, 12–15; Hickmann 1949, pl. XVI; Hickmann 1961b, 43, 75; Ziegler 1979, 22–23.
- 52 Sachs 1921, 16; Hickmann 1949, pl. XIV; Hickmann 1961b, 103. On page 55 these seem rather to be Egyptian men's heads.
- 53 Sachs 1921, 15–16; Hickmann 1949, pl. XI, XIV, XV; Hickmann 1961b, 103; Ziegler 1979, 22–23.
- 54 N. d. G. Davies 1920, pl. XXVIII, XXIIIb (three types: with hawks' heads, with male human heads and without special decoration).
- 55 The undecorated examples seem typically to have been used in parades; see the scenes in Survey 1994, where they occur passing along *inter alia* the trumpet and drum, for which see above.

possible genealogical implications. Without wanting to go into the tedious business of Amarna family matters, suffice it to say that both women were very close relatives of Tutankhamun. The names suggest that at least one of these two had once owned and played the instrument in question. But why did the clappers end up in the boy-king's tomb?

A possible explanation can be found in a papyrus published recently, pBrooklyn 47.218.84, a Late Period Mythological Manual of the Delta region.<sup>56</sup> While the manuscript itself dates to the time of Psammetich I (664 to 610 BCE), it clearly draws upon much older sources. In one instance it is even possible to catch the author in the act of quoting almost verbatim from another text without actually admitting that this is what he is doing.<sup>57</sup>

At any rate, there can be little doubt that the relevant passage reflects practices that were already current in the 18th dynasty as well. The text explains *inter alia* some mythological story involving the Golden One, i. e. Hathor, the Hand of the sun god Re.<sup>58</sup> The background to the tale is the creation by masturbation of the Goddess identified with the Hand. The text goes on to state that four of the fingers of the Hand eventually changed into the snake-shaped "Children of Tiredness", who then rebelled against the creator and the Hand. Because of this, at the beginning of the first month of the season of Shemu a feast of commemoration is celebrated in which hand-shaped clappers are beaten for the Goddess. In the time of Tutankhamun, the feast would have fallen around the beginning of March (according to our modern calendar). Fortunately for us, Tutankhamun's mummy was adorned with wreaths of flowers, while the rest of his tomb was amply provided with other flowers and fruits. From their remains it is possible to pinpoint the season of burial.<sup>59</sup> This evidently occurred some time between around mid-March and late April.

Thus, the ritual in which the clapper was last played by its owner was likely celebrated shortly before Tutankhamun's burial, during the period when the king was being mummified. As the ritual remembered, and in a way magically reenacted, the quelling of a rebellion against the solar creator god and first king, Re, the inclusion of a physical part of the ritual in the grave makes sense.<sup>60</sup> After all, a king's death was a time of danger, both literally and symbolically. The ascension of a new king, to the contrary, marked a renewal of creation and restoration of political stability. While this must have been the case at every transition of power, it would have been particularly so during the crisis that marked the end of the Amarna period.

56 Meeks 2006.

57 Von Lieven 2007, 455–463.

58 pBrooklyn 47.218.84 3,8–5,4; see Meeks 2006, 9–12.

59 Krauss 1996, 227–254.

60 In fact, this symbolic function of the hand-shaped clapper might have made it relevant to a royal tomb even without the suggestive calendrical coincidence.

Thus, one can reasonably conclude that none of the musical instruments included in Tutankhamun's grave was chosen arbitrarily, as Manniche has suggested. Rather, they were all carefully chosen and, in one way or another, linked to the political sphere; and thus relevant to the present subject. In fact, none of them serves an entertainment function, although of course, a fair amount of music must also have been played at the royal court simply for pleasure. Still, none of the instruments that characterize the music of pleasure were put into the king's grave, even though depictions of scenes from the royal harem at Amarna do show the rooms full of harps, lutes and lyres.<sup>61</sup>

Unfortunately, it is not known whether stringed instruments would also have been present in other kings' tombs. One possible hint to that effect is furnished by the two famous depictions of harpists in the tomb of Ramses III.<sup>62</sup> Yet, once again, they are absolutely unique, as are many of the scenes from his tomb showing equipment and the production of goods in a way that is completely unusual for a royal tomb of the New Kingdom. Still, the inscriptions accompanying them also point to a particular function within the context of the grave, namely a link to Maat, the goddess of truth, and Osiris, the lord of the dead.<sup>63</sup> Harpists of course also recall the literary genre of Harper's songs expressing either praise for the hereafter or often the complete opposite, namely a *carpe diem* in view of the insecurity of fate in the hereafter.<sup>64</sup> As Ramses III was murdered by an intrigue in the harem, one could imagine those harpists depicted in his tomb to sing to the divine judges an eternal complaint about the lawlessness of his opponents. While this can just be guessed, in the tomb of his successor Ramses IV there is surely one subtle hint as to the political actions taken by him against the murderers of his father, although in that case it is a thoroughly non-musical one. He has inserted a significant addition to his 'negative confession' from the Book of the Dead spell 125. Usually this passage simply states "NN has not killed or commanded to kill." But here he has added an important final word, "King Ramses has not killed or commanded to kill *unjustly*."<sup>65</sup>

The case of the clappers in Tutankhamun's grave has already introduced the aspect of religious ritual. As stated earlier, the religious sphere cannot and should not be separated too strictly from the political sphere, although it far transcends it of course. Most rituals would have included music in one way or another, often in a vital role. For example, ritual appeasement of the Dangerous Goddess relied heavily on music. Without

61 N. d. G. Davies 1908, pl. XXVIII, XXXVI.

62 Hickmann 1950.

63 Both would have been present during the judgement of the dead as described in Book of the Dead chapter 125, being in fact the most important participants: Maat the truth against which the dead

person's heart is weighed, Osiris the supreme judge.

64 Lichtheim 1945; Wente 1962, 118–128; Assmann 1977; Osing 1992, 11–24; Kákósy and Fábíán 1995, 211–225; El-Noubi 1998, 251–255; von Lieven 2002b, esp. 530–531.

65 Hornung 1990, pl. 56, left part.

these rituals, supposedly, the goddess would have killed the Egyptian population by her arrows of pestilence.<sup>66</sup>

While this can be inferred from some of the hymns to her, for the cult of Osiris and his particular mysteries there is even an Egyptian source preserved, making clear the religious as well as political importance of the rites. As was shown a few years ago,<sup>67</sup> in the mysteries of Osiris music, particularly percussion music, played a crucial role in warding off dangerous enemies. Thus one can safely adduce this document as further evidence for political significance of ritual music as seen by the Egyptians. The text in question is the so-called 'Texte de propagande' from the papyrus Jumilhac, a monograph on the myths and associated rites of the nome of Cynopolis.<sup>68</sup> It contains a chapter on the supreme importance of celebrating the Osirian mysteries regularly and in the correct way. This is indispensable for the well-being of the whole country, because

If one neglects all the rites of Osiris in their time in this, there will be no more order for the masses. Horus-Hekenu, the son of Bastet, the slaughterer-demons and the wandering demons armed with knives will circulate everywhere under the command of Anubis. If one does not accomplish all the rituals of Osiris in their time in this district and all his feasts of the seasons, this country will be bereft of its laws, the populace will abandon its master, there will be a year of epidemics in the South and North, the slaughterer-demons will take away everything in Egypt [...] If one does not decapitate the enemy in front of oneself in the form of wax or on new papyrus or in wood of acacia or wood of *hm* according to all the ritual prescriptions, the desert dwellers will revolt against Egypt and there will be war and rebellion in the entire country. The king will no longer be obeyed in his palace, and the country will be bereft of defenders. Open the books, look at the god's words, and you will be knowing, according to the plans of the gods [...] Also do not cease to do what is necessary in the presence of the god so that the god is content because of it. [...] Proclaim his feast list, read his books without ceasing to venerate him. Do not be lazy, do not be ignorant, guard yourself against being forgetful at heart: it is thus that one avoids a premature death on earth; it is life or death. It is he who gives life's time and it is he who shortens it very much: if he is content, the years are long for him, but if he is angry, there are no more years. As for the servant who follows his master, Bastet has no power over him, because as much as every god lives from their offering cake, Osiris lives from the Powers of Re [i.e., the sacred scriptures, A. v. L.]. And as they are useful for Osiris, so are they useful for those

66 Von Lieven 2003, 47–55, esp. on music 50–51; von Lieven 2006b, 33–35.

67 Von Lieven 2006b, esp. 22–33.

68 Vandier 1961; for the passage in question see 129–131, pl. XVII, 14–XVIII, 21.

who recite them, they are useful for those who perform them on earth, and likewise in the hereafter.

### 3 Conclusions

It therefore becomes obvious that the Egyptians did hold views that were quite similar to those of Lü Bu We. Although the cited passage from pJumilhac does not mention music explicitly, it nevertheless clearly states that maintaining the correct rites is vital for the wellbeing of the nation, both in terms of the health and safety of the population and in terms of political stability. It is this very same view to which Lü Bu We subscribed when he posited that a change of music and other customs would immediately affect the state of a country and of its people:

When impure and morally corrupting music arises, it gives birth to spiritual impurity and wicked sentiments. From this, all kinds of vices and wickedness follow. Therefore the noble-minded will turn back to the right path and cultivate his virtue. From pure virtue flows pure music. Through the harmony of music he creates Order. If the music is harmonious, the population increases in righteousness.<sup>69</sup>

Thus, both Lü Bu We and the ‘Texte de propagande’ from pJumilhac share the concept of a direct relation of cause and effect between rites including music on the one hand and the political, if not cosmic sphere on the other. By coincidence, the actual manuscript of pJumilhac (approximately 4th to 3rd century BCE) may have been written at around the time that Lü Bu We was alive, in the 3rd century BCE. However, pJumilhac is clearly a compilation of older material of different dates and origins; and on linguistic as well as intertextual grounds<sup>70</sup> a much earlier composition is most likely for the ‘Texte de propagande’ itself: namely in the 2nd millennium BCE, between the 12th and the 18th dynasties.

69 Wilhelm 2006 [1928], 92–93: “Wenn unreine und sittenverderbende Musik aufkommt, so bewirkt sie unreinen Geist und schlechte Gesinnungen. Durch diese Wirkung werden alle Arten von Lastern und Schlechtigkeiten geboren. Darum kehrt der Edle zum rechten Weg zurück und pflegt seine Tugend. Aus reiner Tugend entströmt reine Musik. Durch

die Harmonie der Musik bewirkt er Ordnung. Ist die Musik harmonisch, so schätzt das Volk das Rechte” (translation A. von Lieven).

70 Quack 2008, esp. 219–220. For further arguments for an earlier date of some of the texts of pJumilhac in general see Lippert 2012, 221, 225.



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## Illustration credits

1 Courtesy of R. B. Parkinson.

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# Musical Finds and Political Meanings: Archaeological Connexions Between Lyres, Poetry and Power in Barbarian Europe

## Summary

Although often recreational today, music can also accompany ritual and form indices of social class and political affiliation. Its practitioners may be drawn into close proximity with government and serve the political purposes of institutions and states. New instrument finds from inhumation cemeteries of the 5th to 8th centuries CE in northern and Atlantic Europe emphasize the political relevance of ancient musics associated with the lyre. While early historical accounts of singers, their political connexions and acts of diplomacy connect ancient song with political landscapes, so the finds emerge as material proxies for political agency. Might closely similar finds of the earlier Iron Age reference political agency in cultural milieux that lie 'beyond the texts' in deep Prehistory?

Keywords: musicianship; inhumations; institutions; diplomacy; agency; identity; early medieval

Wenngleich Musik heutzutage überwiegend der Entspannung dient, kann sie auch Rituale begleiten und Hinweise auf soziale und politische Zugehörigkeiten liefern. Musizierende können in die unmittelbare Nähe zur politischen Führung geraten und so politischen Absichten dienen. Neue Instrumentenfunde in Gräbern des 5. bis 8. Jhd. aus dem nördlichen und atlantischen Europa lassen auf die politische Bedeutung antiker Leiermusik schließen. Während in historischen Berichten über Sänger, ihre politischen Verbindungen und diplomatischen Handlungen alte Lieder mit Politik in Verbindung gebracht werden, fungieren archäologische Funde als materielle Repräsentanten politischer *agency*. Könnten analog dazu recht ähnliche, aus der frühen Eisenzeit stammende Funde als Ausdruck politischen Handelns in schriftlosem Umfeld verstanden werden?

Keywords: Musikantentum; Bestattungen; Institutionen; Diplomatie; *agency*; Identität; Frühmittelalter

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## I Introduction

In around the year 1200 CE the Scandinavian historian Saxo Grammaticus, drawing together threads of earlier folk tradition for his *Gesta danorum*, or History of the Danes, contemplated the ancient tale of a common musician named Hiarnus, whose skills in song had propelled him onto the very throne of Denmark.<sup>1</sup> On the death of the legendary Danish king Frotho, apparently without an heir, this Hiarnus (Saxo labels him *rusticano*, which is to say ‘peasant’) had composed a four-line verse eulogy, or epitaph, of such perfection that he was promptly acclaimed king in Frotho’s place. *Quo carmine edito*, we are told, *auctorem Dani diademate munerati sunt*: ‘when the song had been presented, the Danes rewarded its author with the crown.’ Saxo neglects to supply the vernacular text of Hiarnus’ ‘barbarous stave’ (*suo barbarum condidit metrum*), but provides a terse Latin paraphrase which, read in the light of similar verses that survive in the Old Norse saga literature, may give us some sense of the heroic quality of the supposed original:

Frotho-nem Dani quem longum vivere vellent  
per sua defunctum rura tulere diu.  
Principis hoc summi tumulatum caespite corpus  
aethere sub liquido nuda recondit humus.

Frotho / for whom the Danes / a longer life / would have wished,  
upon his death / through the lands / they bore long.  
The prince was then / entombed under turf / his corpse  
beneath the clear sky / they laid in earth.<sup>2</sup>

It seems a remarkable and, on the face of it, unlikely claim: that a man might acquire political control over a famous state merely through his skills in song and verse; and indeed, from his cultivated vantage-point in the 13th-century Saxo takes a somewhat modern, unsympathetic, view of the Danish people’s alleged behaviour, as we shall see. Yet, illogical and erratic as such a choice may seem to us, as well as to Saxo, Hiarnus’

1 Knabe et al. 1908–1912 VI, 1–16.

2 Author’s near-literal translation. A closely comparable sentiment is expressed in the stave composed by Oddi Glumsson *Litli* (‘the Little’) for the poet Thorbjorn *Svarti* (‘the Black’) who died at Acre in around 1154, as told in *Orkneyingasaga* 88: *Þá sá ec hann · at höfutkirkiu : siklings vín · sandi ausinn ; nu þrumer grund · grytt yfer hönum : solu signud · á sudr-löndum*. ‘Then saw / I / him · beside the great kirk ; the earl’s friend · / in sand / surrounded; now [are]

the mourning earth · [and] the stones above him : / by sunlight / blessed · in a southern land.’ Author’s near-literal translation from Jonaeus’ reading of the Old Norse (ON) text in the *Flatexjarbók* (Stofnun Arna Magnussonar Reykjavik, MS GKS 1005; Jonaeus 1780, 312). A variant reading together with a transcription from the very much later Uppsala MS (UppsUB R702) can be found at <https://skaldic.abdn.ac.uk/db.php?id=3503&cf=default&table=verses> (visited on 19/07/2019).



story is merely one of many reported (and even documented) instances of ancient poets and musicians attaining high political rank, whether amongst illiterate Barbarians or in the more sophisticated, lettered world of Classical and early Medieval statecraft. Thus, when in the fifth and sixth books of his *Spring and Autumn* the Chinese writer Lü Buwei asserts profound connexions between a state's musical customs and its order and stability,<sup>3</sup> whilst his ideas may seem merely dogmatic they may not be quite so detached from real life as we his modern audience might otherwise suppose. Taken together, his opinion, Hiarnus' alleged experience and Saxo's derision may prompt us to revisit some interpretive challenges posed by modern developments in the material culture of ancient poets and their music, particularly those for whom a political inclination might be suspected.

In this chapter I will focus specifically on the musical and poetical behaviours of Saxo's northern Barbarians insofar as they are represented in the written and archaeological records, paying particular attention to the period between the collapse of Rome's Western Empire in the 5th century CE and its revival in the Carolingian Renaissance of the 9th. I choose this 500-year span in part because of the diversity and increasing richness of its archaeological footprint, but also because of its ready susceptibility to diachronic perspectives including (because relatively recent in the timeline of music's prehistory) the viewpoint of ethnology. I will argue that whilst the modern scholar may find Lü's bold assertions to be simplistic, naïve, prejudiced, unscientific, they nevertheless represent an ancient point of view, perhaps widely held, and thus have the potential to draw Ancient Studies into a new and ambitious theoretical engagement with music's archaeological record. Broadening Lü's notion of the politics of states to include also political aspects of established institutions, such as church, tribe and household, I will explore textual support for the notion that certain forms of Barbarian musical expression – especially those associated with the lyre – could have had a profoundly political dimension at that time. I will show how a recent wave of archaeological finds of musicians and their instruments contribute materially to the case. We will see from the texts how poetry and power intertwine in some familiar but also in some unexpected ways; how both for individuals and for their kin and wider society, music was a recurrent political tool. We will see that, rightly or wrongly, the northern Barbarians did indeed perceive themselves and each other through something resembling Lü's prism: that by providing an index of cultural and intellectual character, their music and musical traditions might reveal something of people's social and political credentials – especially their nobility – and therefore their entitlement to respect and to authority in an age

3 *Lüshi Chunqiu* (or *Lu-shih ch'un ch'iu*, 吕氏春秋), V, 4.4; VI, 3.5. Knoblock and Riegel 2000, 144–145; 162–163. Lü was writing in ca. 240 BC.

when lordship could be as much a matter of reputation, manoeuvre and negotiation as it was of inheritance.

In pursuing this line of thought it will be necessary to explore the material contexts of lyres found in so-called musicians' graves and in elite chamber burials, and to present some of the growing archaeological evidence which hints that their placement in these funerary assemblages should be seen as a political as well as a votive gesture, enacted before witnesses. I will consider whether their political value in this funerary context would have resided merely in their expressing connexions with song and tradition, or whether, echoing Lü, they were meant to evoke particular genres: genres of repertoire and even of sounds themselves. In conclusion I will ask whether such material expressions have the potential to tell us something new about the workings of the machinery of politics in ancient times.

## 2 First indications

In the summer of 1846 the first ancient lyre grave came to light in the south of Germany, at a place called Oberflacht in the Schwäbische Alb, near the source of the river Danube and not far from Konstanz on the Upper Rhine (Fig. 1).<sup>4</sup> During investigations of a large inhumation cemetery on land to the north of the present settlement, Captain Ferdinand von Dürrich found a number of graves in which wooden items had been preserved, in some cases in their entirety, as a consequence of an unusual clay subsoil and a high water table. In the following year Dr. Wolfgang Menzel was able to report that one of von Dürrich's graves, today designated Oberflacht 31,<sup>5</sup> included an object which seemed at first to be the body and neck of a lute. He uses the word *Geige*, which normally means 'fiddle' or folk violin. However, in 1892 further excavation within the same cemetery complex, by Berlin archaeologist Dr. Albert Voss, revealed another such grave, known today as Oberflacht 84, which contained a complete wooden lyre.<sup>6</sup> From its form it quickly became apparent that Menzel's *Geige* had been merely the surviving half of a closely similar instrument: one arm and part of the sound box. The context was in each case Barbarian, evidently post-Roman. Each man had a sword, showing that in death, and presumably in life, he had enjoyed elevated status within his community. Each burial was contained within a narrow chamber with wooden walls, floor and roof,

4 In the earliest musical treatments the site is often referred to as 'Lupfen', 'Lupfen bei Oberflacht' or 'Lupfenberg', after the hillside on which it is situated. However, 'Oberflacht' has always been the name of the parish in which it is located.

5 Schiek 1992, 37–40, pl. 8 (plans), 31–34 (finds); Dürrich and Menzel 1847, 13, 17.

6 Schiek 1992, 55–57; pls. 60–61 (finds). Today Voss shares the honours for the discovery with the collector Julius Schad, a former mayor of Tuttingen whose museum seems initially to have received the finds.



Fig. 1 Europe, showing the location of Oberflacht in relation to subsequent finds of lyres and lyre components. 500–1000 CE. a – Oberflacht; b – Trossingen; c – Concevreux; d – Cologne; e – Dorestad; f – Abingdon; g – Taplow; h – Prittlewell; i – Dover; j – Deal; k – Sutton Hoo; l – Snape; m – Oakley; n – Morning Thorpe; o – Bergh Apton; p – York; q – Elisenhof; r – Haddeby (Hedeby/Haithabu); s – Broa-Halla; t – Gerete-Fardhem; u – Birka-Björkö. Scale: 500 km.

the space just large enough to enclose the coffin and a piece of wooden furniture at its foot. In Grave 37 the body lay supine in a closed casket with a two-headed serpent running along the ridge of the casket lid; there was also a spear, horse-harness gear, a candlestick and a gaming board. In Grave 84 the body lay supine within a framed bed, or

bier, which had elaborate sides, gables and a stout ridge-pole, together with a fine double chair (serving also as a repository for smaller objects) standing at its foot. This time there was no horse gear, but prominent elements included a spear, a bow and arrows, two wooden travelling flasks and a candlestick. Neither grave preserved any obvious metal armour, such as helmet, shield or mail.

Together, the two finds offered scholars their first enigmatic glimpse of a phenomenon that is becoming familiar to us today but was then unknown to science: the Germanic warrior-musician. Who these people were, and what their exact role had been in society, remained unclear. They were fighting men, certainly, yet somehow instrumentalists also. Each instrument was a highly elaborate piece of equipment, skilfully made, elegant in its external appearance. Each was evidently placed so as to seem embraced in a gesture of intimacy and possession.<sup>7</sup> In those earliest days of our field, theories of ancient music were still entirely led by the texts, and nothing in the vernacular and early medieval Latin literatures, which provided most of the references, seemed to link stringed instruments either with weapons, as such, or with burial rites: they appeared mostly in the heroic context of feasting and leisure, and to some extent of Christian song, especially psalmody. The clearest external parallels were provided by the practitioners of later medieval courtly song – troubadours, *trouvères* and *Minnesänger* – whose combat-readiness is rarely emphasized in their songs; likewise the bardic poets and associated performers of Insular Celtic tradition. Nevertheless, with these as the only available models, the generic designations ‘bard’ and ‘minstrel’ came to be widely adopted, and attention began to focus instead on the lyres as objects, dwelling especially on their constructions and modes of operation.

It must be admitted that they were remarkable objects, and would have seemed startlingly advanced to scholars whose thoughts were still dominated by notions of a ‘dark’ post-Roman world. Their remains clamoured for practical exploration. Indeed they were to be much celebrated both in the literature and in the museums that curated them. Dürrich’s Oberflacht 37 fragments came to be displayed at the Württembergisches Landesmuseum, Stuttgart, where they remain to this day, whilst in due course Voss’ complete specimen from Oberflacht 84 would feature prominently in Berlin’s Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde<sup>8</sup> and later in the Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte,<sup>9</sup> when the collections moved there in 1922. And there it remained until the Second World War.

7 Dürrich and Menzel 1847, pl. 8. 3–7, supplies an ink-wash drawing of the Grave 37 finds *in situ* (reproduced in Schiek 1992, pl. 8, and Lawson and Krempel-Eichmann 2015, pl. 1), which shows the sword and lyre together in the crook of the man’s right arm. I have seen no grave plan for Grave 84, but a replica of the whole grave (viewed obliquely in Schiek 1992, fig. 10) presents the lyre as lying di-

agonally across the man’s chest, with the bow in the crook of his left arm. The sword is hidden from sight, so probably on his right side.

8 The Royal Museum for Ethnography, which opened on the corner of Stresemann and Niederkirchnerstraße in 1884.

9 The Museum for Pre- and Early History, in the nearby Martin Gropius Bau.

Although musicology seems at first to have been slow to explore the finds' full cultural significance, deterred perhaps by the smallness of the sample,<sup>10</sup> they were to be cited many times (if often unexamined at first-hand) by organologists such as Otto Andersson<sup>11</sup> and Hortense Panum,<sup>12</sup> taking their cue from Oskar Fleischer's essay in Hermann Paul's *Grundriss der germanischen Philologie*.<sup>13</sup> Fleischer's treatment, brief though it is, was amongst the first in the philological sphere to recognize the essential similarity between the two finds and to establish, contra Jacob Grimm, that Dürriich's was a plucked stringed instrument. He renames it *chrotta*<sup>14</sup> in place of the *Geige* which Grimm had innocently perpetuated on Menzel's authority. Interestingly, Fleischer treats the people themselves under the heading "die berufsmässigen Musiker der Kelten und Germanen: die Barden",<sup>15</sup> thereby asserting identification with a professional, or at least specialist, class or cadre of performer. Contemplating the Frankish court poet Venantius Fortunatus' reference to the *harpa*, evidently the *chrotta*'s equivalent amongst 6th-century Barbarians, he adds "Die Harfe war den Sachsen ein unveräusserliches Besitztum, ihre Spieler politische Persönlichkeiten",<sup>16</sup> and in so doing touches upon our present theme. Yet although the political implications of poets and of song have continued to engage the attention of philologists, and even music historians, they have persistently failed to attract serious archaeological consideration. Which is to say that archaeology has failed to address the political questions posed by these and other finds of similar sort, even when found in association with persons of political class.

For many years the Oberflacht instruments remained isolated, their only known parallels being images of King David and his lyre shown in Late Antique and early medieval manuscript miniatures purporting to illustrate stringed instruments referenced in the Old Testament Psalms and related texts. But then, during the dark days of the Second World War, the publication of another German discovery introduced fresh detail to the picture. Since 1924 Roman archaeologist Fritz Fremersdorf had been conducting

- 10 The music historian Emil Naumann, for example, makes no mention of Oberflacht 31 in the first volume of his *Illustrierte Musikgeschichte* (Naumann 1880; also Naumann Undated, after 1880), despite devoting three pages to a discussion of the lives and repertoires of earlier, Roman poets, later troubadours and *Minnésänger* (Naumann Undated, after 1880, I, 228–230).
- 11 Andersson 1923; Andersson 1930, 211, fig. 69 supplies a photograph of the Oberflacht 84 lyre.
- 12 Panum 1940, 92–93; fig. 76 supplies only a crude line drawing of the Oberflacht 84 lyre, unattributed.
- 13 Fleischer 1900, 570–571 has not been allowed an illustration.

- 14 The word *chrotta* is used by Fortunatus in the 6th century to describe the instruments of the Britons or Bretons (it is unclear which he means). Its various equivalents in medieval Insular tradition include Irish-Gaelic *crúit*, English *crowd* and Welsh *crwth*. Today *chrotta* no longer carries any universal implication as to type (beyond 'plucked stringed instrument') and has lost its place in music's archaeological nomenclature.
- 15 Fleischer 1900, 570: "The professional musician of the Celts and Germans: the bard."
- 16 Fleischer 1900, 572: "The harp was, for the Saxon [i. e. the Anglo-Saxon], an essential possession, its players political persons."

investigations in and around the Romanesque basilica of St Severin in Cologne, including its early medieval levels, and in the course of his continuing exploration in early 1939 he found and excavated two élite graves of the early medieval period: one male, the other female.<sup>17</sup> Benefitting from more modern investigative techniques, associated finds showed them to date from the early 8th century, their context Frankish. This was the time in which the Frankish élite were consolidating their conversion to Christianity and, under their king and later self-styled emperor Karl der Große (Charlemagne, r. 768–814), would soon begin their conquest of Western Europe in the image of ancient Rome, inaugurating the so-called Carolingian Renaissance. In one of the burials, grave P100,<sup>18</sup> lay a young man<sup>19</sup> with a wooden lyre (Fig. 2). Although smaller than the Oberflacht 84 lyre, and somewhat less well preserved, it too had had tuning pegs for six strings, as well as evidence of a tail-piece of iron. It had a broadly similar outline, the arms and sound box carved from one continuous piece of wood, the cavity extending up inside the arms. The context too preserved some important details. The sides of the grave were made up of dressed sandstone slabs of various colours, rising from a floor of trachyte paving.<sup>20</sup> The surviving photographs reveal his ghostly shape, lying on his back with his legs extended (he wore leather shoes) and the lyre placed over his right forearm.<sup>21</sup> On the floor were traces of plant materials, thought to be from his mattress. A wooden stave with an organic mass of fatty material and willow bast was interpreted as a torch. A wooden pilgrim flask similar to those at Oberflacht lay by his right foot.<sup>22</sup> The personal equipment clustered by his left foot included a folding knife or razor, a comb, a small pair of shears and an iron strike-a-light. For all these fine things and his prestigious position (under the present historic church), there were no weapons, and his gloves seemed not to be a matching pair.<sup>23</sup> He was, however, expensively dressed. He was clothed in woollen and linen textiles, his tunic mounting a gold-threaded collar and facings, whilst below his knees were scattered fine silver ornaments that may once have decorated the lower part of his costume.<sup>24</sup> These ornaments were decorated in a

17 Fremersdorf 1943, 133–139; for the lyre itself, 136–139; fig. 7; (*in situ*) pl. 55.

18 Since redesignated III, 100 by Bernd Päffgen. Päffgen 1992, part 1, 481–485; part 2, 280–285; part 3, pl. 59–60, 130.

19 The absence of weapons led the composer and harpist H. J. Zingel, who saw the press reports and went to see the find, to presume female gender; Zingel 1939, 335. However, this is inconsistent with the evidence later presented by Fremersdorf and Päffgen; perhaps he had been confused by the second of Fremersdorf's important graves, which was clearly female.

20 Päffgen 1992, part 2, 280–284.

21 Fremersdorf 1943, pl. 55. As with Oberflacht 84 in Berlin, the find itself did not survive the war, being lost when the museum store burned on the night of 28–29 June 1943. Päffgen 1992, part 2, 284.

22 Päffgen 1992, part 2, fig. 126.

23 The right glove was of soft buckskin; the left was of cow hide and decorated with a different pattern. Both gloves were gauntlets, with extended cuffs. Fremersdorf 1943, 133, fig. 7 c–d; 137–138.

24 Päffgen 1992, part 3, pls. 59, 60. Some equally fancy silvered ornaments found at Oberflacht and associated with Oberflacht 37 (Veecik 1931, pl. 58) have been identified as belt fittings (Schiek 1992, 39–40; fig. 9).

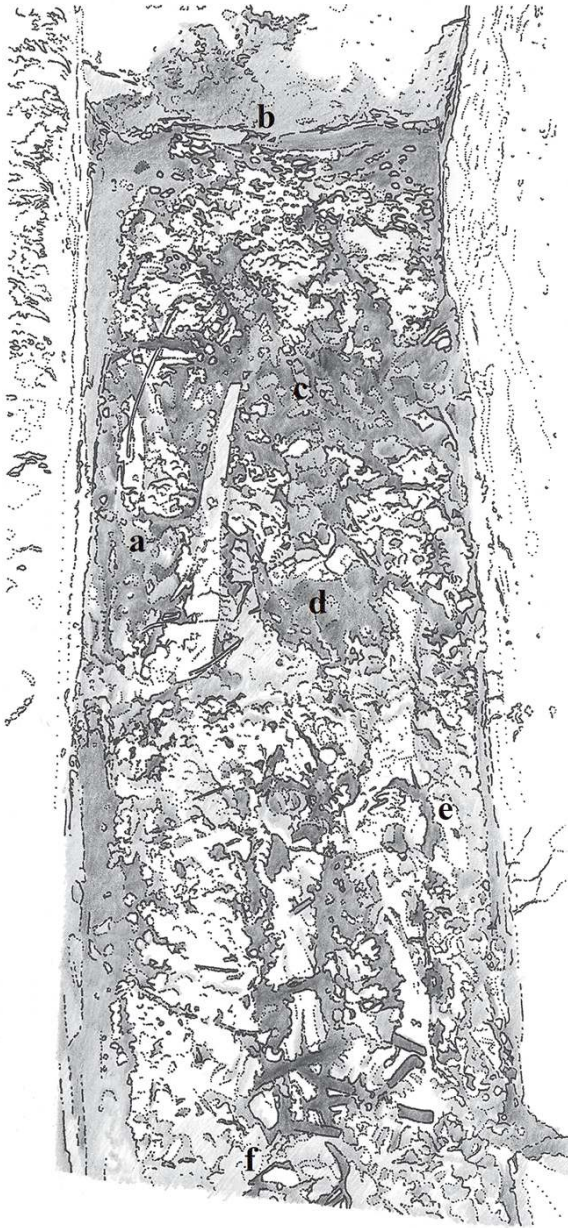


Fig. 2 The Severinskirche lyre and musician *in situ*. Cologne, early 8th century CE (a – lyre; b – head; c – thorax; d – pelvis; e – left knee; f – right shoe and bindings).

style that could be dated to around the beginning of the 8th century. Some finds provided still more personal, indeed poignant, detail. Strewn across his torso and over the lyre were fragments of plant stalks which were identified as the stems of wild roses and possibly lavender.<sup>25</sup>

As an archaeologist and culture-historian who knew Oberflacht well, Fremersdorf must have begun to wonder about the relationship between the Frankish and Alamannic lyres, but sadly he failed to produce a fuller publication. Indeed it would not be until the 1970s, as scholars shifted their focus from the instrument's construction, typology and musical characteristics towards contemplation of its material-cultural aspects, that archaeological discussion of its symbolic, contextual and demographic meaning would begin. Yet already in 1943 there were questions that called for answers. Who, or rather what, had these three men been? Why had they each been buried with a lyre? To what cultural milieu did they belong? Did the minor differences in their presentation signify differences in character, or rank, or tribal affiliation? The vegetal residues at Cologne also invited questions about the circumstances of the burial, the nature of the funeral rite and the likely identities and purposes of actors and witnesses.

### 3 Royal lyre graves

The puzzle took its next step forward in the 1960s through the work of Rupert Bruce-Mitford and his daughter, the musician Myrtle Bruce-Mitford, on fragments of wood with metal fittings found in the early 7th-century royal ship burial at Sutton Hoo, Suffolk, on the east coast of England (Fig. 3, no. 1).<sup>26</sup> Amongst many items of treasure recovered from the collapsed burial chamber in 1939, the same year that had seen Fremersdorf excavating the Cologne lyre, the pieces had quickly been identified as parts of a stringed musical instrument (they included one of its hollow arms and a curved bar bearing a series of sockets for pegs, the pegs still preserved within them).<sup>27</sup> In an echo of Oberflacht 31, the exact type of instrument was at first unclear: misled by literal readings of the texts, some kind of small harp was suspected. However, by 1970 the identification of further wooden fragments and careful comparison with details of Oberflacht and Cologne showed that it was in fact another lyre.<sup>28</sup> Its original length could not be determined, but from its breadth and overall shape it seemed closest to the Oberflacht finds in size, with only a minor structural difference in the joints used to assemble the upper part of its frame. It did however possess one other feature unknown in

25 Fremersdorf 1943, 137.

26 Excavated in 1939 under the direction of Charles Phillips; today it usually carries the more prosaic

designation 'Mound 1'.

27 R. L. S. Bruce-Mitford 1948.

28 R. L. S. Bruce-Mitford and M. Bruce-Mitford 1970.



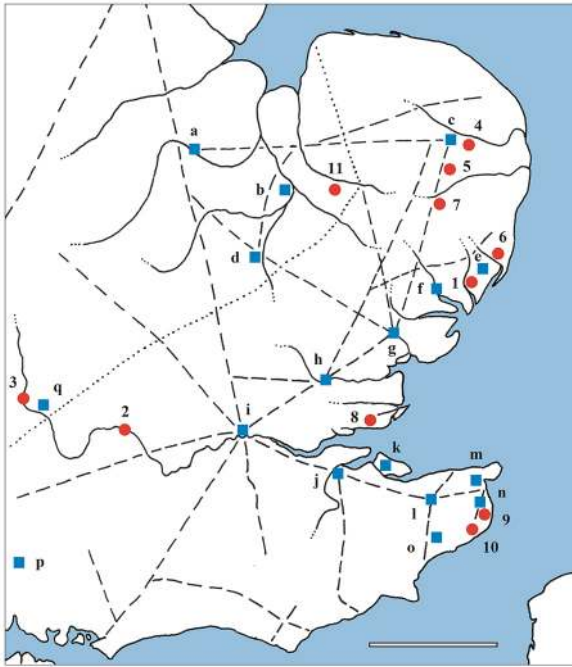


Fig. 3 Southern and Eastern England, showing lyre graves (red dots) in relation to coastline, waterways, principal land routes and (blue squares) centres of power and authority, 500–700 CE (1 – Sutton Hoo; 2 – Taplow; 3 – Abingdon; 4 – Bergh Apton; 5 – Morning Thorpe; 6 – Snape; 7 – Oakley; 8 – Prittlewell; 9 – Deal; 10 – Dover; 11 – Eriswell). Scale: 50 km.

the German lyres: a pair of elaborate gilded bronze plaques or escutcheons. With their carved birds' heads, zoomorphic interlace, small panes of glittering garnet *cloisonné* and bosses made of shell and yet more garnet, these appeared to mark it out as an instrument fit for a king.

As the work progressed, Rupert Bruce-Mitford revisited other unpublished materials in the British Museum stores. Amongst early Anglo-Saxon finds discovered in 1883 within the large princely tumulus in the churchyard at Taplow Court, Buckinghamshire, he found part of another, broadly similar instrument, which had been identified merely as a “crescentic ornament.” Again the wood was adorned with a pair of bird-headed plaques of gilded bronze, with carved interlace and garnet inlays. The placement of both lyres at a distance from the bodies (or, at Sutton Hoo where no skeletal remains survived, where it was guessed that the body should have been) also contrasted sharply with Oberflacht and Cologne. However, Bruce-Mitford was also able to locate a third, previously unidentified English specimen in the literature, this time within a cemetery of more typical burials and cremations, at Abingdon in the valley of the upper Thames, not far from Oxford (Fig. 4).<sup>29</sup> It consisted of pieces of two curved antler plates with

29 Saxton Road, Abingdon, burial 42. Leeds and Harden 1936, 38–39; pls. V, IX, XIX.

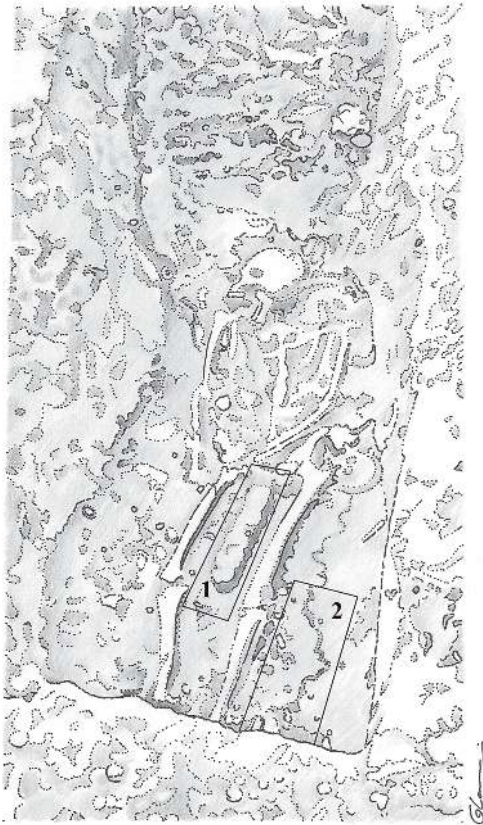


Fig. 4 Abingdon grave 42 *in situ*,  
1 – the 5th-century sword and  
scabbard; 2 – the location and  
probable orientation of the lyre.  
Abingdon, Oxfordshire, 5th or  
6th century CE.

holes for tuning pegs, from the upper end of the instrument. Their placement in the grave differed slightly from Oberflacht and Cologne, in that they seemed to have been deposited near the foot. Otherwise, allowing for differences in preservation, the context was broadly similar to those of Oberflacht 31 and 84: the accompanying finds, which included an iron sword of a type believed to date from the 5th century, were consistent with a person of elevated status, rather than a ruler. Abingdon thus came to play an important role in establishing circumstantial connections, not only between the Anglo-Saxon instruments and their Frankish and Alaman parallels overseas but also, being English, between Anglo-Saxon lyre graves and the performers referred to in the surviving Anglo-Saxon literature, both Old English and Latin. It now seemed that, although lyres like Sutton Hoo could come into very close proximity to power, like the German finds they still had their place amongst the wider population.

What royal function might the princely instruments have served? It is a question that might equally be asked of other enigmatic aristocratic finds, from the lyres, harps

and lutes of Ancient Egypt to the instruments found in the frozen tombs of the Altai. Ought we to envision them as the intimate personal possessions of the dead, or as domestic equipment from the ruling houses over which they had presided? Could they be extraneous, third-party offerings, inserted into the grave in order to satisfy some ritual formula, perhaps votive? Or could their presence be symbolic, surrounded as they are by more familiar attributes of kingship? The Anglo-Saxon evidence was equivocal. To be sure, they seemed to exist alongside equipment that could be interpreted as household gear associated with feasting and leisure, such as cauldrons, bowls and drinking horns. Next to the Taplow fragments, where they lay by the wall of the chamber, was a set of gaming pieces, a drinking horn and an elaborate glass beaker. But did this mean that lyres were mere playthings or utensils, parts of the mechanism – and theatre – of domestic life, like the traditional parlour piano or the modern home audio system? Some archaeological commentators have assumed so.<sup>30</sup> However, the presence of similar lyres in two Insular manuscript miniatures of the 8th century provided indirect exemplars of an alternative, more intimate relationship, a relationship which, as we will now see, was also hinted at in the texts. The implications of this dichotomy would be considerable. On the one hand we might begin to imagine the music and poetry that Sutton Hoo and Taplow represent being no more than incidental accompaniments to the men's lives, while on the other we might see them as signs of personal musical preferences. Might it be that they were indeed intended as statements, to say something about the identities of the people themselves: about their personalities as rulers and patrons, about the nature of their rule and patronage, and about the manner in which they or their successors wished them to be remembered?

#### 4 Household analogues in the texts

It should be stressed from the outset that, beyond the cemeteries, no lyre or fragment of lyre has ever been recovered in a household location, rich or poor. Certainly no aristocratic dwelling has yet produced a lyre. Some finds, such as the 8th and 9th-century amber lyre bridges from Elisenhof, Schleswig-Holstein,<sup>31</sup> and Dorestad, Netherlands,<sup>32</sup>

30 See Hines 2007, 219.

31 R. L. S. Bruce-Mitford and M. Bruce-Mitford 1970, 8, fig. 2; R. L. S. Bruce-Mitford 1974, 192; R. L. S. Bruce-Mitford and M. Bruce-Mitford 1983, 694, fig. 505 c, d; Salmen and Schwab 1971, 10, pl. 3. For the finds context, see generally Bantelmann 1975, and, in more detail, Westphalen 1999; Westphalen 2010.

32 Werner 1954, 14, pl. II. 2, 4; R. L. S. Bruce-Mitford and M. Bruce-Mitford 1970, 8; R. L. S. Bruce-

Mitford and M. Bruce-Mitford 1983, 694–695; fig. 505 b. Werner's two, which he attributes to the Centraalmuseum, Utrecht, are stray finds from earlier explorations (incorrectly numbered 2 and 3 on Werner's plate). Although found during excavations in 1974, the third also lacked a useful find-context. For the excavations and finds see Van Es and Verwers 1980 and more especially Van Es and Verwers 2009.

may correspond to loci of craft and commerce. Others, such as the 9th-century antler bridge from Birka (Björkö), Östergötland,<sup>33</sup> the 10th-century lyre yoke from Hedeby (Haithabu), Schleswig-Holstein,<sup>34</sup> and its 1st-century equivalent from Bremen-Habenhäusen, Lower Saxony,<sup>35</sup> may be associated with settlement environments that included houses. But all are in essence stray finds: none can be attributed with confidence to a particular building or otherwise identified as a household item. The texts too offer little in the way of support. Few present lyre-playing within a strictly domestic milieu, and only one purports to offer precise detail. This is Bede's story of the 7th-century Northumbrian herdsman-poet Caedmon.<sup>36</sup>

Caedmon's story contains several points of political importance. Like Hiarnus, he is a figure for whom musical and poetical experience has led to upward social mobility, in his case elevating him abruptly (at least in Bede's 8th-century narrative) from unknown common man to monkish celebrity, from agricultural worker to Christian poet and teacher. The occasion is his composition of a vernacular song in praise not of a dead king but of God's Creation of the World and of Humankind. Caedmon, says Bede, has long lived with a fear of performing to an audience, and has a particular horror of the *cithara* (for which Bede's later Anglo-Saxon translator supplies *hearpe* in Old English) as it is passed around the common table according to the custom of the house. Then, one night, whilst asleep in his hut, a figure (the text simply describes him as 'someone') appears to him and asks him to sing something. Caedmon has recently returned from dining, the instrument's arrival having as usual caused him to flee 'in the middle of eating'. He protests that he cannot sing; but the figure persists, Caedmon eventually plucks up the courage to sing, and the marvellous outcome is pronounced by Bede to be the first Christian song composed in the English language. Sadly the melody of 'Caedmon's Hymn', as it is generally known today, does not survive, but two closely similar dialect versions believed to represent the original vernacular text have come down to us as later interpolations into the various surviving Latin and West Saxon<sup>37</sup> manuscripts of Bede.

This account of the Hymn's first composition may or may not relate to real events in the 7th century. However, for us the question of its historicity is of less musical consequence than the glimpse the tale affords us of Bede's 8th-century notion of music's place in a household: a household in which it might be normal for such an instrument to circulate during and after mealtimes, when everyone – not just the householder – would be expected to perform upon it. It is incidentally one of the very few sources which make clear the direct, practical connexion between lyres and the performance of Old English

33 Arbman 1939; Lund 1984, no. 30.

34 Lawson 1984.

35 Bischof 2002b; Bischof 2002a.

36 Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis anglorum [HE]* IV, 24.

37 The 'West Saxon' dialect of Old English was spoken in the south-west of England, centred on the cultural region now known as Wessex.

(OE) poetry. The ownership of the *cithara* is not indicated: Bede's narration is economical and probably ownership had no bearing on his purpose.<sup>38</sup> Scholars have speculated that the table from which Caedmon fled may have belonged to the hall of some monastic house, though the Latin text nowhere demands that the community need be a religious one: it could be the common table of any aristocratic farming estate.<sup>39</sup> More significant for us is the process of diplomacy, negotiation and political engagement that now ensues. The song somehow comes to the attention of the reeve, the administrative head of the estate, and the reeve, perhaps sensing his opportunity, takes the trouble to bring it to the notice of the church authorities.

The authority he finds is one of the most influential political figures of 7th-century Britain, the redoubtable Hild, daughter of a leading Northumbrian family and founder of the famous double monastery of *Streonshalb* or *Streanæshalch*. Hild convenes a committee and together they examine Caedmon. Finding him to be authentic, he is invited – Bede says “instructed”, which leads some scholars to infer that thus far he has not been a free man – to join the monastery as a monk. The story concludes with Caedmon installed as a revered teacher, his persuasive poetic voice strengthening the Church in its continuing attempts to secure the conversion (and subsequent orthodoxy) of all the English. In short, Bede presents Caedmon as propagandist, placing his poetry, and by implication his music, alongside Hild at the forefront of one of the most important political struggles of the post-Roman world.<sup>40</sup>

From an organologist's perspective, Bede's clear implication is that the instrument *cithara* that has so unnerved the simple herdsman is not his own individual property.<sup>41</sup>

38 For Bede's interest in emphasizing the impact of Caedmon's experience on his later missionary role, see Frantzen and Hines 2007, 6; Hines 2007, 199.

39 For discussion of such contrasting milieux and the challenges involved in separating them in the archaeological record, see Loveluck 2007, especially 161–169.

40 For Bede's interest in reform of the Northumbrian church, and the agency he attributes to Caedmon, see DeGregorio 2007, 68, 76.

41 For the significance of Latin *cithara* and OE *bearpe* during the 6th to 8th centuries, and their relevance to the identities of the lyre graves, compare the traditional philological view eloquently championed by Robert Boenig (Boenig 1996) with the archaeological position proposed by Rupert and Myrtle Bruce-Mitford (R. L. S. Bruce-Mitford and M. Bruce-Mitford 1970; R. L. S. Bruce-Mitford and M. Bruce-Mitford 1983) and expanded by the present writer (Lawson 1981; Lawson 2001; Law-

son 2009; Lawson and Krempel-Eichmann 2015; Lawson 2019; Graeme Lawson. “Old English Poets, Dangerous Knowledge and Secret Agency in Late Antiquity: A Musical and Archaeological Viewpoint.” In *Knowledge to Die For: Secret Knowledge in the Ancient World*. Ed. by F. Geller. Forthcoming; Graeme Lawson. “The Lyres and Their Contexts [from Eriswell, Suffolk, Graves 313, 255 and 221].” In *Excavations of the Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries at Eriswell, Suffolk*. Forthcoming; Graeme Lawson. *The Prittlewell Lyre and the Kingdom of Kent. Anglo-Saxon Poets' Graves, from Deal and Dover*. Forthcoming). At the time of writing there is still no archaeological support for the etymological reasoning that either word must imply ‘harp’ in the later triangular sense. As with *chrotta* above, they simply mean ‘stringed instrument’; and although true harps do appear in the art of the later Anglo-Saxon period, their remains have yet to appear anywhere in the British finds record before around 1200.

So whose might it be? Although some kind of shared ownership cannot be ruled out, it is nowhere specified, or even hinted at: to Bede it is merely something that is passed around. Perhaps it belongs to the house or to a prominent member of the community, perhaps the householder him- or herself, whoever that may have been in this particular case. We are limited by the uniqueness of the story as well as by its economy of detail. Other early medieval traditions offer surprisingly few insights. In the early Irish tale of the pre-Christian god-hero Dagda, for example, a story much quoted by early organologists such as Francis Galpin, Hortense Panum and Otto Andersson,<sup>42</sup> a stringed instrument *crot* or *cruit* is spoken of as hanging on the wall of a feasting hall, presumably reflecting contemporary medieval practice. Instruments, including lyres, are shown in this mode in some medieval manuscript miniatures, as well as in Greek and Roman art.<sup>43</sup> But wall-hanging hardly implies communal property: many things might be hung on walls, including guests' personal equipment and trophies. Indeed the poet makes it clear that this is the hero's own personal instrument, previously taken from him in battle, which he finds hanging in the hall of his enemies.

A stronger model for a musical household, or at least for a musical householder, might be provided by the early Danish king Hrothgar, whom we hear described in OE *Beowulf*,<sup>44</sup> reciting verses and songs (*gidd ond glēo*) of long ago to his assembled guests and retainers during the gift-giving that follows Beowulf's defeat of the monster Grendel. In doing so Hrothgar accompanies himself on the instrument *bearpe*, which in the following line attracts the kenning or epithet *gomen-wudu*, 'joy-wood':<sup>45</sup> At the same celebration his *scōp*, who is also kened *glēo-man*, 'glee-man,' has already performed a long narrative song, concerning the fates of the sons of Finn Folcwalding, to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument again described as *gomen-wudu*.<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, there is no sense in the text that we are meant to imagine the two men sharing an instrument, nor is there any indication that either instrument might be passed around in the manner that Bede describes.

42 E. g. Galpin 1910, 1–2; Panum 1940, 125; and most extensively Andersson 1930, 198–199, 204, drawing on the lectures of Eugene O'Curry (O'Curry 1873). The Dagda has a *cruit*-player called Uaithne, whose instrument carries the epithets *Coirecethaircuir* (or *Coir cethar chuir*) meaning 'four angled music' (the number evidently representing the seasons of the year) and *Dur da blá* (indicating that it is made of

oak). In the tale it is stolen from the god during the second Battle of Moytura (*Cath Mag Tuired*), and hung up on the wall of its captors' hall, whence the Dagda eventually recovers it.

43 Panum 1940, fig. 150.

44 Wrenn 1953, line 2106.

45 Wrenn 1953, lines 2105–2110.

46 Wrenn 1953, lines 1063–1070, 1159–1160.

## 5 Household models: the Trossingen find

I mention these questions of household and community, of kings and ministers and the life of hall and table, partly because they have recently been touched upon in relation to the Oberflacht instruments and to a more recent German find (which I shall shortly describe) but also because together they have an important bearing on the ways in which we should envision musicianship and poetry functioning in post-Roman social and political milieux. The growing impression of a functional division between royal lyres, such as Sutton Hoo, and those found in more modest graves, apparently indicative of a musical division between rulers and other men, has appeared to some to correspond also to a duality already identified within the OE literature, indeed even within *Beowulf* where the poet discriminates between Hrothgar as kingly performer and the subordinate figure of his *scōp* or *glēoman*. The question ‘who was the *scōp*?’ has long perplexed philologists,<sup>47</sup> just as they have sometimes been moved to ask ‘what kind of instrument is indicated by *bearpe*?’ Into these debates now came archaeology’s not dissimilar enigma: ‘who were the lesser men buried with their lyres at Oberflacht, Cologne and Abingdon?’ Might these questions, perhaps, be related?

The more recent find was made in the winter of 2001/2002 during excavations of another Alamannic cemetery, on land belonging (by sublime coincidence) to the Hohner musical instrument factory at Trossingen, in the district of Tuttlingen, Baden-Württemberg. Not far from Oberflacht, and benefitting from the same hydrological circumstances and taphonomy, Trossingen grave 58 proved to contain the body of a man lying on his bed in a narrow chamber, surrounded by weapons and items of wooden furniture. In his arms was a lyre, very similar in shape and size to the Oberflacht instruments, and perfectly preserved.<sup>48</sup> It lay face-downwards.<sup>49</sup> In considering the likely status of the dead man, Barbara Theune, who has been responsible for his post-excavation study and publication, tends to favour identification as a significant local householder. There is much to be said for this. There is little evidence in the Tuttlingen cemeteries of a treasure-laden ruling class, of the kind seen in the Frankish and Anglo-Saxon sphere; yet all three lyre graves are clearly equipped in such a way as to indicate a ranking amongst persons of substance: substantial, that is, in terms of the region’s economic and political landscape. They are still part of a well-to-do warrior élite.

Such a convivial, *amateur*, model of Barbarian musicianship, élite yet essentially domestic, contrasts strongly with vernacular text-driven models which have often evoked affiliation with a discrete cadre or priesthood comparable with the *bardoi* of the Celts, or

47 See for example Cassidy 1965. For a challenge to traditional viewpoints see Niles 2003. For a recent review see Horton 2010.

48 Theune-Großkopf 2004; Theune-Großkopf 2006;

Theune-Großkopf 2008; Theune-Großkopf 2010; also Lawson and Krempel-Eichmann 2015.

49 Theune-Großkopf 2010, 7.

with such evidence as we have of them. It contrasts too with *berufsmässigen* models such as Fleischer's, in which the poet is to be seen as part of an equally discrete, largely mobile, perhaps even itinerant, class of a kind that has been suspected from OE poetic texts such as *The Wanderer*, *The Seafarer* and *Deor*. The peripatetic, patron-seeking lifestyle seems explicit in OE *Widsith*. 'Thus wandering · / by fortune / driven : the *gleomen* travel · through many lands' writes the *Widsith* poet, ostensibly from personal experience,<sup>50</sup> whilst the first-person voice of OE *Deor* laments the loss of his former position as *beodeninga scōp*, poet at the court of the legendary Heoden.<sup>51</sup> How is this circle to be squared?

Theune's notion of the local hero gains some support from stable-isotope analysis of her subject's tooth enamel.<sup>52</sup> Although dental isotope data can tell us nothing about where and how Trossingen 58 spent his adult life, they do at least reveal that he was buried within the region of his childhood. He is by no means displaced. If he has travelled, he has returned. The grave finds too lack obviously exotic items that might connect him to distant places. On the other hand, the weapons and the defensive capability that they represent may still indicate an aptness to participation in travel, whether of a peaceable nature or on some kind of military service, whilst a mobile lifestyle may also be hinted at by a stoppered wooden flask, suggesting a form of victualling more portable than we see in the pots, horns, beakers, buckets and platters which are usually associated with refreshments of the table and feasting hall.<sup>53</sup> Indeed it is of a form generally described as *Pilger-* or *Feldflasche*, 'pilgrim flask' or 'field flask', in the archaeological literature. As we have seen, two such flasks accompanied Oberflacht 84, and another accompanied Cologne 100.<sup>54</sup> Further isotope analyses now in preparation elsewhere, notably in England, may or may not add to this picture: only time will tell. But already the question benefits from increasing numbers of finds and from their broadening distribution within the landscape.<sup>55</sup> For if Abingdon 42 raised hope that lyre finds might some day be looked for amongst the wider population, that hope has been amply justified by subsequent discoveries.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, as I shall shortly show, lyres now appear more widespread and more frequent than we have hitherto dared to suppose, to such an extent that space and number, as well as context, are beginning to have something to contribute too.

50 *Swa scriþende · gesceapum hweorfad : gleomen gumena · geond grunda fela*. Chambers 1912, lines 135–136.

51 Heoden can be identified with Hetele in later German sources, Heðinn in ON (his name is spelled 'Henden' in the *Widsith* MS).

52 Theune-Großkopf 2010, 20–21.

53 According to analyses by Manfred Rösch, residues within the flask indicated that it had contained a strong honeyed beer. Theune-Großkopf 2010, 90–91.

54 Wooden *Feldflaschen* of much the same form are re-

ported also from Oberflacht graves 11, 14, 30, 34, 71/2, 79, 82, 233, together with one of barrel type in grave 23 and another in 70; Schiek 1992. Where they are described in the Roman finds literature their military connexion is usually presumed, and sometimes evident, whereas in the medieval literature pilgrimage is the more usual attribution.

55 For the musical value of archaeological context and spatial distribution see Lawson 2006.

56 Lawson 1978b; Lawson 1987; Lawson 2001.



The popular, as it were democratizing, implication of the Caedmon story was helpfully revisited in 2007 by John Hines and colleagues, in a volume of papers devoted to Caedmon's place in Bede's writing. Whereas to an earlier generation of philologists, such as C. L. Wrenn,<sup>57</sup> *cithara* and *bearpe* had seemed the exclusive preserve of the élite, to archaeologists such as Hines and the present writer Caedmon's experience increasingly indicated a poetic tradition with a very much broader base, in which the role of *scōp* might be without formal social limitation. Like 'poet' and 'musician' today, it was a calling, perhaps even a lifestyle, but not a job title. Within this looser framework, much of the Anglo-Saxon population might be imagined participating in *scōpcraft* – in harping and vernacular versifying – in a spirit of inclusivity and continuity that would serve to bind together the whole of society in a matrix of shared tradition. Its more skilful exponents, whether élite figures like *Widsith* or rustics like Caedmon's fellows, might be imagined from time to time emerging from the mass of the population to fill prominent positions in Barbarian cultural life, according to wit and opportunity.

Such a scenario is hugely attractive, especially for what it might say about the character and techniques of early OE poetic tradition, and perhaps about mechanisms of ancient Tradition more generally. In an oral literature of the kind that the early Anglo-Saxons and their Germanic cousins are widely believed to have inherited,<sup>58</sup> according to Caedmon's example the predominant dynamic of storage and transmission becomes one of collective as much as individual recall, and the sharing of material and process strengthens and consolidates the tradition. The broader the repository – the more commonly things such as styles, rules, conventions, geographical and historical subject matter are shared and practised – the more robust becomes the transmission of information.

Yet such an egalitarian vision is not without its interpretive risks when applied to the hard archaeology. It must be remembered that, with almost the sole exception of the Caedmon story, household and householder models of ownership are entirely dependent upon later historical and indeed modern experience. Although they may appear *consistent* with the earliest textual evidence, neither enjoys any direct contemporaneous or even near-contemporaneous support; and from this weakness flow certain consequences. By tacitly embedding the lyre within the material culture as a whole, each to an extent risks imposing interpretive limits, confining it to the daily round. Lyre finds – even those of kingly graves such as Sutton Hoo and Taplow – become mere elements of domestic routine, perhaps not even personal to their dead. Hines argues as much when he draws a parallel with the feasting equipment that accompanies the royal lyres, remarking that “we can safely assume that the lord of the hall provided the feasts without

57 See for example French 1945; Wrenn 1962.

58 In a much quoted passage, Tacitus (*Germania* 2) not only states that the ancient songs (*carminis antiquis*) of the Germans are the memorials and annals of

their race (*apud illos memoriae et annalium genus est*) but in doing so seems to imply that commemoration is also their prime function.

cooking or serving them himself”<sup>59</sup> Such a circumscribed view of the lyre’s function, in which the instrument is somehow detached from and impersonal to the owner of the grave, may also have the effect of helping to perpetuate the tacit assumption, still quite widespread within archaeological circles, that music and poetry are of interest to Ancient Studies primarily as proxies for entertainment. Sure, this represents a viewpoint, as far as it goes, and it would be absurd to deny that entertainment (of the right sort) was held in high esteem within early medieval feasting culture. But this ought not be allowed to impose upon the archaeological evidence, especially if what we are seeking from that evidence is a deeper understanding of the finds’ potential roles, particularly as measures or indices of the ownership of poetry and Tradition. If we take a more holistic view of the evidence a somewhat different picture begins to emerge, in which a distinctly political engagement may also be discerned. One of Hines’ colleagues, Scott DeGregorio, finds in Hild’s response to Caedmon, and in the use to which Bede puts their story, support for the notion of a specific political application for vernacular song, including Caedmon’s Hymn: its application to the highly charged matter of ecclesiastical reform, as Bede and his friends set out to re-invigorate the Church’s mission in 8th-century England.<sup>60</sup> Let us look again at the evidence of some of the other early medieval narratives.

## 6 Princely poets

Despite its remoteness in time and despite its mythical elements, Saxo’s telling of Hiarno’s story may bear further inspection. The bare facts appear to be as follows. Frotho the king<sup>61</sup> has died fighting supernatural beings.<sup>62</sup> A competition is launched in order to supply a praise song which should preserve his glorious reputation for future generations. Since his only heir, Fridlevus, is absent, presumed dead, it is decided that the very crown of Denmark should be the prize. Hiarnus’ verse wins, and time passes; but when Fridlevus returns unexpectedly from his travels, the Danes urge Hiarnus to abdicate (he has been governing ineffectually, Saxo assures us, by way of justification). Rather than retire into vulgar and dishonourable obscurity (and here Saxo describes his origins just as Bede does Caedmon’s, as being “of the peasantry”)<sup>63</sup> he chooses to stay and fight. The nation is thus divided and civil war ensues. When Fridlevus’ army prevails in battle, Hiarnus retreats to Jutland, where he is finally routed and seeks refuge on “the island that

59 Hines 2007, 219.

60 DeGregorio 2007, 68–78.

61 Frotho is generally designated the third Danish king of that name, Frotho III, who may be equated with the hero Fruote of OE *Widsith*; Gillespie 1973, 48.

62 The dates of Frotho, whom Saxo identifies as the son

of Fridlevus, are not known for certain. If he existed at all, he would have lived several centuries before Saxo’s time. Frotho’s life story occupies the major part of Saxo’s Book V.

63 Knabe et al. 1908–1912, 6.3.2 [4]: *rusticae condicionis hominem*.

now bears his name”.<sup>64</sup> From there, in time, he travels back alone to Fridlevus’ court, craftily disguised as a salt-maker, with a view to attaching himself as a servant to the king’s household and killing him. When the disguise fails the two men meet in single combat and Hiarnus himself is killed.

So much for the legend, it seems. But there is some external support for the idea that at least one early Danish poet may indeed have achieved a high station in life, perhaps high enough to allow him to aspire to kingship. Although brief enough in Saxo’s telling, the tale connects with other traditions of a poet-hero of similar name, perhaps cognate, which, despite corruptions in later tradition, may help flesh out Hiarnus’ improbable career trajectory. In the South German poem *Kudrun* (a work preserved in *Das Ambraser Heldenbuch* of ca. 1240) and in the Middle German *Dukus Horant* (a poem written in Hebrew characters in a codex of 1382 preserved in the Cairo Genizah) the eponymous singer Hôrant von Tenemark (Denmark) is a retainer to Hetele (or Etene, OE *Heoden*) who sends him as his ambassador on a mission to seek Hilde Hagen’s daughter in marriage. Marriage and marriage embassies are widely acknowledged to have been one of the most important political devices in early medieval statecraft.<sup>65</sup> The assignment proves a dangerous one for Horant, since Hagen is the jealous father to end all jealous fathers; but Horant possesses the musical skills of an Orpheus<sup>66</sup> and his poetic diplomacy is eventually crowned with success. Hiarnus’ literary character may be obliquely referenced too in the Anglo-Saxon sphere, where in the OE poem *Deor* the eponymous poet laments that he has lost his job, or rather estate, to one ‘Heorrenda, þæt lēoð-cræftig monn’ (‘that song-powerful man’). *Deor*’s ostensible association with the court of Heoden tallies, and thereby with the tales of Hetele, Hagen and Hilde, even finding an echo in OE *Widsith* where in line 21 the poet expresses knowledge of these events by his coupling of *Hagen Holmrycgum ond Heoden Glommum*, ‘Hagen of the Holmrycgings and Heoden [Hetele] of the Glommas’ in a catalogue of famous heroes and legends. Both of their peoples belong in the Danish sphere (incidentally Hrothgar too gets a thumbnail in lines 45–49, as the famous Danish warrior-king).

The proposition that a poet and musician might attain political power draws further support from other early medieval instances of princely musicianship. Whilst Hrothgar is perhaps the most notable in the OE literature, both as singer and as patron, there is also the Burgundian prince Gundaharius or Gundicarius, Middle High German (MHG) Gunther, who, as the *harpa*-playing Gunnarr ‘vin Borgunda’ of Scandinavian tradition, is commemorated in some of the most memorable tableaux in the entire canon of Scandinavian medieval art (Fig. 5).<sup>67</sup> In *Widsith* lines 55–56 one Gūðhere the Burgundian is

64 Hjarnø is a small island at the mouth of Horsens Fjord, on the Baltic coast of Jutland. But this may merely be Saxo attempting to anchor his myth in the physical world.

65 See for example Bornholdt 2005.

66 For Orpheus see Vendries, this volume.

67 Lawson 1978a.



Fig. 5 Stone baptismal font from Norum, Bohuslän, Sweden, showing the captive Burgundian prince Gunnar in the snake pit, playing a lyre with his toes. Around 1100 CE.

celebrated as a patron of poets, rewarding *Widsith* himself with gold. Then there is the eminently historical Geilamir, the Vandal leader whom Procopius cameos seeking the solace of a *kithara* during the siege of his fortress at Pappua, Numidia, in around 570. And from that same decade there is the no less historical figure of Venantius Fortunatus, poet amongst the Merovingian Franks.

Much quoted by organologists for a poem in which he famously apportions certain instruments (or to be more precise, certain instrument names) to the panegyric traditions of different nations, the relevance of Fortunatus' personal history to Barbarian poetry is surprisingly neglected. Maybe it is because he is remembered for his Latin verse, or rather, because such of his verse as survives is rooted firmly in the Latin tradition; maybe it is compounded by his North Italian origin. Maybe it is because, like Caedmon, he shows religious tendencies, composing Christian hymns (such as the famous *Vexilla regis prodeunt* and *Pange lingua gloriosi*) and eventually becoming bishop in St Hilary's ancient see of Poitiers. Nevertheless a critical, and as it were anthropological, view of his oeuvre and *modus operandi* shows them to be in no profound sense inconsistent with the career dynamics of a *Widsith* or a *Deor*, or even a Hiarnus.

Arriving in Francia as a youth, the political circles in which Fortunatus moves there are from the outset decidedly Germanic. He immediately attaches himself to the court of the king of Austrasian Franks, Sigibert of Metz and his Visigoth wife Brunihildis, performing at their wedding in about 567. According to the details he reveals in his books of *carmina*, which he will later publish, he appears to spend the remainder of his life running back and forth on embassies between friends and patrons, massaging egos and smoothing paths with his panegyrics, eulogies and encomia. He addresses his praises to Frankish rulers like Sigibert and Charibert and Chilperic both on his own account and as advocate for others, notably for church figures like bishop Gregory of Tours (the

historian of the Franks) whose life he successfully defends in verse in 580 against false charges of treason. He supports the Thuringian abbess of Poitiers, Radegund (formerly the wife of Frankish king Chlothair I) when she appeals to Justin II and his empress Sophia in Byzantium for relics of the True Cross. Whether or not he ever composes in the Barbarian manner he does not say, and he includes no such poems in his published verse, but we can be reasonably sure that he is at least acquainted with vernacular tastes since this is hinted at both by the traditions he lists in *carmen* 7.8 to his friend Lupus, Duke of Champagne and, as Judith George remarks,<sup>68</sup> by the playful use of alliteration that he exhibits in a short *carmen* addressed to the young king Childebert II.<sup>69</sup> His is an intensely political life, rewarded, like *Widsith* and *Deor*, by noble gifts of land and by a distinguished appointment.<sup>70</sup>

Much the same political career path can be seen the world over. It can be guessed, for example, and more than guessed, in the journeys of the Baghdadi poet and musician Ali ibn Nafi, pupil of al-Mawsili, who progressed to be chief minister to the emir Abd ar-Rahman II in early 9th-century Spain. It is abundantly clear outside the European theatre too: in the Near East, for example, in India and beyond. And of course the long history of Roman imperial court poetry abounds in political poets and poetical politicians: one need only think of Corippus at the court of Justinian in the 6th century (and indeed that of Justin II, his successor); of Claudian in the entourage of Stilicho in around 400, or of Ausonius' compositions in honour of Gratian in the 4th century. For these men panegyric was a powerful political tool, just as it is today – even if we now have many more subtle forms and media in which to express it, and other names with which to describe it. Neither was its flattery targeted only at rulers and courtiers. But since I have already visited these and other cases at length elsewhere,<sup>71</sup> I shall not labour their particulars now, except to make this observation: that it seems unreasonable, indeed illogical, to argue that any of the high-achievers I have described could have suddenly become poets and musicians *after* securing their political advancement. Poetry and musicianship were surely skills that they would have brought with them from their youths. And even if we cannot assume that a poetical reputation would necessarily have earned them their titles, in the manner that Saxo claims for Hiarnus, it surely cannot have failed to add lustre to their candidature. Indeed the impression we gain from their stories is one of the very high value attached to accomplishment and knowledge and a facility with words. Perhaps this should come as no great surprise. A poet's skills and resources

68 George 1995, 118.

69 'On King Childebert', designated 'Appendix 5' by George 1995, 118.

70 For a concise political treatment of Fortunatus as forerunner of the panegyrists of Carolingian Gaul, see especially Godman 1987.

71 Graeme Lawson. "Old English Poets, Dangerous Knowledge and Secret Agency in Late Antiquity: A Musical and Archaeological Viewpoint?". In *Knowledge to Die For: Secret Knowledge in the Ancient World*. Ed. by F. Geller. Forthcoming.

are likely to have been as close as a person could come to scholarship in a pre-literate society, and scholarship itself has been a frequent attribute of historical kingship, from Alfred the Great to Alfonso the Wise and beyond.

In Barbarian Europe this esteem for verse is perhaps most vividly expressed by the author of *Orkneyinga saga*, reporting a stanza by Kali Kolsson, later earl Rognvald (Raugnvalldr) Kali of Orkney in the Northern Isles of Scotland (r. 1136–1158). In it we hear Kali playfully boasting:

Tafl em ec aurr at efla, iþrottir kann ec nú,  
týne ec traulla runum, tíð er bok oc smíþer,  
skríða kann ec í skíðum, skýt ec oc ræ sva at nýter,  
hvert veggja kann ec at higgja harpslátt oc bragþáttu.<sup>72</sup>

[At the chess] table am/I an enthusiast, [of such] pastimes can/I [do] nine:  
rarely [do] I forget [a] rune, [oft-]times I [read] a book and write,  
slide can/I on skis, shoot/I and row, if needed;  
[and] either of [these] twins can I do: harping and verse.<sup>73</sup>

The saga-writer devotes much space to the story of Kali's sea voyage to the Holy Land, and supplies several examples of his verses, as well as verses composed by poets who are amongst his closest retainers. He was himself the kinsman of poets, we are told. His grandfather Kali Sæbjarnarson, who as an estate-holder held lands in Norway under king Magnus Olafsson 'Bare-Legs' (r. 1093–1103), was "a great sage, dear to the king and good with words."<sup>74</sup> His uncle too was a prominent *skald*: Magnus Erlendsson, earl of Orkney, later Saint Magnus.<sup>75</sup>

If Rognvald, Magnus and their poet-friends and kinsmen represent what we might call the 'skaldic' model for vernacular *scōþcræft*, it is a model that is perhaps most powerfully expressed in the person of the 10th-century poet Egil Skalla-Grímsson whose story we know from his own Icelandic saga compiled and composed from Icelandic tradition in around 1230.<sup>76</sup> A complex character – at times exuberant, at others sentimental, soulful, yet capable of great violence – he was also by tradition a family man, a householder

72 ON text after Jonaeus 1780, 150. Jonaeus' Latin translation reads: *in alea instauranda sum alacer · artes novem calleo · vix dedisco characteres Runicos · frequens est mihi liber & ars fabrilis · xylosoleis vehi possum · jaculor & remigo ut sit utile · utrumque, ni fallor, teneo · chitarizandi artem & rythmorum sectiones*. The saga survives in manuscript in the codex known as *Flateyjarbók* (Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies, Reykjavik, MS Gks 1005) compiled ca. 1390.

73 Near-literal translation by the present author. For a

modern literary translation see Pálsson and Edwards 1978; Pálsson and Edwards 1981, 108.

74 *Kali var spekingr mikill oc kærri kongi oc orti vel* (Jonaeus 1780, 108). The saga writer includes an example of Kali Sæbjarnarson's strongly alliterative verse (Jonaeus 1780, 114).

75 For Magnus' poetry and musicianship see De Geer 1985.

76 Snorri Sturluson, *Egils saga Skalla-Grímssonar*. Einarsson 2003.

and, like Rognvald and Magnus, no stranger to foreign travel. The saga-writer supplies something of his genealogy and early childhood, of his marriage and children, and of his death and his pagan burial mound at Tjaldness in the West of Iceland. We are told of his family's estates at Borg and Mosfell nearby, and of his family and neighbours there, including amongst them other poets.<sup>77</sup> He has even named one of his sons Gunnar. We hear him attending at the Althing, or parliament, disputing points of traditional law. Most importantly the saga-writer includes remains of his verses. But there are also accounts of his overseas journeys and of his contacts with ruling élites along the way. He leaves Iceland on four separate occasions between around 925 and 960, in the course of which he visits the Scandinavian mainland and England, joining piratical raids on Denmark, Friesland and Saxony. We know that he is a pagan, that he composes political verse (including both panegyric and polemical forms) and counts earls and kings amongst his patrons – and enemies – in England and Norway. Included amongst the former are the Christian West-Saxon king Æthelstan (r. 924–939) in whose army he fights at 'Vin Moor' in around 937, whilst the latter includes the not-so-Christian king of Northumbria, the Norwegian Eiríkr Haraldsson 'Bloodaxe', from whose anger his poem *Höfuðlausn* ('Head Ransom') narrowly saves him at York in 948.

From these diverse Barbarian examples, Burgundian, Vandal and later Norse, one may begin to wonder whether the reality behind Saxo's story of Hiarno's ordinariness and, if I dare say it, behind Bede's story of Caedmon's ordinariness too, may be a little less straightforward than either author would like us to believe. After all, Saxo, like Bede before him, has his political axes to grind. Admittedly all of the poets I have mentioned have to an extent been self-selecting, known to history because of the prominence they achieved in their own day; and inevitably they must represent the more prosperous end of their calling. No doubt there were many more whose attainments failed to guarantee them a place in either history or myth. But it is noteworthy how those that are reported do appear accustomed to foreign travel, how repeatedly they engage in political activity, and how their art evidently supports them in their diplomacy. So when we come to re-evaluate our earlier grave finds, whilst we may find the idea of commonality and commonness attractive, and notions of the householder as poet, it would perhaps be a mistake to assume ordinariness, even when accompanying grave goods appear scanty. The question, as always, is one of *representativeness*: whether we should imagine a sparseness of grave furnishings to represent parsimony or taphonomy; and, by the same token, whether we should imagine evidence of a political element in the texts to be typical or inflated by literary bias.<sup>78</sup> Might not Hiarnus (supposing that he existed) have been a member of the king's *comitatus* whose poetry merely embellished an otherwise political

77 Notably Einar Scale-Clatterer of Breidafjord. *Egils saga* 78.

archaeological record see Lawson 2005; Lawson 2008.

78 For issues of representativeness in the music-

career? And, in the real world, might not Caedmon (who surely did exist) have been a poet all along?

## 7 Further 'simple graves'

The questions of status which Trossingen 58 raised had been foreshadowed not only by Abingdon 42 but also by three subsequent discoveries in the East of England; and here too questions of representativeness would prove a challenge. In 1973 gravel extraction near the village of Bergh Apton, Norfolk, on a low ridge overlooking the river Chet (a modest tributary of the Yare), revealed the remnant of a cemetery of much the same date, now comprising just 63 inhumations of men, women and children.<sup>79</sup> In one of these, designated grave 22, were various small objects of iron and copper alloy, together with skeletal remains of an adult, much-degraded.<sup>80</sup> The body seemed to have been laid on its back. Of the legs only the femurs remained, but these were enough to show that the knees had been raised and had then tilted to the person's left, giving them a seated appearance. Framed in the space above the knees and to the left of the torso were the remains of a delicate wooden object, of which portions had been preserved by copper-mineralisation: by copper salts emanating from the corrosion of small copper-alloy fittings. Later examination showed it to be another lyre, its delicate construction similar to Sutton Hoo and lacking only that royal lyre's extravagant decoration.<sup>81</sup>

The person's status now became the principal focus of archaeological (as distinct from organological) discussion. Accompanying finds were few: the dry, acid soils of this part of Norfolk and Suffolk are hostile to metals as well as to organics, and part of the upper body area had already been destroyed by quarrying when the excavation began. Such finds as there were, however – two small buckles and an iron knife – hinted that the person had been male, an impression supported by the lack of female attributes of the kind seen in women's graves nearby. The absence of weaponry might or might not prove significant: a shield and/or a spear were the norm for male burials in this cemetery (of which generally only the metal parts remained, heavily crusted); but either type of weapon might have been lost with the missing part of the grave. Otherwise the grave's size and form were not dissimilar to those of Abingdon 42. Only the absence of a sword provided obvious contrast, but then such ostentation seems to have been rare at Bergh Apton in any case: grave 19 contained a sword, but otherwise the principal surviving indicators of the community's prosperity consisted of beads, rings and brooches.<sup>82</sup>

79 Green and Rogerson 1978, 1–5.

80 Green and Rogerson 1978, 21.

81 Lawson 1978b, 87–93.

82 Besides numerous annular brooches, including those from graves 7, 18, 37 and 64, there are four fibulae of cruciform type from graves 5, 6, 18 and 37, and two of square-headed type from graves 7 and 64.



Other accessories included decorative wrist-clasps and, in the case of women, 'chate-laines' or girdle-hangers; but precious metals were few. Two large square-headed Cu-alloy brooches, one in male grave 7 and the other in male grave 64, had elaborate carved decoration, gilded and plated with silver. No evidence remained of coffins or beds, or of any of the fine wooden furnishings that were preserved so beautifully at Oberflacht and Trossingen; likewise, little remained of any textiles. Thus, apart from the lyre, there was nothing to suggest that the person in grave 22 was in any way highly placed. And yet, for him to have been buried in the cemetery at all a certain status would still have been necessary. Thus whilst his burial might seem to lack ostentation, his position was still broadly consistent with an ordinary free man, if not a householder,<sup>83</sup> and because so little was still known about the *scōp* and what it really meant to be (or to have been) a *scōp*, some relationship to that central mystery still could not be ruled out.

In grave 97 at Morning Thorpe, some 9 miles (15 km) SW of Bergh Apton, this sense of ordinariness was repeated in a little more detail, providing a clearer pointer to the person's status within the community.<sup>84</sup> The lyre itself was highly fragmented: the upper part of the grave contained numerous mineralised wooden fragments. Nevertheless two with copper-alloy fittings sufficiently resembled a feature of the Bergh Apton find to justify a similar identification. At the time their organological value appeared slight, but the context proved to be of some interest. Accompanying finds included a shield boss and the head and detached ferrule of a spear.<sup>85</sup> There was a small knife in the upper-body area and a number of metal clothing accessories such as wrist-clasps and small buckles. Some pieces were suspected of having been disturbed from an earlier female grave, but this did not seem to apply to the lyre. No skeletal remains were found. However, the condition of a number of detached teeth found in the upper-body area suggested that the principal had been a young adult. He sported a copper-alloy fibula of cruciform type, with punched decoration and dragon-head ornament.

The grave appeared not to be one of the richer graves in the cemetery. Compared to the Bergh Apton community Morning Thorpe seemed to contain a higher proportion of affluent persons. In addition to nine cremations, around 365 inhumations remained. Amongst males, spears and shields again appeared to be the preferred form of armament, and fibulae the most frequent (surviving) form of ostentation. Only grave 218 contained a sword, grave 362 the only axe (together with a spear, but no shield). Graves 16, 30, 90, 96, 153, 346, 353 and 370 had three fine fibulae each, whilst in graves 288, 359 and 371 there were single large gilt and silvered fibulae of square-headed type. Beads were numerous and, in female graves, girdle-hangers were frequent, some of them very finely made. Feasting culture was represented by large wood-and-metal vessels, as well as

83 Lawson 1978b, 96.

85 Green, Rogerson and White 1987, 63, 231–233.

84 Lawson 1987.

pottery: a large iron-bound wooden tub accompanied the male in grave 35 and another smaller tub in male grave 200 together with two vessels of copper-alloy sheet. Male-and-female grave 148 contained a fine cone-beaker of imported glass. Other buckets included one with the sword (and a spear and shield) in male grave 218, and two more in male-and-female grave 238. In short, excepting the presence of the lyre, grave 97 again gives the impression of a neutral, inconspicuous position in the social order: neither peasant nor important householder. Yet he is still a fighting man amongst fighting men, and for all its fragmented condition we can see that his musical instrument has been a fine one.

The third of the three lyre players emerged in 1992 from excavations on Snape Common, in the Sandlings district of coastal Suffolk, on raised ground overlooking the River Alde. The existence of a cemetery had long been known from the presence of several large burial mounds which had been variously explored by antiquarians during the 19th century.<sup>86</sup> They included the famous ship burial, investigated in 1862. In the 1980s it was noticed that parts of the remaining site were being endangered by agricultural erosion: unlike the gravel subsoils of Bergh Apton and Morning Thorpe the ground here was light and sandy, and subject to degradation by the combined action of ploughing, irrigation and wind. Ploughing had begun in the 1950s (the site having previously been pasture) and some mounds had already been ploughed out. Some graves had become dangerously shallow. Following renewed excavations at Sutton Hoo in 1983, therefore, the affected areas were scheduled for investigation, and were dug by William Filmer-Sankey and Tim Pestell over several seasons between 1985 and 1992. Grave 32, which lay on the very edge of one of the excavated areas, Area B, close to the verge of the modern roadway, was one of the very last to be explored. Here again the acid nature of the ground had taken its toll of both organics and metalwork. However, this time the comparative sterility of the soil – there had been few trees and little in the way of nutriment to encourage faunal disturbance of the soil structure – had left organic features silhouetted as dark stains in the pale orange sand of the grave floor. The body lay on its back, turning slightly to its left (the left knee was turned outwards) with the shield placed as a cover above the head and torso. To the left of the upper body were fragments of a large, delicate wooden object with copper-alloy fittings. Removed as a soil block and investigated in the laboratory,<sup>87</sup> it proved to be another lyre, the wooden elements again preserved by copper-mineralisation.<sup>88</sup> Although distorted in the process of drying out, the surface detail showed it to be a finely made instrument. So what kind of person had owned it?

86 Filmer-Sankey and Pestell 2001.

logy, Oxford.

87 The work of investigation and conservation was carried out by Vanessa Fell at the Institute of Archaeo-

88 Lawson 2001.

The finds were of a distinctly male type. The weaponry – spear,<sup>89</sup> shield and small iron knife – connected him with Morning Thorpe, and indeed one of the elements of the lyre provided a close parallel for features of the Morning Thorpe and Bergh Apton finds. In addition the man wore a fine composite buckle at his waist and carried an iron strike-a-light. An equally fine wooden drinking bowl had been placed at his feet: like the fragments of lyre, it survived only where Cu-mineralisation from a repair had preserved part of the rim. He thus gave a clearer impression of prosperity than was apparent at either Bergh Apton or Morning Thorpe. But still there was no evidence of wealth, as such. There seemed to be no brooch, no beads or other dress accessories; no expensive trinkets. His burial still seemed a very functional one.

On the other hand the location of the grave seemed suggestive of more. If Morning Thorpe showed a musician in proximity to a prosperous class, here surely was a musician in proximity to the ruling class, for the ship burial was not the only grave in the cemetery to carry an aristocratic implication. Eight or nine other substantial mounds had been recorded. One of them, robbed-out grave 33, lay only 15m to the south of 32 and had once been surrounded by a ring ditch.<sup>90</sup> A few metres to the east and still within Area B were parts of two others, while just beyond eastern limit of excavation the remains of Mound 4 still lie unexplored. The finds from the cemetery also indicated a prosperous, even wealthy community. Apart from the ship and its contents, brooches, weapons (spears and shields) and feasting vessels of various kinds were numerous. Grave 1 contained a fine glass beaker of Continental type. Grave 16 contained a particularly fine fibula. In grave 47, which lay immediately to the south-west of Mound 4, the body was found to be enclosed in a boat, together with a sword, shield, three spears, a stave-built wooden bucket and (added on the north-west corner of the grave) a horse's skull with its harness. Under the man's head were traces of fibres thought to derive from a feather pillow. With such wealth all around him, a poet in need of patronage need have looked no further. And of course the same might equally be said for a wealthy person in need of a poet.

Questions of distribution also now began to emerge. It might be too early to say much about their place in the wider landscape, but already all four lyre graves – Abingdon, Bergh Apton, Morning Thorpe and Snape – seemed to exhibit two common geographical traits. Each lay close to a line or lines of communication: to rivers and coastal waters or, inland, to known Roman roads and other ancient land routes. And together with a metal lyre bridge and tuning peg from a robbed grave near Oakley (overlooking

89 The spiked iron ferrule was found within the NE corner of the grave, beyond the dead man's left foot, in a position suggesting that it may have been planted there as a grave marker. Part of the socket of an iron spear-head was found in the plough soil just

beyond the NW corner, to the left of the dead man's head. Filmer-Sankey and Pestell 2001, 77, fig. 56.

90 Filmer-Sankey and Pestell 2001, 13, reverse of fold-out plan.

the river Waveney close to the same Roman road that passes Morning Thorpe) they all lay within a day's journey of one or another centre of Anglian royal activity: at Snape and Sutton Hoo, naturally, but also at Rendlesham, Bede's *Casa Rendili*, the chief villa of the kings of the East Angles.<sup>91</sup> Could we now be glimpsing an emerging cluster, or even network, of people whose calling required that they be within reach of royal and aristocratic patronage? The organology appeared suggestive.<sup>92</sup> Each lyre was closely similar in structure to Sutton Hoo and Taplow, and had been manufactured to the same rigorous standards, evidently at the high end of woodworking craft tradition. They were by no means rustic, home-made instruments, but the work of specialists. How could this be?

## 8 Princely poets: the Prittlewell find

The next breakthrough came near the site of Prittlewell Priory, on the outskirts of Southend-on-Sea in Essex, when in 2003 archaeological prospection in preparation for road improvement works revealed a substantial chamber tomb of the late 6th or early 7th century, once covered by an earthen tumulus.<sup>93</sup> Other Anglo-Saxon graves had been found in the surrounding area since the 19th century, notably during the construction of the nearby railway line, so finds had been expected. What was quite unexpected, however, was the richness of this particular grave. The site had been prominently situated on raised ground between the northern shore of the Thames Estuary and the marshes at the head of the tidal river Roach. It again benefitted from a near-sterile sandy soil, and during the course of excavation the chamber yielded finds of such quantity and wealth as to indicate that the person buried there was either a ruler himself or, if not, had at least belonged to the highest echelons of the ruling élite. He had been buried in a wooden chest laid against the north wall of the chamber. Amongst the furniture, weapons and other equipment festooning the floor and wooden walls of the chamber, which had become filled with sand during the gradual collapse of the roof, were objects and utensils associated with feasting, including some fine imported items. Within the chest, or coffin, were two small crucifixes of gold foil, thought to have been placed over the dead man's eyelids. On the floor by the south wall lay the complete silhouette of a lyre (Fig. 6 and Fig. 7). Although reduced to a dark powdery stain, it contained within its shapely outline the now-familiar pieces of wood, preserved by salts emanating from the corrosion of numerous small copper-alloy and silver fittings. This time, however, preservation seemed to have been enhanced by mineralisation from the oxidation of pieces of iron.

91 Lawson 2006, 5.

92 Lawson 2009.

93 Hirst 2004; Blackmore et al. 2019.

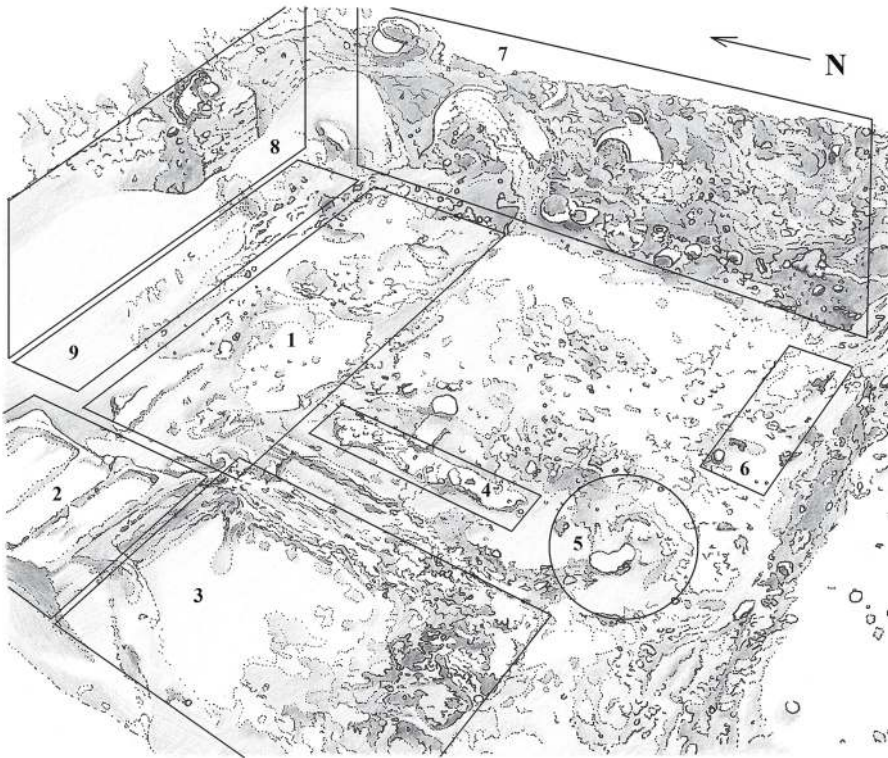


Fig. 6 The Prittlewell tomb, Essex, first quarter of the 7th century CE. General view of the excavation of the chamber in progress (1 – coffin; 2 – folding stool; 3 – wicker basket; 4 – sword; 5 – shield; 6 – location of the lyre, not yet revealed; 7 – East wall with suspended feasting vessels and equipment; 8–9 – North wall and floor, ditto).

The absence of display items from the interior of the coffin, excepting the crosses, and the profusion of valuable objects outside it have suggested that this person died in the midst, and maybe even at the political heart, of one of the most significant political and diplomatic crises to affect southern England during the first half of the 7th century. It is a reasonable proposition. Whilst his personal space within the coffin is undoubtedly Christian, the public space outside it, which includes the lyre, is undeniably pagan, or at least conforms determinedly to more traditional practice, a contradiction, or ambiguity, that has its counterpart in Bede's historical narrative of the East Saxons. Across the river, he tells us, the first Roman mission to the kingdom of Kent had begun formally in 597 under Pope Gregory I, with the arrival of the holy Augustine at the court of king Æthelberht and his queen Bertha, in Canterbury. Æthelberht, then the most powerful of all the English kings, benefitted in no small degree from Frankish political support, and no doubt the Christianizing mission served the political ambitions of both parties, as

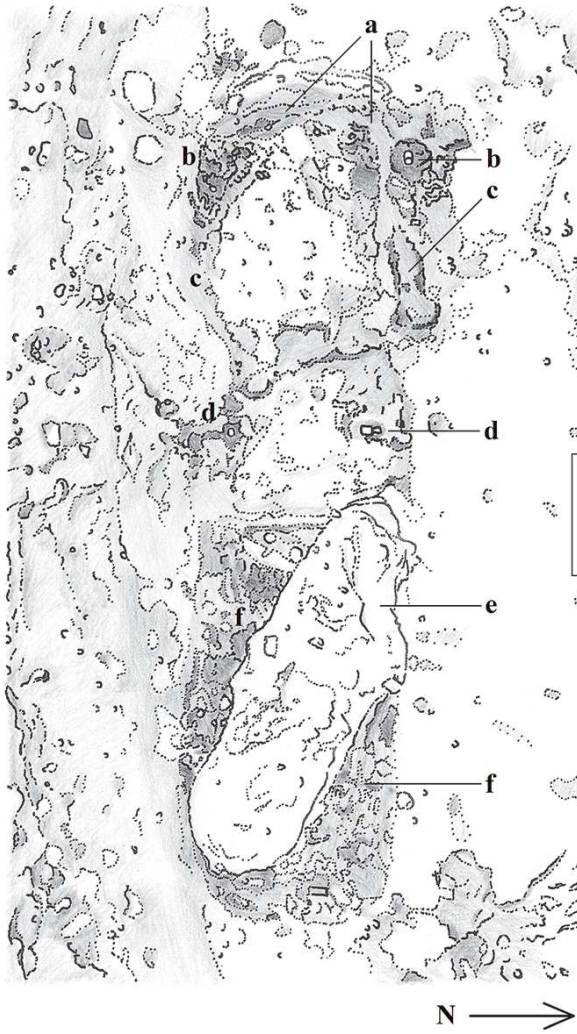


Fig. 7 The Prittlewell lyre lying face-down *in situ* during excavation (a – yoke; b – backs of gilt escutcheons; c – arms; d – backs of silver fitments; e – overlying iron concretion, unrelated; f – back of sound box). Scale: 10 cm.

indeed had Æthelberht’s earlier marriage: Bertha was the daughter of the Merovingian ruler Charibert I who, as well as being king of the Neustrian Franks at Paris, is also remembered as one of the targets of Fortunatus’ poetic diplomacy. But Æthelberht and Bertha were also uncle and aunt to the current East Saxon king, Sæberht, who ruled all of the coastlands immediately to the north of the Thames, including London and the Essex Coast. Sæberht’s dates and circumstances have therefore made him a prime candidate for the Prittlewell burial.<sup>94</sup> The nature and gravity of the ensuing crisis may be read as

94 Lawson 2019.

follows. In 604 Sæberht had received a mission from Kent, led by Augustine's aristocratic protégé Mellitus, and had soon afterwards accepted Christianity, establishing a church and see for Mellitus in London;<sup>95</sup> but, as in other Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, Sæberht's people were not entirely of the same mind. Indeed even his own family was divided. On Æthelberht's death in 616, Kent passed to his son Eadbald, who promptly reverted to paganism; and when Sæberht died shortly afterwards the crisis spread across the river into Essex.<sup>96</sup> All Sæberht's three sons, Bede says, had continued in their pagan ways whilst professing Christianity. No doubt hedging of this sort was common enough in the age of Conversion; but it led to a major disagreement with Mellitus, now bishop of the East Saxons, who seems to have suspected as much; and when he haughtily refused them the Sacrament on grounds of their heterodoxy they drove him into exile. So severe was the traditionalist backlash that followed that it would be more than a generation before Essex would again engage politically with Christianity, by which time it would be a Northumbrian, not a Kentish (and thereby Frankish), alliance that the East Saxons courted.<sup>97</sup>

But in the meanwhile one can readily imagine the tensions at Sæberht's funeral.<sup>98</sup> And it is not difficult to discern such tensions here at Prittlewell, with its two discrete phases appearing to serve on the one hand the personal preferences of the dead prince and of his Christian advisors, and on the other the contrary pressures of tradition and of public and family opinion. Did Mellitus himself stand at the graveside? Perhaps. We shall never know. But we should be in no doubt that these ritual distinctions mattered. Even without textiles and other soft furnishings, of which all but mineralised traces are now lost, the careful placement of the gold crosses in the coffin and the laying out of the various elements of hardware within the chamber – the chair, the weapons and household equipment – have something of the appearance of a stage set, dressed for alternate theatrical productions, the Christian production subsequently hidden from view while the more conservative performance took centre-stage. Evidently, although Christian sensitivities have been satisfied, traditionalism has had the last word. The presentation, though conflicted, is by no means a jumble; and in its pristine state, with the various objects framed against textiles and interspersed with other ephemera, it must have made a remarkable sight. Of course, such manifest display in the performance of state occasions, closely paralleled at Sutton Hoo, has had a very long history, both before and since. Doubtless the Christian rite was able to match Paganism's in its theatricality, albeit emphasizing its drama in a more transitory, less material way.

95 Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis anglorum* II, 3.

96 Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis anglorum* II, 5.

97 Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis anglorum* III, 22. Bede describes the rapprochement commencing with Sigibert's visits to the North and culminating in the

mission of Cedd to the East Saxon court in 653.

98 Bede refers only to Sæberht's death, and does not include him amongst rulers whose funerals merit a mention.

Archaeologists at one time tended to regard the contents of such material expositions as votive offerings or as ‘grave goods,’ equipment set aside for the comfort of the dead or for use on his or her final journey. Today they are increasingly seen in terms of their symbolism, as tableaux, the scene and its ceremonial formation not only witnessed but intended to be witnessed, remembered, and the knowledge of it disseminated both within and beyond the immediate community after the tomb was finally closed.<sup>99</sup> It is seen particularly in terms of the formation of identities.<sup>100</sup> Elsewhere in this volume Cristina Alexandrescu explores music’s place in the identities of family and the politics of family prestige, as represented in the sculptural tableaux portrayed on Roman funerary monuments where they constitute a somewhat more permanent public statement, whilst Alexandra von Lieven touches upon the physical nature and political meaning of musical elements in Ancient Egyptian tombs. Barbara Theune has described the evidence for symbolism in the contents of Trossingen 58.<sup>101</sup> Looking at material remains such as these in our search for identities for the dead, we are reminded that, ultimately, it is the living, not the dead, who enact such rituals. We also remember that funerary behaviours need not consist exclusively of pious commemoration. On the contrary. They may serve social and political functions too, even at the level of community, kinship and household. Above all they are meant to serve reputation through the agency of witnesses. Ibn Fadlān is one such witness, when in around 921 he undertakes his journey in order to observe a pagan Barbarian (in this case a ‘Russiyah,’ perhaps Viking) funeral on the banks of the river Volga.<sup>102</sup> When the *Beowulf* poet envisions such a ceremony, the ship-funeral of the legendary Danish ruler Scyld Scefing, he goes so far as to imagine people bringing exotic treasures:

- 36                                   [...] þær wæs mādma fela  
   of feor-wegum, frætwa, gelæded.  
   Ne hȳrde ic cȳmlicor cēol gegyrwan  
   hilde-wāpnum ond heaðo-wāddum  
   billum ond byrnum; .
- 43 Nalæs hī hine læssan lācum tēodan,  
   þēod-gestrēonum [...]
- 36                                   [...] there were / treasures / many  
   from far-away, trappings / brought.  
   Ne’er heard I of a comelier keel [vessel] prepared

99 See for example Herschend 2003 on Valsgärde grave 8; also Back Danielsson 2010.

100 For identity formation in the ancient world see for example Wells 2001; Kane 2003; Babić 2005; Pohl

and Mehofer 2010; Gavrielatos 2017. And in relation to ancient music; Rocconi 2010.

101 Theune-Großkopf 2010, 88–100.

102 Togan 1939.



- with battle-weapons and war-weeds [armour]  
 with bills [blades] and byrnies [shields];  
 43 No less did they / him / furnish with gifts given  
 from the nation's treasury [...].

The key word here is *gelæded*, 'brought,' though whether he means things brought from faraway for the ceremony, as Ibn Fadlan might have brought gifts with him, or merely existing imports brought from nearby is unclear. But he does offer us a second description which details the sorts of persons that are likely to have participated in such practices. Speaking of another funeral late in the poem,<sup>103</sup> he describes (or imagines) the complex *dramatis personae* involved in Beowulf's cremation at *Hrones-næsse*, a headland by the sea somewhere in what is now south-east Sweden (it is hard here not to think of the wonderful Ales Stenar, by the sea at Kåseberga in Skåne). Wiglaf the king's heir summons seven of his best war-leaders to assemble the treasure for the pyre; the Geat people then prepare the pyre itself, hanging weapons upon it; warriors lay the body on the pyre and light it; from the crowd comes the sound of weeping; the people express their grief; a lone woman keens a dirge in Beowulf's memory, lamenting hard times to come; then in the space of ten days the Geats have built a great mound over the ashes, using the skills of their best craftsmen to fashion the chamber; they load it with treasures; then finally, princes (*æpelinga bearn, ealra twelfe*, 'noble's sons: in all, twelve of them') circle the mound on horseback (here the poet uses the verb *riodan*, to ride) reciting a eulogy or eulogies in their dead king's honour, just as Hiarno and his fellows might have done, and indeed Sæberht's unnamed sons and kinsmen in Essex. Such purposefulness is evident at Prittlewell in the orderly presentation of the grave's various elements, and seems particularly captured by the presence, location and condition of the lyre.

If the form of the Prittlewell lyre raises questions about the dead man's personal engagement with music, and therefore his own musicianship and *scōpcraeft*, its precise placement within his pagan tableau, seemingly remote from his body, inevitably recalls the counter-argument that such instruments could be merely part of the household's domestic equipment. The royal lyres of Sutton Hoo and Taplow had been similarly detached. Here, however, a close inspection of its juxtapositions in the grave plan shows that it is placed not amongst the feasting equipment but lies rather in its own discrete space, unencumbered by other items (an iron concretion found lying on top of it proved to be a bundle of spears that had merely detached itself from a nail or hook on the wall). In any case it is evident from the austerity of the coffin deposit that an intimate placement would not have been appropriate there. Close by are the dead man's sword and

103 Wrenn 1953, lines 3137–3182.

shield. Moreover, microscopic examination has shown that the instrument is not a theatrical property made (or otherwise obtained) merely in order to be buried, but has had a complicated personal history of its own, being buried only after a long and seemingly distinguished royal service. It is a working lyre *and* a royal lyre, and it has been both of these things since it left its maker's workshop. If there is a paradox, it is that it should belong to the same school of manufacture as all the other English lyres: of the same elegant design, its construction and finish expressing the same investment in workmanship and materials. And of course, such comparison works both ways. If men like Snape 32 and Bergh Apton 22 are mere 'rustics', in the pejorative sense insinuated by both Bede and Saxo, why are they playing such fine instruments – instruments that are indistinguishable from those used at the courts of princes like Prittlewell?

The surprising details of the Prittlewell lyre's narrative began to emerge in the laboratory, even before any attempt was made to separate its structural elements in conservation.<sup>104</sup> From a tomography scan of the soil block it had been established that the instrument lay face-downwards, like Trossingen 58; but already there were several glimpses of a shiny yellow metal. On further investigation these proved to be the gold plating on small copper-alloy bridging plates which held together a split that ran the full length of the back of the sound box. Each plate was delicately fluted and gilded on its exposed face, and was clamped to its copper-alloy back-plate by short, dome-headed rivets whose exposed heads were also gilded. A similar series, this time in solid silver, performed the same remedial function on the sound board, at the front of the instrument. The head of the lyre too, the 'yoke' in organological terms, had been broken into at least two portions, and had been repaired by clamping the remains between two stout iron bands. If the severity of all this damage posed questions enough, the steps taken to repair it were equally perplexing. Why, in the age before modern glues, would anyone try to repair an instrument that had suffered such catastrophic failure: and what did they hope to achieve by it? Did they expect that the instrument could be made to sing again? Evidently they did, and evidently they succeeded, to an extent, for the tailpiece (a loose fitment held in place only by the tension of the strings) was still close to its predictive position, indicating that the instrument had been strung and tensioned when it was placed in the grave. But this is not all. Under the microscope the gold plating showed clear traces of wear in places that could only have been worn after the plates were fixed in place. It was becoming clear that the instrument had been repaired not simply for inclusion in the grave-group: it had been rebuilt long before, while the prince was still very much alive, and had been much handled in the meanwhile. One would like to say *much played*, but the evidence does not go quite that far. Still, it indicates at least that it

104 Conservation was carried out by Elizabeth Barham at Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA) in

consultation with the present writer: Barham 2008; Lawson 2019.

has been cherished and used in the interim. Other gilded ornament appears to be original: the two discs mounted over the principal structural joints do so in much the same decorative manner as the paired escutcheons at Sutton Hoo and Taplow. Each disc has a beaded rim and a centrally mounted garnet eye with gold-foil backing, the intervening band filled with delicately carved interlace, also worn. Yet whereas the elements of decoration show that they were intended from the outset to reflect the owner's royalty, or at least someone's royalty or royal ambitions, the disc shape and the structural principle employed closely resemble Snape 32.

These commonalities naturally bring into focus the furnishing of the other, lesser, lyre graves, including even the meagre Bergh Apton 22. Are these lesser grave groups simply depositories of equipment, or could they too represent tableaux, their compositions ceremonial, witnessed both by participants and bystanders? The number and character of such participants can only be surmised, of course, but it would perhaps be a mistake to assume that in addition to the immediate actors – presumably close family and kinsfolk – the event did not also involve onlookers: passers-by perhaps but also conceivably significant members of the circles, communities and kinship groups to which the dead had belonged. Bare as Bergh Apton 22 may now seem, stripped of its organic detail by the passage of time, the fact is that someone has still laid out the body and made the funeral arrangements, someone has still dug the grave, and someone has still assembled the equipment – including the lyre – and set it all in place. Even in a modest grave like Bergh Apton 22, the inclusion in such a display of so valuable an item as a lyre with the intention of sealing it within the grave, sacrificing it to the earth, would surely have seemed a significant as well as extravagant gesture, and could so easily mark a political choice, if only at the level of family and community. Unless expressed as a solitary act of piety (and even solitary piety may be noticed) such display would surely make it worthy of an audience, however small that audience may have been. What evidence might we hope to find to test this idea?

Secondary deposits might offer one avenue, such as we glimpsed in the rose and lavender stems that Fremersdorf found at Cologne. Barbara Theune and Manfred Rösch have already raised the probability of something similar in Trossingen 58, where Rösch identifies traces of cereals (including barley, *Hordeum vulgare*), hops (*Humulus lupulus*), wild strawberry (*Fragaria vesca*) and hedge-row flowers such as white mustard (*Sinapis alba*) and campion (*Lychnis viscaria*, 'catch-fly').<sup>105</sup> The unthreshed nature of the cereals and the inclusion of plant stems, they argue, make it unlikely that these derive from the stuffing of the man's bedding.

Another test might be in the arrangement of furnishings: do the objects for example favour particular lines of sight? A suggestive distribution has been noted at Prittlewell,

105 Rösch 2010.

where part of the central area of the chamber is, or now appears to be, bare of finds, as though to allow the placement of a ladder.<sup>106</sup> Another might be in the condition of the finds. Barbara Theune has shown that the chair, table and spear accompanying Trossingen 58 are mere tokens, unserviceable or even incomplete at the time of burial.<sup>107</sup> She attributes their compaction to the lack of space in the crowded burial chamber, drawing support from dismantled furniture found in other, non-musical graves, such as the chair referenced in grave 11 at Oberflacht by only its bird's-head terminals: in Trossingen grave 47 a weaving loom is represented only by its foot-board (the lyre, by contrast, appears to have been complete and fully functional).

A further test might be in the presentation of the bodies, and indeed of the lyres themselves: have they been displayed in a particular way? For example, are the flexing of both legs to the left in Bergh Apton 22 and the outward turn of the left leg in Snape 32, significant? We believe that the instrument is played typically on the player's left side, and it is buried in that position at Bergh Apton, Morning Thorpe, Snape and of course Trossingen. And is it merely a coincidence that several lyres are deposited in an unexpected orientation: face-downwards in the case of Prittlewell and Trossingen 58, displaying the elaborate decoration on their backs; or head-to-tail in the case of Bergh Apton 22 and, very probably, Abingdon 42? At Prittlewell the lyre was not the only item to be found lying face-downwards: so also were the nearby sword and shield, suggesting a symbolic and perhaps even functional connexion.<sup>108</sup> Is there significance, finally, in a gruesome detail of Snape 32: the unusual number of fly pupae, which suggests that the body was exposed before or during the funeral process?<sup>109</sup>

Today archaeologists have come to think of cemetery sites in anthropological terms, as aggregation centres for the expression of kinship and cultural identities, often delineated by spatial boundaries, often enjoying vistas of and visibility from the lands about them, often centring on iconic monuments such as (in the extreme case) the major tumuli at Sutton Hoo and Snape, and now Prittlewell: mounds whose implication of dynastic power would not have been lost on those involved in any acts and ceremonies occurring in the surrounding spaces. These are cemeteries, after all, not graves scattered randomly across the landscape. At Morning Thorpe, grave 97 seemed to belong to a cluster of four graves grouped near the ring ditches of two earlier monuments. Each of the other three included fragments of complex wooden objects, so far unidentified but exhibiting certain lyre-like materials and craftsmanship. Could they be lyres also, and

106 Blackmore et al. 2019.

107 Theune-Großkopf 2010, 99. Theune's claim that the Prittlewell lyre was unserviceable at the time of its burial reflects the evidence available at the time; however, as we have seen, subsequent research has shown this to be mistaken.

108 Blackmore et al. 2019.

109 Filmer-Sankey and Pestell 2001, 79; some 250 pupae of the genus *Ophyra* (*O. capensis* or *O. leucostoma*) were preserved, mineralised, on the buckle and knife (see also chapter 5, section VI).

could their arrangement be an attempt to express the relationship between poet and patron?<sup>110</sup>

## 9 The Prittlewell dividend

If Prittlewell's organology has done more than just confirm Rupert and Myrtle Bruce-Mitford's theories of the form of the Anglo-Saxon instrument, it has also done more than clarify its relationship to the continental German traditions. Its wealth of structural and remedial detail has enabled the identification of a series of new lyre finds, previously overlooked because their fragments had so far found no exact match either amongst the Sutton Hoo fragments or at Taplow. And these finds have brought with them further insights, particularly of a contextual kind, revealing more about the kinds of people that these lyre men could have been.

The details of damage seen at Prittlewell and especially the steps taken to remedy it cast an immediate spotlight on two finds from excavations in Kent, across the Thames estuary: the first from Vera Evison's excavations within the Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Buckland, Dover,<sup>111</sup> and the second from Keith Parfitt's explorations of a similar site at Mill Hill, Deal.<sup>112</sup> Evison had already proposed a tentative musical identification for Buckland 114, but for want of direct parallels it remained unproven. Mill Hill 91 likewise appeared suggestive, but no more. Each find evidently represented a large, more-or-less flat, wooden object with assorted metal fittings, consistent with a lyre in its overall dimensions but lacking a diagnostic outline or any of the tell-tale details seen in previous lyres. Each involved a row of little metal mounts on wood, portions of the wood itself being preserved at Buckland (though not, alas, at Mill Hill) by copper mineralisation. At Buckland, identification was further complicated by the excavator's conclusion that the plates surmounted a deliberate joint between two thin wooden sheets, their made edges carefully chamfered to fit snugly together. Such a design choice made neither structural nor acoustical sense in a lyre. Prittlewell now solved the puzzle at a single stroke: the joined edges were a crack, not made, and the bridging plates were repairs, not parts of the original design. It seemed that Prittlewell might be far from the only lyre to embody a complicated narrative.

110 Graves 112, 152 and 178; ring-ditches 121 (perhaps associated with grave 157) and 179; Green, Rogerson and White 1987, fig. 5; Lawson 1987, 171 (note 1); Lawson 2006, 5, fig. 5.

111 Excavated in 1851–1852. Evison 1987, 121 (discussion), 242 (catalogue); fig. 2 (plan); fig. 50 (finds).

112 Excavated in 1988–1989. For the site see Parfitt and Brugmann 1997, 13–15; fig. 4 (fold-out plan); for a discussion of both Mill Hill and Buckland, see Graeme Lawson. *The Prittlewell Lyre and the Kingdom of Kent. Anglo-Saxon Poets' Graves, from Deal and Dover*. Forthcoming.

Each confirmation brought with it valuable new contextual information. Both men were armed, fighting men. In Mill Hill 91 the lyre-like elements 'g', 'k', and 'l' formed a short series in the lower part of the grave, evidently above his right leg and aligned with it. (Apart from his femurs, which were poorly preserved, no bones remained.) Over his feet was placed a large (30 cm) bronze bowl ('f'), elaborately constructed with handles and trivet. It was upside-down. In the middle of the grave were his weapons: a fine iron sword ('e'), spear ('a') and shield ('d'), with its central boss ('d1') placed over the lower thorax or abdomen. The sword was ranged along the man's left side, from thorax to knees, the spear along his right with its head alongside his shoulder and head.<sup>113</sup> Buckland 114 likewise contained a spear, or at least an iron spear head ('2'), of which the head lay horizontally alongside the man's left foot, pointing away from him. At his waist he carried a small knife ('1'). His skeletal remains were somewhat better preserved. He lay on his back with legs extended, his arms by his sides and his head turned fully to his right. The lyre-like elements ('3; together with small metal ring '4') lay in a series over his left femur and aligned with it. Unlike Mill Hill 91, however, there was no other sign of ostentation. No evidence remained of a shield. The absence of dress-ornaments and accessories, such as brooches and buckles, was particularly striking. It is true that Evison attributed the grave with 'high status,' but she seems to have predicated this primarily on its containing the lyre, for which in those days Sutton Hoo and its royal association offered the most obvious English parallel.

Of course parsimony of finds in any of these graves may be more apparent than real, attributable simply to the failure of soft furnishings to survive: a person could be clad in silks and surrounded like Trossingen 58 by a wealth of fine wooden objects, and still no trace of prosperity might remain. But here it is all the more remarkable when we look around at the significant displays of wealth and status routinely exhibited by finds elsewhere in the cemetery, particularly in the matter of dress accessories. Brooches are everywhere, some of them with fine carved decoration and cloisonné garnet and glass (including an especially fine one in grave 126). There are glass vessels of Continental origin in graves 6, 20, 22 and 38, a metal bowl in grave 20, and other complex objects in graves C (a balance, with a purse of Roman coins), 107 (an elaborate container made from sheet bronze) and 110 (an antler comb in its case). The location of the grave within the cemetery is equally unremarkable. At the highest point in the cemetery was a prehistoric barrow surrounded by a ring ditch, and on its eastern side was a tightly defined cluster of graves (perhaps laying optimistic claims to ancestral association); but although grave 114 lies precisely to the south of the barrow's centre, it is separated from the ring ditch by some 45m of open ground and clearly belongs to a separate cluster. As at Morning Thorpe, two other Buckland graves preserve lyre-like fragments not noted

113 Parfitt and Bruggmann 1997, 150–151, 207; fig. 70; also appendix V, 245.

by Evison. Of these, grave 71, lay in the same broad range of burials as grave 114, and also had a sword, a spear, a shield and a knife.<sup>114</sup> The shield was placed next to the legs, standing on-edge rather like the shield in Trossingen 58. The other, grave 93, lay in a tight cluster of graves near the north-western edge of the survey area and had a sword, a seax (large knife) and a shield, the shield being placed over the legs.<sup>115</sup>

Be that as it may, both cemeteries are again located significantly in the wider landscape. Both are set on high ground, both are widely visible; and on a fine day each would have afforded clear views across the ocean to the Frankish shore. Moreover, neither is more than half a day's walk from a royal estate: Buckland is only 14 km from Lyminge, by former Roman road, while Mill Hill is around 10 km from a suspected royal villa at Eastry, near Sandwich.<sup>116</sup> Both enjoyed good long-distance communications too, neither being more than 22 km from the East Kentish capital, Canterbury, while Buckland lies close to the crossing of two Roman roads, the principal of which, Watling Street, connected Dover with Canterbury and London before proceeding on into the heart of England – as it still does today.

If Prittlewell has opened up new possibilities in Kent it has also done so further to the north, in East Anglia especially. Most remarkable are three graves from the large Anglo-Saxon cemetery complex on a United States Air Force base, RAF Lakenheath, in the parish of Eriswell, North-West Suffolk. Excavated in 1997 by Joanna Caruth in advance of a programme of redevelopment following the end of the Cold War, the site benefits from an alkaline soil quite different from those further to the east and south, resulting in the preservation of skeletal material and even whole skeletons.<sup>117</sup> Eriswell 313, an extended supine male, contains a pair of Fe repairs to a delicate wooden object which on closer inspection has proved to be the jointed top of a lyre, elements of the wood (a fine hardwood, perhaps maple) being preserved by iron mineralisation. The workmanship is again indistinguishable from the royal lyres. The more complete joint of the two exhibits an elegant half-mortice exactly matching the internal and external form of joints employed at Sutton Hoo and Taplow, as well as Bergh Apton 22 and Snape 32. The instrument has been placed to the right of, or perhaps diagonally across, the man's torso, with its yoke in line with his head. Apparently bundled with it is an iron spear-head, an arrangement reminiscent of the lyre and sword in Oberflacht 31, and the whole of his upper body has been covered by a large circular shield, its central boss placed over his face. An iron knife is positioned at his left thorax.

In a second extended supine male grave, Eriswell 221, parts of a large, delicate, repaired wooden structure were again found, scattered from the right of the man's head

114 Evison 1987, 235.

115 Evison 1987, 238.

116 Hawkes 1979, Parfitt and Sweetinburgh 2009.

117 Joanna Caruth and John A. Hines. *Excavations of the Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries at Eriswell*. Suffolk. Forthcoming.

(next to the iron spear-head) towards his waist, its lower part apparently cradled by his forearms (his left hand is placed over his heart, his right over his abdomen, as though holding something to his chest). The structure of the object includes a pair of copper-alloy fittings which closely match lyre fittings at Bergh Apton 22 and Snape 32, and especially the paired fittings 'H' and 'P' in Morning Thorpe 97. Associated with it was a cluster of organic and metal elements perhaps representing a purse or ditty bag: removed as a soil block and investigated in the laboratory, the block proved to contain (amongst other suggestive items) some fine spooled organic cordage preserved by iron mineralisation from the corrosion of a steel strike-a-light. The fineness, smoothness and density of the cord, and the inclusion of different gauges, suggests a specialised requirement, and could be spare stringing for a lyre. In addition to the spear-head, his weaponry included a shield, of which an iron boss and paired studs centred on his left elbow, and an iron knife which lay at his right waist. Near it were two buckles, one of copper alloy, the other of silver. In the presence of such a precious metal we may again glimpse an underlying prosperity, or claim to prosperity, which the taphonomy has otherwise failed to express. A third grave, meanwhile, is laid out somewhat differently. In Eriswell 255 the body has been placed on its right side with its legs drawn up as though seated, the right arm extended towards the raised knees and the left hand held up in front of the face. In the space between knees and face, and thus between the two hand positions, is a scatter of wood and metal fragments that are again consistent with the shape and size of a lyre. Behind his head, over his left shoulder, is an iron spear-head. An iron knife has been placed over his extended right forearm.

Within the present distribution of lyre graves, Eriswell 313, 255 and 221 are at present the most distant from any royal estate attested by Bede in the 8th century, lying as they do some 65 km as the crow flies from Rendlesham. However, Bede's list is by no means complete, and they do lie within a very short walk of the junction of two major land routes: the prehistoric ridgeway known today as the Icknield Way, which runs south-westwards from the coast of North Norfolk to the Upper Thames in the vicinity of Dorchester, Oxfordshire (the site of an important early bishopric mentioned by Bede),<sup>118</sup> and the Roman road which still runs west-south-westwards from Caistor St Edmund, Norwich, to join Roman Britain's principal north-south artery, Ermine Street, at Royston in Hertfordshire. Standing on raised ground, the cemetery is also situated on the watershed between the river Lark and its near neighbour the Little Ouse, whose navigable lower reaches flow westwards respectively from Bury St Edmunds and Thetford into the fen river network of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely (incidentally the

118 Abingdon 42 is only an 8 km walk upstream from Dorchester, while an easy boat journey would lead

downstream to Taplow (45 km as the crow flies) and eventually to London, Prittlewell and the sea.



locations of royal monastic foundations also mentioned by Bede). Moreover the communities represented by the Eriswell cemeteries already display conspicuous prosperity of their own, including most famously the large grave of a man buried with his horse, found in 1997. In addition to his sword, shield and other items indicative of exceptional status, he is known particularly for his horse's elaborate harness. Thus it seems reasonable to suppose that a warrior-poet such as Eriswell 313 would already have been well positioned to seek engagement amongst aristocratic families in the neighbourhood, even without such convenient access to the wider world.<sup>119</sup>

## 10 Conclusions: towards a political theory of ancient musics

Whether one looks at ancient poets in the Classical literature or in the vernacular, whether one contemplates their historical narratives or their surviving poetical works, it is difficult to escape the impression that a skill in verse and music carried with it a certain political advantage, at one level or another, an advantage with the potential to enhance a poet's individual prestige and status within a community, undoubtedly, but also to carry the more ambitious into proximity with power and authority. Indeed much the same proximity can be discerned amongst skilled poets and songsmiths of later centuries, including our own, as they engage in many aspects of life that can be considered to be political, sometimes profoundly so, even up to the level of government and state. It becomes apparent too that in Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages this political engagement was in no way restricted to purveyors of overtly and directly political forms such as panegyric, epithalamium and eulogy,<sup>120</sup> but consisted also in a more general conferment of prestige, for example through patronage of lyric poetry, instrumental music and performances and entertainments of various other kinds, notably in the context of hospitality and feasting.<sup>121</sup> The interesting complication arises when we come to establish such claims to political connexion as it were forensically: when we attempt to correlate the implications of the histories and poems with the new materialities emerging in the field and in the laboratory. How are we to reconcile the élite, often heroic milieux implied by the texts, floating within their literate and literary bubbles, with the necessarily broader, earthier, even prosaic, impressions conveyed by the archaeological finds and their contexts?

Happily, this challenge is of a kind that has long been embraced by historical archaeologies (which is to say archaeologies directed at epochs in which written texts supply

119 Graeme Lawson. *The Prittlewell Lyre and the Kingdom of Kent. Anglo-Saxon Poets' Graves, from Deal and Dover*. Forthcoming.

120 For the power of panegyric in 6th to 8th-century

Francia, see especially Godman 1987.

121 For recent treatments of the social and political importance of feasting and 'commensality' see variously Halstead 2012; Sallaberger 2012; Pollock 2012.

– or purport to supply – accounts of the remote past); and, as it turns out, the tensions it creates there are by no means unproductive. In place of misleading clarities of definition, with their inherent temporal and spatial weaknesses and an inclination towards categorization, typology and hierarchy, emerges a new, real-world blurring of boundaries, in which elements of evidence are nevertheless situated, in which the patterns of behaviour that they reveal are complex as well as dynamic, and where the increasing richness and variety of evidence redirects our attention to matters of diversity, continuity, adaptability of genre and negotiability of status.<sup>122</sup>

Some of the finds, it is true, strongly support and expand the evidence of the texts. The ‘princely’ lyre graves at Sutton Hoo, Taplow Court and Prittlewell emphasize the status enjoyed by lyre music (and by implication, by song and poetry) at the very top of society, amongst the ruling class. It is hard not to be aware of how closely they match the *Beowulf* poet’s now-familiar description of the aged king Hrothgar, his instrument and his reciting of traditional lays. Others however confront us with surprises that demand fresh thinking. The English material, for instance, indicates a greater density of lyre players amongst the early Anglo-Saxon population than we have previously anticipated, at any rate during the period in which funerary rites result in the deposition of equipment. Such density may also be emerging, or at least may be suspected, in some of the Continental evidence, especially from southern Germany. Neither can the instruments themselves be dismissed as mere theatrical properties. Even the ‘princely’ lyres turn out to be cherished, much used, essentially functional instruments, whose inclusion in the graves of kings and magnates can be seen as symbolic gestures, for sure, but also as celebrations of real personalities, expressing important components of real identities and reputations whilst also adding to the cultural capital of the kinsfolk of the dead and the populations which they governed. As we gaze at the structures and contents of their graves we must not forget that, as we saw in the crisis at the death of Frotho, Hiarno’s predecessor, as we saw in the schism at the death of Sæberht in Essex, and as the poet laments at the end of *Beowulf*, the demise of a prince and the moment of his or her succession are inevitably moments of political tension and manoeuvre, as well as of solemnity, when interested parties may lay claim to cultural as well as moral authority.

There is also growing evidence of connexion between ordinary and princely pots. We have seen in particular how the lyres found in lesser graves are nevertheless fine

122 For a persuasive example from the 7th and 8th centuries at Flixborough in Lincolnshire, England, see Loveluck 2007. Noting that styli and other paraphernalia of literacy have previously been assumed to be indicators of monastic centres, especially *scriptoria*, Loveluck finds them in elite settlements also.

He goes on to chart the changing character of such communities through patterns of consumption and literacy evidenced by their finds and *débitage*, including especially tell-tale variations in dietary and commensal habits through time.

products of the same high technology as those of ‘princes’, and how this unexpected continuity and indeed commonality increases the possibility, made explicit in the cases of *Hiarnus* and *Fortunatus* and *Caedmon*, that a skill in song could indeed have brought social mobility within the grasp of the Barbarian and the Latin poet alike – the transition itself negotiable through the poet’s own medium of music and verse. Grave contexts too in no way deny the notion of social mobility and political aptitude amongst lyre-bearers. Despite the apparent parsimony expressed in the furnishing of some of the lesser burials, they might still represent a secular *Caedmon* or a younger *Fortunatus*, a struggling *Widsith* or a disappointed *Deor*. We have also seen how even the lesser burials are generally situated amongst or in geographical proximity to potential patrons, from local magnates to heads of states, and that even in those few instances where this cannot be established they are located in convenient proximity to road, river and/or maritime communications. Some are horsemen (Oberflacht 37, Broa) while all but two (Bergh Apton 22 and Cologne 100) are conspicuously armed and equipped for warfare or the hunt – or indeed for travel. And with such finely made and cherished instruments in their hands, we can see that even the least of them has been buried with some measure of sacrifice and an eye to display and ostentation.

It is easy therefore to foresee how identification of political agency amongst these long-dead lyre bearers, and others like them, might enrich our understanding of their roles in society, and might thereby lend music a new relevance to archaeological theories of the remote past. It certainly threatens to undermine received perceptions of musicianship as being somewhat marginal to archaeological thinking, a mere subset of leisure or an accompaniment to religious ritual. This growing realisation may also begin to have a contribution to make to Ancient Studies more generally. In the first place, lyres and poetry seem difficult to divorce from ancient commensal behaviours;<sup>123</sup> and since the social and political importance of commensality is now widely appreciated, and since music at least has left us an archaeological footprint, they surely deserve to be factored into our interpretive schemes. If an inclusive, social and political theory of ancient musical behaviour, or at least of lyre musics, promises to illuminate political aspects of the time-frame on which this chapter has focussed – the post-Roman and early medieval period of northern Europe – there may be a wider application too, particularly for students of Late Prehistory. Indeed prehistoric studies may yet prove to be its biggest beneficiary. In attempting to access and understand the mechanisms of ancient political agency (other than warfare, whose brute expression has long influenced readings of the archaeological record) this realisation seems to me to be pregnant with possibilities and opportunities. If evidences of feasting such as the paraphernalia and *débitage* of food

123 For the repeated use of alimentary and commensal metaphors in *Fortunatus’ carmina*, see Godman 1987, 17.

preparation offer powerful archaeological proxies for social mechanism<sup>124</sup> it seems entirely reasonable that, through the art forms that they signify, the remains of lyres might go one step further and serve as archaeological proxies for social engagement not just in its leisure aspects but also in its political: in diplomacy itself, including the oral diplomacy which must have been the life-blood of political exchange in the age before letters. We can hear clear echoes of such diplomacy in action in the marriage quest ascribed to the poet in OE *Widsith*, and can see its workings laid bare in missions of other kinds expressed in the Latin poetry of Fortunatus as he plays intermediary between the rival aristocratic courts of 6th-century Gaul.

In the midst of his negotiations the notion of 'lyre' too is never very far from Fortunatus' creative consciousness. Although it may still be the instinct of many critics to assume that when he and his kind invoke such things in verse they are merely following an archaic, even anachronistic, convention of poetic metaphor, there is less and less reason to suppose that they were not also referencing actual, contemporary instruments or that their audiences would not have attributed to them such physical meaning. Indeed, some of our lyre graves could equally be those of Latin poets. The widespread assumption that all the extant Barbarian lyre finds must somehow reference vernacular traditions such as *Beowulf* and *Widsith* and Caedmon, which is to say traditions distinct from the Latin *oeuvres* of Fortunatus, Aldhelm, Alcuin and their kind, has been no more than that: an assumption. The Christian symbols found with the Sutton Hoo and Prittlewell princes, and hinted at in the iconography of Trossingen 58, combine with the late date and ecclesiastical proximity of the unarmed young man in Cologne 100 to warn us against trite categorizations of this kind.

Poetry and song are not, of course, the first genres of ancient music to be suspected of concealing a hidden, political dimension, neither is this the first suggestion that musical finds might usefully serve as proxies, or markers, for ancient human aptitudes and behaviours. Musical pipes-with-finger-holes (sometimes called 'flutes,' though this involves a value judgement) are amongst the material proxies proposed for cognitive and linguistic development in modern humans of the earliest Upper Palaeolithic in northern Europe, between around 35 000 and 40 000 years ago.<sup>125</sup> It has long been recognized too that the metal horns and trumpets of the Late Bronze and Iron Ages in northern and central Europe exhibit such extravagant investments of skill, material resources and knowledge, and that the resulting instruments are capable of such energy and drama, that they cannot satisfactorily be explained without reference to ostentation and the pro-

124 Funerary feasts figure amongst the examples discussed by Alexandrescu, this volume.

125 For examples of the use of proxies, including mu-

sical proxies, in human evolutionary studies see Lawson and D'Errico 2002; D'Errico et al. 2009, especially 14–16.

jection of power.<sup>126</sup> In some instances a competitive dimension seems well within the bounds of possibility. Often musical instruments are found to represent the pinnacles of technology. Another supreme example can be seen in the conspicuous technical advances revealed by instruments buried in Ancient China at around this time, including in the 5th century BCE the large carillon of bronze bells from the tomb (and originally we may suppose the court) of Marquis Zeng Yi, at Suizhou, Hubei Province.<sup>127</sup> And already within the protohistoric range of the present study, archaeologists are fully accustomed to rely on material proxies for a number of other transient phenomena: pollen, seeds and phytoliths for changes in the natural environment; coinage and exotic products such as amber for patterns of foreign trade; styli and book mounts for literacy and scholarship; and faunal remains for dietary habits, including feasting. So why not musical instruments?

A first opportunity to test these ideas may recently have emerged from a site of the Early Iron Age in the Atlantic north-west of Scotland. During excavations on a hillside at Kilbride, near Torrin on the Isle of Skye, the partly carbonised remains of wooden objects have been recovered which include the bridge of a lyre. It is quite unmistakable. Dating from at least the 4th century BCE, perhaps earlier,<sup>128</sup> it was found in layers of ash representing a long series of burning events associated with hearths. The context is very unusual. Other finds and residues from the site represent ritual behaviours including feasting with, from time to time, funerary acts. In the midst of the site is a sunken walkway leading to a sink-hole, through which hewn steps lead down to an underground watercourse. Enclosed for a time within a circular wall or revetment, the focus of activity above ground teems with evidence of sound of various kinds including, besides noises of fire and water, a variety of sonorous or percussive craft activities. The cave mouth itself is a mysterious and essentially liminal space, transitioning between light and dark, fire and water, the world of the living and a chthonic otherworld. Clearly much more than a habitation or locus of production, the site seems to be a place of active congregation too, conceivably of pilgrimage. So what might a lyre have been doing there? It is unexpected, to say the least. Not only is it the oldest example found anywhere north of the Alps, but it is so far the only lyre bridge contemporary with Classical civilization found anywhere in Europe – including the Classical Mediterranean itself. If its use has been purely recreational, why has it been burned? And if it was meant to be burned, how

126 See Lund 1986, 36 for the bronze 'lurs'. For the Etruscan *lituus*, see Holmes 2013. For the context of the La Tène (late Iron Age) trumpet deposit of Tintignac, Corrèze, see Maniquet 2008; also Vendries, this volume. For examples of modern political re-use and abuse of the spectacle these antiquities afford today, see Højring 1986, 235–251; Lund 1986, 39–44; Schween 2004.

127 Falkenhausen 1993; Falkenhausen 2000. See also Fang 2010.

128 Birch 2004; Steven A. Birch, Jo T. McKenzie and Gemma Cruickshanks, eds. *High Pasture Cave: Ritual, Memory and Identity in the Iron Age of Skye*. Oxbow Books. Forthcoming (2021). See also <http://high-pasture-cave.org/> (visited on 19/07/2019).

was it not incinerated? We need not doubt its association with music and musicianship. However, since all known lyres seem to exist in close association with song and verse, and these in turn imply Tradition (which is to say the storage, recall and sharing of information as Text), might it be hinting too at something still more ephemeral? If its delicate manufacture is any indication, the type of instrument for which it was made must have been every bit as sophisticated as those of the 6th to 8th centuries CE. Might the deliberateness of its destruction be similarly suggestive of some broader symbolic, even political, engagement?

Naturally, whilst a find might be invoked as a proxy for a particular suite of behaviours, a single proxy cannot in itself constitute proof. For a proxy to function it must form part of a pattern, or be corroborated by other clues. So, what other tests of political and/or diplomatic connexion ought we to seek? How might the political relevance of lyres and lyre-bearers be developed and tested in terms of evidence? Recurrent anomalies may afford one avenue: were a lyre-bearer to be found to be accompanied by some other suggestive grave furnishings perhaps, or wearing unusual dress-accessories, this might be suggestive. The *skomorokh* poets of medieval Russian tradition are distinguished by their unusual headgear, it seems,<sup>129</sup> whilst the runic inscription on a wooden stick or *Spazierstock* (so-called) found in an early medieval layer at Schleswig, Germany, claims association with one *Suein barbara*, ‘Svein the harper.’<sup>130</sup> And as we have seen there are already several curious grave finds. Cologne 100 is both weaponless and wears odd gloves, though in both of these respects he is so far unique. The lyre of Bergh Apton 22 was strangely installed up-ended, its head pointing towards the foot of the grave. The meaning of this remains unclear, but something similar can be seen in Abingdon 42, whilst in Trossingen 58 and Cologne 100 the instrument lay face-down and at Prittlewell it was placed face-down on the chamber floor, remote from the body yet also separated from the feasting equipment and major weapons. Individually perhaps such quirks ring no more than small alarm-bells, in our present state of knowledge; but as our sample increases in size any repetition might prove significant.

‘Constructive ambiguities’ may offer a more direct approach to habits and techniques of diplomacy.<sup>131</sup> The bird-headed plaques of the Sutton Hoo and Taplow lyres, for example, may correspond to the paired birds and animal heads that accompany King David enthroned in some early medieval miniatures (Fig. 8); but whilst a Christian or Christological allusion may therefore be suspected, some pagan meaning is also possible, referencing perhaps creatures such as those that came to be known as ‘Huginn’ and ‘Muninn’ in ON *Grimnismál*, the feathered messengers of the Norse poet-god Óðinn (Fig. 9).<sup>132</sup> Amongst the decorative zoomorphic schemes adorning the lyre of Trossingen

129 See Zguta 1978.

130 Düwel 1989, 55–56, drawing on Moltke 1975.

131 For ambiguities and their political application see

Pehar 2001; Scott 2001.

132 Lawson 1981, 50.



Fig. 8 The biblical King David as divine singer, poet and model of kingly virtue, accompanying a copy of Cassiodorus' commentary on the Old Testament Psalms. Durham Cathedral, MS. B. II. 30, folio 30 verso. 8th century CE.

58, meanwhile, is a broad tableau showing armed men arranged enigmatically around a central, weapon-like motif. As Barbara Theune has argued,<sup>133</sup> it is impossible to say whether these represent Christian notions of Christ's twelve apostles or whether they reference some independent Barbarian tradition of twelve heroes, such as the twelve young men who circle the king's barrow in the closing lines of *Beowulf*, chanting his pagan epitaph. If we take Fortunatus' ambivalences as a starting point, together with the Anglo-Saxons' curiously inconsistent treatment of the notorious tyrant Ermanaric (who has been the target of the poet's diplomacy in OE *Widsith*), the possibility remains that such dualities may be no accident, and that an audience or patron is intended to draw from them whatever meaning most suits or least offends its own particular leanings and susceptibilities. Performers then, as now, are unlikely to have underestimated their audiences' sensitivities, or would have done so at their peril. After all, as Peter Godman has remarked of the Carolingian poets, "Panegyric, in these circumstances, was not the cosy occupation of an armchair versifier but a political act with its special attendant dangers."<sup>134</sup>

If evidence of musical preference can reveal to us something of a long-dead person or class of persons, or an ancient people and its ruling élite, it is hard to believe that it was not also capable of doing so within its own cultural milieu, and might have been exploited to that effect much as Lü Buwei proposes. In the final analysis, music-making and poetry of social kind are media of expression and communication, shared between actors and recipients, participants and witnesses, their diversity of forms affording an enormous range of choices as to genre, repertoire, mood and tone quality. Thus when Lü suggests that "by observing the musical customs of a regime" (and he might equally

133 Theune-Großkopf 2006, 131–138.

134 Godman 1987, 24.



Fig. 9 Head of the one-eyed Óðinn (Odin), pagan Norse god of poetry, knowledge, death and divination, on a church portal preserved at Kraviksfjord, Norway. Around 1200 CE.

imply its musical choices) “we can appreciate the manner of its government and the character of its ruler”; he may be speaking from a vantage point that is not so very dissimilar to Fortunatus? Indeed one wonders what Fortunatus would have thought of the idea. Given the close study he has clearly made of his own patrons’ characters, as well as those of their enemies, one somehow feels that he would not have found it especially incongruous. His oeuvre clearly shows that he has the measure of his subjects, he knows what they like, and he knows how to deliver. To the dangerous king Chilperic, whose anger he has to appease at Brinnacum (perhaps Berny-Rivière, near Soissons) in 580 CE, incidentally the very year of the Trossingen 58 burial, he is as soothing as can be; and the happy outcome<sup>135</sup> is testament as much to the soundness of his political judgement as to his skill in composition. Moreover, his frequent allusions to the sweetness (*dulcedo*) of the lyre and of lyric verse are consistent with the tones produced by lyres reconstructed from the archaeological finds of those times, including Trossingen, as well as with the evidence, such as it is, of the texts. *Swūtol sang scōpes*, exclaims the Beowulf poet: “sweetly sang the poet”. And this recurrent preference has to be understood in relation to the contrasting timbres of the myriad flutes and bells, clashing cymbals and brazen trumpets with which the archaeological and pictorial records of Late Antiquity are otherwise so richly endowed. It is hard, of course, to deny that Lü’s assertions lack scientific or philosophical rationale, at least of a kind that we would recognize today,<sup>136</sup> yet such thoughts and prejudices may still be authentic, reflecting his perception and honest opinion as he experiences and reflects upon the political world in which he lives.

135 Fortunatus, *Carmen* 9.1 (discussed by George 1992, 48–57). Fortunatus’ task is to defend bishop Gregory of Tours (the famed historian of the Franks) against charges of treason. Gregory survives. George 1995,

73–80 supplies the text in modern English, with additional commentary.

136 Hagel, this volume.



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**Illustration credits**

1 Graeme Lawson. 2 Drawing by Graeme Lawson, i. a. after Fremersdorf 1943, pl. 55 and Pfüffen 1992, 282, fig. 126. 3 Graeme Lawson. 4 Drawing by Graeme Lawson, based on Leeds and Harden 1936. 5 Photo: Graeme Law-

son. 6 Drawing by Graeme Lawson, i. a. after Hirst 2004, 43. 7 Drawing by Graeme Lawson. 8 Drawing by Graeme Lawson. 9 Photo: Graeme Lawson.



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Eleonora Rocconi

## ‘Greek’ versus ‘Barbarian’ Music: The Self-Definition of Hellenic Identity through the Culture of *Mousikē*

### Summary

Ancient Greek sources are full of references to the music of peoples who are not Greek, stereotyped as ‘barbarian.’ Qualifications such as ‘effeminate’ and ‘lascivious’ are often applied to the musical paradigm of the East, especially during and after the Persian crises of the early 5th century BCE. The purpose of this paper is to explore the construction of Hellenic identity through the notion of *mousikē*, mainly by analyzing those literary and iconographic references in which ‘Greek’ and ‘foreign’ elements are presented as opposites, and by trying to interpret them as indicators of cultural and political changes in society.

Keywords: *mousikē*; musicians; instruments; *harmoniai*; ethnic identity; barbarian; hellenization

Altgriechische Quellen sind voll von Verweisen auf die Musik von Völkern, die nicht griechisch sind und deshalb stereotyp als ‚Barbaren‘ bezeichnet werden. Merkmale wie ‚weichlicht‘ und ‚wollüstig‘ werden dabei oft dem musikalischen Paradigma des Ostens zugeschrieben, vor allem während und nach den Perserkriegen des frühen 5. Jahrhunderts v. Chr. Ziel des Beitrags ist, die Konstruktion hellenischer Identität mit dem Begriff der *mousikē* zu untersuchen, wobei in der Hauptsache diejenigen literarischen und ikonographischen Quellen analysiert werden, in welchen ‚griechische‘ und ‚fremde‘ Elemente als Gegensätze dargestellt werden. Sie werden versuchsweise als Kennzeichen kultureller und politischer Veränderungen der Gesellschaft interpretiert.

Keywords: *mousikē*; Musiker; Instrumente; *Harmoniai*; ethnische Identität; Barbaren; Hellenisierung

## 1 Introduction

The oppositional theme of Greek versus ‘Barbarian’ has recently become a principal subject in Classical scholarship. This has been reinforced since the last century when structural anthropologists began ordering societal ontologies according to binary opposition. This is apropos since the Greeks were fond of such oppositions and, like modern anthropologists, divided the world into ‘us’ versus ‘them’, ‘Greeks’ versus ‘Others’. Hellenism, in fact, is a cultural construct contingent on the need for an oppositional ethnic group (‘Other’) in order to define its boundaries of self. Undoubtedly, Hellenic peoples discovered their common identity as ‘Greeks’ mainly through their confrontation with Persia (their principal ‘Other’), in the decades after the Persian Wars of the early 5th century BCE.

Of course the interaction of Greeks with foreign peoples, whom they termed ‘Barbarians’,<sup>1</sup> predates their conflict with the Persians. Let us recall that Hellas as a whole comprises the Greek communities of the Black Sea, Sicily, Italy and Asia Minor, as well as the Greek mainland and islands; and that through the politics of colonization and commerce – which began at an early date – the Hellenes had occasions to deal with other cultures constantly, even if this interchange became unquestionably more antithetic during and consequent to the Persian War period. Furthermore, Greeks did not just define themselves by contrast with ‘Barbarians’, since their sense of belonging to particular Hellenic subgroups (such as the Dorians and Ionians, to name two) was equally important to the complex construction process of their ethnic identity.<sup>2</sup> As an additional and complicating element, today there is a broad consensus among scholars that there were already significant Near Eastern influences on Greek civilization, beginning in the earliest stages of Hellenic history, for which evidence is provided in many different fields.<sup>3</sup>

It is, on the other hand, undeniable that the ‘ideology’ underlying rhetorical representations of Hellenic identity in literary and pictorial sources of the 5th and 4th centuries BCE is strictly tied to the history of political events, to which ideological images of ‘Greekness’ seem to respond in that period, as many scholars have already remarked.<sup>4</sup>

1 The term literally means an incomprehensible language, like (proverbially) that of the swallow, as in Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 1050–1052: “Well, if her language is not strange and foreign (βάρβαρον), even as a swallow’s, I must speak within her comprehension and move her to comply” translation Smyth 1926. See also Ion fragment 33 (Snell 1971), handed down by Herodianus (one of the most celebrated grammarians of antiquity particularly interested in linguistic phenomena, hence vouching for the trustworthiness of this quotation), where ὁ χελιδῶν (i. e.

‘the swallow’) metaphorically means ‘barbarian’.

2 Hornblower 2008.

3 As in art or religion: on this see Burkert 1985; Morris 1992; West 1999.

4 From the extensive bibliography on the subject, let us at least recall Hall 1989 (whose title is intentionally echoed in the title of the present paper), who explored the Hellenic construction of the ‘barbarian’ East through the lens of Attic tragedy. For a summary of this scholarly view, offering an alterna-

Within this complicated panorama of associations, the culture of *mousikē* – one of the elements of the Greek social and cultural identity – still remains little explored, but it may yet tell us a lot.<sup>5</sup>

The first element of note is that ancient Greek sources on music are full of concerns regarding the ethnic characterization of its elements. In fact, since the Archaic age musical tunings, rhythms and instruments were often explicitly associated with particular geographical regions. But Greeks were not only acutely aware of the regional diversity of their music and performance influences: they considered music to be extremely important also to their self-identity as Greek, vis-à-vis their comparing it to the music of other civilizations, especially in periods of cultural and political change (like the Persian wars). Qualifications such as ‘womanish’ and ‘lascivious’ seem in fact to have been applied to the musical paradigm of the East more frequently after the Persian threat – especially by the Athenian propagandists, willing to exaggerate, when not overtly rewriting the contribution made by the polis of Athens in defeating the enemy – this in contrast to the austerity of the so-called genuinely ‘Greek’ music prototype. The purpose of this paper will thus be to explore the construction of Hellenic identity through the notion of *mousikē*, mainly by analyzing and contextualizing – socially and historically – those literary and iconographic references in which Greek and foreign (or highly ‘contaminated’) elements are presented as opposites.

### 1.1 Structural ‘Orientalisms’: the ethnic *harmoniai*

Let us start with the first puzzling element. Among the older attunements or *harmoniai* quoted by ancient Greek poets to indicate the different regional styles traditionally employed by musicians, we find not only ‘Dorian,’ ‘Ionian’ or ‘Aeolian’ *harmoniai* (corresponding to the three main Hellenic sub-groups), but also ‘Phrygian’ and ‘Lydian’ (this latter divided, at times, into three variants: Mixolydian, Tense and Relaxed Lydian). In the 7th century BCE the poet Alcman – active in Sparta, although presumably from Lydia – mentions a Phrygian tune, played on the *aulos*, called *Kerbēsion*,<sup>6</sup> while in the early 5th century BCE the Boeotian poet Pindar asks his *phorminx* to “weave out music with Lydian *harmonia*”<sup>7</sup> (a tuning which, according to another Pindaric fragment, had been

tive approach, see Gruen 2011, especially 1–5 and more recently Vlassopoulos 2013.

- 5 On this topic, see Uliერიu-Rostás 2013; Franklin 2015; De Simone 2016 (none of which, however, has been taken into account in the present article since they appeared after its completion).
- 6 Alcman fragment 126 (Page 1962): Φρύγιον αὐλησε μέλος τὸ Κερβήσιον (“On the pipe he played the Ceresbian, a Phrygian melody”). Stesichorus too,

a poet who lived between the 7th and 6th century BCE, refers to a “Phrygian melody” (fragment 35 (Page 1962): Φρύγιον μέλος).

- 7 Pindar, *Nemean* 4.44–45: ἔξῳφαινε, γλυκεῖα, καὶ τόδ’ αὐτίκα, φόρμιγξ, / Λυδίᾳ σὺν ἄρμονίᾳ μέλος πεφιλημένον (“Weave out, sweet *phorminx*, right now, / the beloved song with Lydian *harmonia*”). Although Pindar’s poetic activity may be set for the most part

introduced at the mythical wedding of Niobe).<sup>8</sup>

Now, Lydians and Phrygians are obviously non-Greek ethnic groups and have certainly been viewed as such since antiquity.<sup>9</sup> Today we know for sure that many elements of Greek culture come from the Anatolian countries of Phrygia and Lydia (neighbouring the Greek colonies in the East). It is thus interesting to note that already ancient sources recorded such influences as foreign arrivals. According to the 4th-century BCE philosopher Heraclides of Pontus, the Phrygian and Lydian *harmoniai* became known to the Greeks from the Phrygians and Lydians who emigrated with Pelops to Peloponnesus.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, both the Phrygian and Lydian styles were clearly perceived even then as part of that musical package which formed what modern scholars now call ‘Ancient Greek Music’. Since the Archaic Age these styles were widely known and used by travelling musicians living in a mobile and multicultural society, and they survived as traditional labels for scales and keys classified as such by musical theorists at least from the late 4th century BCE onwards (by which time Greek language and culture had spread throughout the Mediterranean world).<sup>11</sup> Evaluations of the ‘appropriateness’ of use of Phrygian and Lydian musical elements to the Greek milieu appear quite inconsistent in the sources, and my opinion is that the terms and their occurrences were manipulated to serve the needs of various political and cultural environments.

A negative evaluation of the Lydian – and, to a lesser degree, of the Ionian – *harmonia*, to take two examples, is basically absent in older literary evidence on music,<sup>12</sup> where the ethnic association is mainly used to indicate musical instruments of Asiatic origin (harps, in most cases, like *trigonoî* and *pēktides*),<sup>13</sup> without any concern for their ‘unsuit-

after the Persian Wars, nevertheless his neutrality towards this negative view of the East (developed, as I have already pointed out, mainly by Athenian sources) may be explained both through his ‘Pan-hellenic’ activity and through his Theban origin (Thebes being one of the most philo-Persian of the Greek *poleis*).

8 Different sources, quoted in the pseudo-Plutarchean *De musica* (1136c), variously attribute its origin to other legendary musicians, such as the mythical piper Olympus.

9 See the remarks of DeVries 2010.

10 Heraclides Ponticus fragment 114 (Schütrumpf 2008), *apud* Athenaeus, *The Banquet of the Learned* 14.625e–f.

11 Hagel 2009, 4.

12 Pindar, *Nemean* 4.44–45 (quoted in note 6 above); Pindar, *Nemean* 8.15: φέρων / Λυδῖαν μίτραν καναχιδὰ πεποικιλμέναν, “bringing / a Lydian crown embroidered with song” – although the ethnic label here refers to the headband called *mitra*, this

latter is said to be “embroidered with song”; Pindar, *Olympian* 14.17–18: Λυδῶ γὰρ Ἀσώπιχον ἐν τρώφῳ / ἐν μελέταις τ’ αἰείδων ἔμολλον, “for I have come to sing of Asopichus / in Lydian melodies and chosen phrases”.

13 Pindar, *Olympian* 5.19: ἔρχομαι Λυδίοις ἀπύων ἐν αὐλοῖς, “I come as your suppliant, singing to the sound of Lydian pipes”; Pindar fragment 125 (Maehler 1971; Snell and Maehler 1975): ἐν δείπνοισι Λυδῶν / ψαλμὸν ἀντίφθογγον ὑψηλᾶς ἀκούων πακτίδος, “when hearing at Lydian banquets / the octave-answering strum of the lofty harp”; Sophocles fragment 412 (Radt 1977): πολλὸς δὲ Φρύξ τρίγωνος ἀντίσπαστά τε / Λυδῆς ἐφουμνεῖ πηκτίδος συγχορδία, “the Phrygian *trigónos* sounds aloud, and the concord of the Lydian *pēktis* sings to it in answer”; Ion fragment 22 (Snell 1971): ἀλλ’ εἶα, Λυδαὶ ψάλτρια, παλαιθέτων / ὕμνων ἀοιδοί, τὸν ξένον κοσμήσατε, “now you, Lydian harpists, singers of ancient songs, adorn the guest”.

ability’ in an Hellenic context. The reputation of Lydian musical style for ‘softness’ (perceived as potentially dangerous, considering the great ‘psychagogic’ power which was attributed to music in antiquity)<sup>14</sup> seems to coincide with the diffusion of an unfriendly attitude towards the Ionian-Lydian customs conspicuously introduced into Athens after the creation of the Delian League.<sup>15</sup> This reputation ascribed to Lydian music is, for instance, indicated in a fragment of the Athenian comic poet Cratinus (whose poetic activity ceased by 421/420 BCE), where a *didaskalos* of tragic choruses – a certain Gnesippus, son of Cleomachus – is mocked because “he has a chorus of women who pluck out their hair playing indecent Lydian melodies.”<sup>16</sup> Let us further consider the polarization of Lydian and Dorian music style (“the Lydian tune, rival of the Dorian muse”) in some fragmentary verses of the dithyrambographer Telestes of Selinus – active between the 5th and 4th centuries BCE – though here the context is clearly favourable to the *aulos* and its eastern, Lydian and Phrygian, connections.<sup>17</sup> In musical imagery of the late 5th to 4th century BCE (especially identifiable, one must emphasize, in more censorious literary sources such as comic poetry or philosophical writings), Lydia became connected most of all with the acoustics of the orientalizing symposium, hence subject to negative stereotypes. In the *Republic* (around 380 BCE), Plato labels the Lydian – together with the Ionian – *harmoniai* as “soft (*malakai*) and suitable for drinking parties (*sympotikai*)”, as well as “relaxed” (*chalarai*).<sup>18</sup>

The Ionian *harmonia*, though linked with one of the two main ethnic sub-divisions according to which ancient Greeks categorized themselves, was itself gradually involved in this process of ideological ‘contamination’ by oriental influences (attributed, in particular, to some Ionian colonies of the Western coasts of Anatolia, such as Miletus). In a manifestly prejudiced passage on musical *harmoniai* quoted by Athenaeus, Heraclides of Pontus contends that there are only three genuine scales, the Dorian, the Ionian and the Aeolian, corresponding to the three Greek ethnic groups, whereas all others are alien

14 Psychagogic literally means ‘leading’ or ‘persuading souls’: in fact, according to a belief widespread among Greeks, music could influence the character (*ēthos*) of those who heard it.

15 The Delian League was founded in 477 BCE as a military alliance of Greek city-states, under the leadership of Athens, with the purpose of fighting the Persian empire, but it soon became an Athenian political instrument used to exert that city’s supremacy over the other members.

16 Cratinus fragment 276 (Kassel and Austin 1983): ὁ Κλεομάχου διδάσκαλος, / παρατιλτριῶν ἔχων χορὸν / λυδιστί τιλλουσῶν μέλη / πονηρά. For a different interpretation of the passage, which locates

Gnesippus’ chorus within the symposium, see Jennings and Katsaros 2007, 196.

17 Telestes fragment 806 (Page 1962): “Of the Phrygian king of the sacred beautiful-breathing *auloi*, who was the first one to fit together the Lydian tune, rival of the Dorian muse, weaving together the well-winged wind of the breath to the reeds of changing form”, translation Leven 2010, 38.

18 Plato, *Republic* 398e: Τίνας οὖν μαλακαί τε καὶ συμποτικάι τῶν ἁρμονιῶν; Ἰαστί, ἢ δ’ ὅς, καὶ λυδιστί αὐτίνας χαλαραὶ καλοῦνται (“What, then, are the soft and convivial modes? There are certain Ionian and also Lydian modes that are called lax”, translation Shorey 1969, 247).

to the true Hellenic tradition.<sup>19</sup> Trying to provide each of these musical structures with an historical and social background, Heraclides picks out a kind of ‘degeneration’ of the Ionian mode, due to the fact that “the great majority of the Ionians have been contaminated (*ēlloiōtai*) through adaptation to the various barbarians who ruled them”. He continues: “the Ionian kind of mode is neither exuberant nor merry, but is harsh and hard, having a weight that is not without nobility. Hence this mode is also agreeable to tragedy. But the characters of present-day Ionians are much more dainty, and the character of the mode is different.”<sup>20</sup> Between the 5th and the 4th century BCE, we indeed find growing evidence for the proverbial association of Ionic musical style with ‘softness’: the famous mid-5th-century citharode, Phrynīs, is called *īōnokampēs* by his rivals (literally, “one who sings with soft Ionic modulation”),<sup>21</sup> while in 390 BCE the comic poet Aristophanes describes saucy songs sung by prostitutes as Ionic (“Oh, Muses, alight upon my lips, inspire me with some soft Ionian love-song!”<sup>22</sup>).

Moreover, in the course of the 5th century BCE, especially in the period of maximum tension between the leading Dorian state, Sparta,<sup>23</sup> and the leading Ionian state, Athens (tension that will lead, in the second part of the century, to the Peloponnesian War),<sup>24</sup> Ionians and Dorians started to be sharply polarized. Dorian people – and, accordingly, their music – were depicted, especially in Dorically oriented sources, as vigor-

- 19 Heraclides Ponticus fragment 114 (Schütrumpf 2008), *apud* Athenaeus, *The Banquet of the Learned* 14.624c–625f: ἀρμονίας γὰρ εἶναι τρεῖς· τρία γὰρ καὶ γενέσθαι Ἑλλήνων γένη, Δωριεῖς, Αἰολεῖς, Ἴωνας. [...] τρεῖς οὖν αὐταί, καθάπερ ἐξ ἀρχῆς εἶπομεν εἶναι ἀρμονίας, ὅσα καὶ τὰ ἔθνη. τὴν δὲ Φρυγιστὶ καὶ τὴν Λυδιστὶ παρὰ τῶν βαρβάρων οὕσας γνωσθῆναι τοῖς Ἑλλήσιν ἀπὸ τῶν σὺν Πέλοπι κατελθόντων εἰς τὴν Πελοπόννησον Φρυγῶν καὶ Λυδῶν (“For there are three modes, since there are also three races of Hellenes: the Dorians, the Aeolians, the Ionians [...]. So the modes are three in number, just as in the beginning we said that they are, the same number as even the races. The Phrygian and Lydian modes, which originated with the barbarians, became known to the Greeks from the Phrygians and Lydians who had returned to the Peloponnesus with Pelops”, translation Stork/van Ophuijsen/Prince, in: Schütrumpf 2008, 106). For a comment on this fragment, see Barker 2009.
- 20 Heraclides Ponticus fragment 114 (Schütrumpf

2008), *apud* Athenaeus, *The Banquet of the Learned* 14.624d–625c (translation Stork/van Ophuijsen/Prince, in: Schütrumpf 2008, 106): Ἴωνων δὲ τὸ πολὺ πλῆθος ἠλλοιώται διὰ τὸ συμπεριφέρεσθαι τοῖς αἰεὶ δυναστεύουσιν αὐτοῖς τῶν βαρβάρων. [...] διόπερ οὐδὲ τὸ τῆς Ἰαστί γένος ἀρμονίας οὐτ’ ἀνθηρὸν οὔτε ἰλαρὸν ἐστίν, ἀλλὰ αὐστηρὸν καὶ σκληρὸν, ὄγκον δ’ ἔχον οὐκ ἀγεννή· διὸ καὶ τῆ τραγῳδίᾳ προσφιλέης ἡ ἀρμονία. τὰ δὲ τῶν νῦν Ἴωνων ἦθη τραφερώτερα καὶ πολὺ παραλλάττον τὸ τῆς ἀρμονίας ἦθος.

- 21 Plutarch, *On Praising Oneself Inoffensively* 539c.
- 22 Aristophanes, *The Assembly Women* 882–883 (translation O’Neill 1938): Μοῦσαι, δεῦρ’ ἔτ’ ἐπὶ τοῦμὸν στόμα, / μελύδριον εὐρούσαι τι τῶν Ἴωνικῶν.
- 23 Together with Sparta’s allies Corinth and Megara, whose conflict with Athens had more tangible causes, mostly economic.
- 24 The Peloponnesian War (431 to 404 BCE) was a war fought by Athens and its allies against the Peloponnesian League led by Sparta.



ous, strong and manly (see Plato, *Republic* 399a–b<sup>25</sup> or Aristotle, *Politics* 1342b<sup>26</sup>), most often in opposition to Ionians who are described as weak, effeminate and associated with luxury and with Asia Minor.<sup>27</sup> In the *Laches*, Plato (who felt a particular attraction to Dorian customs and politics) portrays the Dorian as “the only true Greek *harmonia*”<sup>28</sup> while, according to the already mentioned Heraclides, “the Dorian mode exhibits manliness (*to andrōdes*) and magnificence (*to megaloprepes*), and this is not relaxed or merry, but sullen and intense, and neither varied nor complex”<sup>29</sup> (in Greek perception, all of these being distinctive features of oriental music).

In the 4th century BCE, the ideologically ‘pure Greekness’ of Dorian music even led to the emergence of the mutual exclusiveness of Dorian and Phrygian modes, the latter perceived as the ‘Asiatic’ mode par excellence.<sup>30</sup> According to Aristotle, no one could possibly compose a dithyramb in the Dorian scale: in the *Politics* he reports that, although Philoxenus attempted to do this with Mysians, he “was unable to do so, but merely by the force of nature fell back again into the suitable harmony, the Phrygian.”<sup>31</sup> Actually, historic evidence tells us another story: an epigram recording a dithyrambic victory at the Athenian Dionysia, probably from the first half of the 5th century, refers to the piper as having nursed the song “in Dorian *auloi*” (that is, instruments on which Dorian scales could be played).<sup>32</sup> Hence Aristotle’s concerns could perhaps have been influenced by non-historical reasons, as seems to be later confirmed by his pupil Aristoxenus. According to the latter, the Platonic rejection of Ionian and Lydian *harmoniai*, and preference for the Dorian, had nothing to do with their actual usage in antiquity. Plato

25 “I don’t know the musical modes, I said, but leave us that mode [i. e. the Dorian] that would fittingly imitate the utterances and the accents of a brave man who is engaged in warfare or in any enforced business, and who, when he has failed, either meeting wounds or death or having fallen into some other mishap, in all these conditions confronts fortune with steadfast endurance and repels her strokes [...]”, translation Shorey 1969, 248.

26 “And all agree that the Dorian mode is more sedate and of a specially manly (*ἀνδρεῖον*) character”, translation Rackham 1944.

27 The Ionians, on the contrary, despised the Dorians as invaders and newcomers: see the myth of the so-called ‘Return of Herakleidae’, an event known to modern scholars as the Dorian Invasion (cf. Zacharia 2008, esp. 27–29).

28 Plato, *Laches* 188d: δωριστί [...] ἤπερ μόνη Ἑλληνικὴ ἔστιν ἀρμονία.

29 Heraclides Ponticus fragment 114 (Schütrumpf 2008), *apud* Athenaeus *The Banquet of the Learned* 14.624e. At the beginning of the 5th century Pindar too, in a fragmentary Paean, acclaimed the Dorian

as “the most dignified kind of melody” (fragment 67: Maehler 1971; Snell and Maehler 1975: Δωριον μέλος σεμνότερόν ἐστιν), though without any ethnic implication or contra-position with other music styles. In addition see also Pratinas’ opposition of New Music to ‘Dorian dance-song’ (*τὰν ἐμὴν Δωριον χορείαν*) in fragment 708 (Page 1962).

30 On this, see the useful remarks by Csapo 2004, esp. 233–234 (on which I am relying here). As a further piece of evidence on the opposition between the characters of the Dorian and Phrygian scales, we should consider the famous episode of the Tauronian man (variously attributed to Pythagoras or Damon) who, excited by a Phrygian song, was calmed simply by changing the *aulos* melody from Phrygian to Dorian (lit. “through the spondaic song of a piper”; cf. Iamblichus, *On the Pythagorean Life* 112).

31 Aristotle, *Politics* 1342b (translation Rackham 1944): Φιλόξενος [...] οὐχ οἷός τ’ ἦν, ἀλλ’ ὑπὸ τῆς φύσεως αὐτῆς ἐξέπεσεν εἰς τὴν φρυγιστὶ τὴν προσήκουσαν ἀρμονίαν πάλιν.

32 *Anthologia Graeca* 13.28.5–8.

– he says – was well aware that early tragedy had employed Lydian and Ionian *harmoniai*,<sup>33</sup> and that the Dorian mode had been used also for girls' choruses, tragic laments and love songs,<sup>34</sup> but “the reason he preferred Dorian was rather because of its high degree of dignified nobility.”<sup>35</sup>

Growing evidence for an ethnic (and, consequently, ethnic) characterization of the *harmoniai*<sup>36</sup> and their manipulation in order to express increasing Greek xenophobia and chauvinism seem, then, to go hand in hand with the history of events occurring during the Classical period: an intricate chain of actions – from the first Panhellenic alliance against Persia to the later internal strife among Greek city-states – which were undoubtedly crucial to the construction of Hellenic identity and which are clearly reflected in contemporary music culture.

## 1.2 Mythical ‘Orientalisms’: Marsyas and Thamyris

A further indication of this ideological process may be seen also at a mythical level. As a matter of fact, Greek poets engaged in a constant process of retelling and revising their musical past, to suit the requirements of each age and context. A clear example is identifiable in two correlated myths which enjoyed great popularity in the Classical period, above all in Athens: the invention (and rejection) of the *aulos* by the goddess Athena and the instrument's consequent adoption by the satyr Marsyas, who then challenged the god Apollo to a music contest.

According to the myth narrated by Pindar around 490 BCE, Athena discovered the *aulos* and the art of *aulos*-playing (the *aulētikē*) while imitating the Gorgons' lament for the death of Medusa.<sup>37</sup> But then – according to Melanippides, a dithyrambic composer whose poetic activity is placed between about 440 and 415 – the goddess, seeing in the reflection in the water that her face was deformed, threw the instrument away.<sup>38</sup> So

33 Cf. also Heraclides Ponticus fragment 114 (Schütrumpf 2008), quoted above: “Hence this mode [i. e. the Ionian] is also agreeable to tragedy”.

34 Such a piece of evidence seems to confirm that the statement reported by Pseudo-Plutarch in another passage of his dialogue, according to which “in the time of Polymnestus and Sacadas there were three *tonoi* (i. e. *harmoniai*), Dorian, Phrygian and Lydian” (Plutarch, *On music* 1134a–b), could well belong to the same Aristoxenian tradition (Barker 1984, 213, no. 62).

35 Aristoxenus fragment 82 (Wehrli 1967), *apud* Pseudo-Plutarch, *On music* 1137a (translation Barker 1984): Πλάτων [...] πολὺ τὸ σεμνὸν ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ Δωριστί, ταύτην προτιμήσεν.

36 It is worth noting that the literary evidence for eth-

nic adjectives related to *harmoniai* were, surprisingly, less frequent in the 7th and 6th centuries BCE than later on.

37 Pindar, *Pythian* 12.

38 Melanippides fragment 758 (Page 1962). That this story comes from outside Greece seems to be implied in a fragmentary poem by Telestes (titled *Argo*), which Athenaeus quotes in *The Banquet of the Learned* (14.616f–617a) as a response to Melanippides' fragment: “That the clever one took the clever instrument in the mountain thickets, I cannot fancy in my mind – that divine Athena, fearing the shameful sight unpleasant to see, immediately threw it away from her hands to be the *kleos* (i. e. ‘fame’) of the hand-clapping nymph-born beast Marsyas! No,

Marsyas, a satyr from Phrygia, a land associated with Dionysus, picked up the *aulos* and played it. The earliest references to the myth in the visual arts are Myron's statue, mentioned later by Pausanias as having been placed on the Acropolis (maybe as a dedication made after the victory of Melanippides' dithyramb at the Panathenaia),<sup>39</sup> and a series of Attic vases from the second half of the 5th century, which reproduce essentially the same scene.<sup>40</sup>

This story has been seen by modern scholars as an attempt to reconcile two contradictory versions of the wind instrument's invention: a Theban one, which placed it in Thebes and by Athena, the other seeing it as a non-Greek creation, coming from Phrygia. Both these 'ethnicizations' of the instrument may have partially contributed to (or, on the contrary, been influenced by) ambivalent, if not actually negative, evaluations of the *aulos* in late 5th-century Athens. In particular, the Theban connotation of the *aulos* was probably perceived as negative because of the difficult relationship between Athens and Thebes during the first years of the Peloponnesian Wars.<sup>41</sup> A scene from Aristophanes' *Acharnians*, staged in 425 BCE, where in the market-place the character Dikaiopolis meets a Boeotian surrounded by a swarm of ethnically-stereotyping *aulētai*, is emblematic: most of the players active in Athens at that time came from the great 'Theban school.'<sup>42</sup> The association with Phrygia, instead, could have cast a shadow on the *aulos* because of the already mentioned Asiatic stereotype, which involved music too. Therefore, as other scholars have rightly noticed, even if through this myth the wind instrument had been incorporated into the world of the Athenian mythic-religious collective imagination, that incorporation is nevertheless presented as "an act of transgression."<sup>43</sup>

The debate over the value of *aulos*-playing and of Phrygian music used for education is well represented by another musical myth related to Marsyas, his contest with the god Apollo. The earliest reference to the story is in Herodotus, who explicitly ascribes it to

why would a keen love for lovely beauty distress her, to whom childless and husbandless virginity was the lot decided by Clotho? But this is a tale unsuitable for the chorus that has idly flown to Greece"; translation Leven 2010, 37.

- 39 Pausanias, *Guide to Greece* 1.24.1. On the hypothesis that the sculpture could have been a commemorative monument placed on the Acropolis for the victory of Melanippides' dithyramb, see Wilson 1999, 63, with relative bibliography.
- 40 Translation Henderson 1998, 166–167 s.v. 'Marsyas.'
- 41 Let us remember that Boeotia defeated Athens at the battle of Delium in 424 BCE. Furthermore, in Athenian sources this connotation could have been

negatively influenced also by Thebes' sympathy for the Medes during the Persian Wars.

- 42 Aristophanes, *Acharnians* 860–863: "Ἴττω Ἡρακλῆς ἔκαμιόν γα τὰν τύλαν κακῶς / Κατάθου τὸ τὰν γλάχων' ἀτρέμας, Ἰσμενία· / ἕμῃς δ', ὅσοι Θείβαν ἀλείται πάρα, / τοῖς ὀστίνοις φυσεῖτε τὸν πρωκτὸν κυνός ("Heracles bear witness, my shoulder's damned weary. Put the pennyroyal down easy, Ismenias. And all you pipers who are here with me from Thebes, puff on those bones to the tune of 'The Dog's Arsehole!"; translation Henderson 1998, 166–167). On this scene, see now Moore 2017.
- 43 Wilson 1999, 59.

the Phrygians.<sup>44</sup> Marsyas was so pleased with his *aulos*-playing that he challenged the god to a musical competition, pitching his instrumental performance on the *aulos* against Apollo's singing to the *kithara*. The Muses judged the contest and declared Apollo the winner: as a result, the satyr was flayed and his skin hung up in a temple in Celaenae, a Phrygian town in south-western Asia Minor.

The popularity of this subject in Classical art and literature may be explained in various ways, but it certainly reflects also an ideological antithesis: it pitches Apollo (described as the quintessential 'Greek' god) against Marsyas (a *daimōn*, half human and half beast, coming from a 'foreign' land like Phrygia), suggesting in turn the superiority of singing to the accompaniment of the quintessentially Greek lyre over instrumental performances on the Asiatic *aulos*. The strategic and intentional opposition of 'Greek' and 'Asiatic' music elements, already pointed out in connexion with the *harmoniai*, finds then a clear echo in Athenian mythical tales related to music.

Other myths, on the contrary, show how the 'foreign' music stereotype could also (at least apparently) exert a particular fascination for the Hellenes. Thrace, the region north of Thessaly, was particularly associated with music. According to Strabo, music had its origin there and Thracians (that is to say 'barbarians', as Thracian people are described by both Herodotus and Thucydides<sup>45</sup>) included two of the most famous mythical musicians, Orpheus and Thamyris. Both of these were especially popular in Athens during the 5th and 4th centuries BCE.

Nevertheless, if we analyze the development of these myths by Greek poets and artists of such periods, we realize that the evidence actually shows an attempt at 'mitigation', or even 'Hellenization' of the most peculiarly exotic attributes associated with these characters.

Let us start with Orpheus.<sup>46</sup> In visual imagery of the mid-5th century BCE, the most frequently depicted episodes related to this legendary singer are two: one in which he charms the Thracian men with his music, and the other in which he meets his violent death at the hands of the Thracian women. In both cases Orpheus is quite often

44 Herodotus, *Histories* 7.26.3: "When they had crossed the river Halys and entered Phrygia, they marched through that country to Celaenae, where rises the source of the river Maeander and of another river no smaller, which is called Cataractes; it rises right in the market-place of Celaenae and issues into the Maeander. The skin of Marsyas the Silenus also hangs there; *the Phrygian story tells that it was flayed off him and hung up by Apollo*"; translation Godley 1922, 341; the Italics are mine. See also Xenophon, *Anabasis* 1.2.8: "There is likewise a palace of the Great King in Celaenae, strongly fortified and situated at the foot of the Acropolis over the sources of

the Marsyas river; the Marsyas also flows through the city, and empties into the Maeander, and its width is twenty-five feet. It was here, according to the story, that Apollo flayed Marsyas, after having defeated him in a contest of musical skill; he hung up his skin in the cave from which the sources issue, and it is for this reason that the river is called Marsyas"; translation Brownson 1922.

45 Herodotus, *Histories* 2.167; Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War* 2.97 and 4.109.

46 Tsifakis 2000; Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae, s. v. 'Orpheus'.

represented as looking 'Greek' (as also Pausanias points out, talking about the famous wall-paintings by Polygnotos in the Hall of the Cnidians at Delphi<sup>47</sup>), with a kind of Apollinean attitude, in opposition to the Dionysiac 'wildness,' or even violence, of Thracian men or women. In the same vein, Aeschylus' lost play *Bassarides* seems to have contrasted the calming music of Orpheus, disciple of Apollo, with the frenzy of the songs of Dionysus' Thracian Bacchants.<sup>48</sup> Hence, the ambiguity of such a character and of his attributes (i. e. his 'magic' power to charm all living things with his music) was clearly mitigated by setting him in opposition to proverbial 'barbarian' savageness and to the cruelty of typical Thracian characters, though a complete conversion of the singer into a 'Greek' hero was never completed.<sup>49</sup>

Most indicative of all is the case of Thamyris. Born in the region of the Thracian Odrysians, this kitharode was punished (that is, blinded and/or deprived of his musical skills) by the Muses for believing that he could defeat them in a musical contest. The first piece of evidence of his 'Hellenization'<sup>50</sup> may be found in the pseudo-Euripidean *Rhesus* (4th century BCE), a drama where, for the first time, the musician is said to be a son of the poet Philammon, who was in turn son of the god Apollo. But most probably the same fatherhood had already been assigned to him by Sophocles in the homonym tragedy, staged around 460 BCE.<sup>51</sup> This parental specification seems to have been the first step in a gradual transformation that his character underwent in literary and iconographic sources of the 5th century BCE: from his representation as a barbarian<sup>52</sup> rightly punished for his insolence towards divinities, to his representation as a skilled singer and player

47 Pausanias, *Guide to Greece* 10.30.6 (describing Polygnotus' wall paintings in Delphi, see no. 52): "Turning our gaze again to the lower part of the picture we see, next after Patroclus, Orpheus sitting on what seems to be a sort of hill; he grasps with his left hand a *kithara*, and with his right he touches a willow. It is the branches that he touches, and he is leaning against the tree. The grove seems to be that of Persephone, where grow, as Homer thought, black poplars and willows. The appearance of Orpheus is Greek, and neither his garb nor his headgear is Thracian", translation Jones and Ormerod 1935, 545.

48 The topic of Orpheus' violent death is first attested in Aeschylus' *Bassarides*, fragment 23–25 (Radt 1985): see West 1983; Hall 1989, 130.

49 After this parenthesis of the 5th century BCE, Orpheus will always be depicted with oriental clothes and attributes (Thracian or even Phrygian).

50 As other scholars have already pointed out (Bélis 2001, 34; Meriani 2007, 46). However we should note how, in the 5th century BCE, 'Greek' heroic

and divine ancestors were identified also within the Persian environment; see Herodotus, *Histories* 7.61.3: "When Perseus son of Danae and Zeus had come to Cepheus son of Belus and married his daughter Andromeda, a son was born to him whom he called Perses, and he left him there; for Cepheus had no male offspring; it was from this Perses that the Persians took their name", translation Godley 1922, 377.

51 See the *scholion* to *Rhesus* 916: τὸν Θάμ<υριν> λέγει [i. e. Euripides] Φιλάμμονος γεγενῆσθαι παῖδα, <καθὰ>περ καὶ Σοφοκλῆς ("Euripides, as well as Sophocles, says that Thamyris was son of Philammon").

52 In Polygnotus' wall paintings for a building called 'Lesche' (a kind of recreation hall dedicated to the Cnidians in Delphi, of which we are informed by Pausanias), Thamyris "has lost the sight of his eyes; his attitude is one of utter dejection; his hair and beard are long; at his feet lies thrown a lyre with its horns and strings broken" (Pausanias, *Guide to Greece* 10.30.8, translation Jones and Ormerod 1935, 545).

who no longer wears Thracian clothes but is instead dressed as a professional musician ready to step up to the podium and play a definitively Greek instrument (i. e. no longer the stringed instrument of unusual shape most commonly depicted on earlier Attic vase-paintings, called “Thracian *kithara*” by modern scholars). He does so in front of the same Muses responsible for his original punishment. This is the scene we may observe on the Polion *krater* from Spina, dated around 420–410 BCE.<sup>53</sup> If in the anti-Thracian atmosphere of mid-5th-century Athens (caused by the unfortunate Thracian expedition of the Athenian statesman and general Cimon, which culminated in defeat at Drabescos) Thamyris had been represented – by Sophocles and Polygnotus – as a ‘barbarian’ rightly castigated for his *hybris*, i. e. ‘hubris,’ ‘insolence’ (a depiction that Athenian theatrical audiences of that period would certainly have appreciated), in later decades the mythical musician could have been more easily assimilated into the Athenian cultural system, softening his most oppositional features of ‘Otherness.’

## 2 Conclusions

As we have seen from these scattered examples, the oppositional theme of ‘Greek’ versus ‘Barbarian’ music – fictionally created only after the Persian Wars – could have been developed in many different ways by writers and artists of the time, being directly affected by contemporary events and by related ideologies.<sup>54</sup>

The Greek attitude towards the music of Others was in origin essentially neutral: since the Archaic age, ancient musicians had travelled all over the Mediterranean and, meeting other music cultures, had easily assimilated their musical idioms, attributing to them ethnic labels without any implied prejudice.

In the early fifth century BCE, however, violent encounters with the Persians influenced the cultural construction of the Hellenic musical idiom, ideologically shaped in opposition to a stereotyped representation of the foreign element. The Athenian ban against Oriental music and poetry, which were perceived as dangers to the social, religious and political order, reveals a desire to control the musical habits of the *polis*, habits which were deeply rooted in the social and religious system of the time. Plato,

53 For these remarks, see especially Menichetti 2007. *Contra Sarti* 2012, 223.

54 During the 5th century BCE, the word ‘Barbarian’ is most often explicitly applied to music in exotic tragic contexts, as in Euripides, *Iphigenia in Tauris* 179–185 (where the Chorus says that he will sing for Iphigenia responsive songs and “a barbarian cry of Asian hymns”) and Euripides, *Orestes* 1381 *pas-*

*sim* (that is, the famous solo song of the Phrygian slave, full of references to “Asiatic” and “barbarian” voices). In the second half of the 4th century BCE, Aristoxenus (fragment 124, Wehrli 1967) will talk about the “barbarization” of contemporary theatrical music (τὰ θεάτρα ἐκβεβαρβάρωται), confirming the negative meaning assumed by the term at this time, though without any explicit ethnic reference.

in the *Republic*, points out how the musical styles of any Greek city were strictly interrelated with its political and social system, even depending upon them: "For the musical styles are never disturbed without unsettling the most fundamental political and social conventions, as Damon affirms and as I am convinced"<sup>55</sup>

The suggestion that, in times of changing social and political condition, public musical tastes might be subject to discernible change, which was the starting point for this conference, seems not only self-evident in ancient Greek culture but also achieves political expression in the work of ancient Greek writers. We may question the scientific basis on which musical knowledge came to be applied to political matters, as Stefan Hagel argues persuasively elsewhere in this volume; but it cannot be doubted that musical experience and political developments did indeed combine to shape public attitudes to political identity and to Otherness; and at the very least the sources confirm the increasing importance that attached to *mousikē* in Greek political thought.

55 Plato, *Republic* 424c. Translation Shorey 1969, slightly modified. Damon is supposed to have been

a 5th-century musicologist, credited as teacher and advisor of the Athenian statesman Pericles.

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Christophe Vendries

## Conquest, Political Space and Sound in Antiquity: Concerning Barbarians and Romans, and Roman Discourse on Music and Civilization

### Summary

During the period of their expansion, Roman sources conceive of Barbarian musical instruments – trumpets and drums – as ‘strange’ or ‘savage’ and their sounds as unmusical. In both Greek and Latin literature the Barbarian world is viewed as a space of noise, especially in the West, and Barbarians’ ignorance of music becomes a mark of their inhumanity since musical knowledge is believed to lead to a harmonious society. Only the Eastern Barbarians seem truly musical, being closer to Greek civilization. Nevertheless Eastern music is effeminate and lascivious, like the Orient itself. Such an opposition feeds Roman discourses on acculturation which enable Rome to assert its moral superiority over other cultures. It also gives us an idea of the manner in which Romans perceived their own music.

Keywords: Barbarians; noise; savagery; war; ethnography; identity; ancient Rome

Während der römischen Expansionszeit wurden barbarische Instrumente – Trompete und Trommel – in den Quellen als ‚eigenartig‘ oder ‚primitiv‘ und ihr Klang als unmusikalisch verstanden. Sowohl in der griechischen als auch in der lateinischen Literatur wird die Welt der Barbaren – vor allem im Westen – als ein von Krach erfüllter Raum beschrieben. Ihre Ignoranz gegenüber Musik wurde zum Zeichen ihrer Unmenschlichkeit, da nur musikalisches Wissen zu einer harmonischen Gesellschaft führte. Nur die östlichen Barbaren schienen wahrhaft musikalisch, da sie in größerer Nähe zur griechischen Gesellschaft lebten. Dennoch galt ihre Musik als verweichlicht und wollüstig – wie der Orient selbst. Dieser Gegensatz nährte den römischen Diskurs über Akkulturation und legitimierte die moralische Überlegenheit der Römer über andere. Dies erlaubt auch Rückschlüsse auf die Wahrnehmung ihrer eigenen Musik.

Keywords: Barbaren; Krach; Wildheit; Krieg; Ethnographie; Identität; antikes Rom

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## I Introduction

During the Roman Empire, between 27 BCE and 476 CE, music theoreticians, all belonging to a philosophical school, agree that amongst Greeks and Romans music has a philosophical dimension, and that Greeks and Romans frequently express degrees of civilization of parts of the Empire in terms of their musics. The work of the music theoretician Aristides Quintilianus sets the tone in this regard, when Barbarian peoples are reviewed on the basis of their relationship to music, ranging from the *Garamantes* and Iberians “savage and like wild animals” and the Phoenicians and Carthaginians “who display excessive moral weakness” to the Thracians and Celts who are “excessive in their anger and wild in war”. He concludes: “on the contrary, peoples who have devoted themselves to the study of music and to the healthy practice of this art – I mean the Greek people and any other which has followed their example – are richly gifted in qualities and knowledge, and, furthermore, are distinguished by their humanity.”<sup>1</sup>

For the Ancients, music had a broader definition than it has today: for them it is a science (*scientia*) that is based on an eruditely elaborated theory, but it also has a religious basis. All musical instruments – organ and trumpet excepted – have a divine origin. It also carries a civic dimension, especially with regard to military musicians and musicians concerned with public cults and games in the service of the city. But it is especially its educative impact that various authors stress: the metaphor of musical harmony as pledge of social harmony is a well-known theme since Cicero:<sup>2</sup> in Rome *Concordia* is the translation of *Harmonia*.<sup>3</sup> It is on the basis of this definition that the Romans consider what music, or conversely, its perceived absence, could mean amongst Barbarian peoples.

This perception of musics of the Other is the consequence of a ‘Romanocentric’ perspective of authors who, often, may never have had direct contact with the Barbarian peoples themselves. The Barbarians have left us no written testimony of their music during the Roman period: Barbarian oral poetic repertoire has entirely disappeared. Even their art provides only very rare images of musical instruments, and our only good body of archaeological evidence comprises the ‘metallic archives’ of remains of horns and trumpets. Although very remarkable, this resource is very restricted in its scope and does not allow us access to their wider musical universe; thus only the discourse of the Greeks and Romans enables us to begin to interpret the image that Rome has of Barbarian music.

1 Aristides Quintilianus, *De Musica* II. 5. The author is probably writing during the 2nd century CE.

2 Cicero, *De Republica*, II. 42.69.

3 Poulle 2002, 285.

## 2 Barbarian and civilized: a system of opposing values

Contrary to formerly accepted ideas, recent research shows that the Barbarian and Graeco-Roman worlds were not closed spaces that existed in isolation: there were early contacts and in due course major commercial trading connections between them, for example, between the Mediterranean world and the Celts.<sup>4</sup> Yet literary sources give the impression of two antagonistic worlds, and an entire system of opposition is developed in both literature and imagery.<sup>5</sup> The Barbarian in the West lives in a hostile environment (in the middle of forests and marshes), he has a peculiar physique (tall, with long hair); moreover his mode of dress (naked in combat or covered in furs<sup>6</sup>), his house (made of wood), his wild customs (human sacrifice in Carthage; severed heads among Gallic warriors); and these are some of the many elements that sunder him from the Greeks and Romans. The perception of aboriginal peoples in these antique sources is based upon a need to express the advantages and superiority of the Graeco-Roman world. This in turn allows and encourages the creation of a notional barrier, even a frontier, between the worlds of the city and of the Barbarian. It is based largely upon stereotypes and ethnotypes. Theodore S. Schmidt calls this “the technique of contrast”, referring to Plutarch’s discourse,<sup>7</sup> that leads to the literary disadvantage of the Barbarian world.

Ancient theory of climate further contributes to the marginalization of the Barbarian of the North. For the Ancients, Earth is divided into five areas (two polar and cold zones, a warm zone and two temperate ones): and the degree of barbarism of a people partly corresponds to its situation in an extreme zone. Thus the climates of the North and South are characterized by ferocity, and their inhabitants share this nature, while the temperate zone brings equilibrium. In his *De architectura*, Vitruvius considers that Italy, because of its intermediate position, is “a unique region regarding its equilibrium” and that this character explains and justifies its current political hegemony.<sup>8</sup> The ignorance and savagery of the Barbarians predisposes them in turn to be dominated by Rome. In this ethnographical vision, formed by the victors, of Barbarian people, the question of music – one that has not previously seemed of much interest to modern historians<sup>9</sup> – contributes to definitions of difference, and appears as an important element in Romans’ cultural and political model of the Barbarian world.

The dominant ideological discourse firstly raises the question of the existence of music. Antique authors sometimes record the absence of music or the absence of certain musical aptitudes amongst foreigners; for instance, in his *Histories*, Herodotus is

4 Goudineau 1991; Buschenschütz 2004.

5 See Dauge 1981; Thollard 1987; for Germany, Chevallier 1961.

6 Only shepherds and Barbarians wore furs: Lavergne 2002, 218.

7 Schmidt 1999, 328.

8 Vitruvius, *De architectura* VI. 1.

9 Wille 1967, 562–576, has sketched a method by gathering texts related to several Barbarian peoples: he reviews the Etruscans, the Gauls, the Germans, the Carthaginians.

surprised by the absence of auletes (players on the *aulos*) during sacrifices amongst the Persians.<sup>10</sup> However, F. Hartog has convincingly explained that Herodotus' representation was no more than a mirror, aimed first and foremost at reflecting back to the Greeks an image of their own superior identity.<sup>11</sup> Plutarch shows that Scythians not only ignore the vine but also eschew cities and the music of auletes.<sup>12</sup> He goes so far as to make fun of the king of the Scythians who preferred to hear the whinny of his horses than listen to the music of the great aulete Ismenias,<sup>13</sup> which echoes his animal nature. Aristides Quintilianus considers that Barbarian people, being "savage and like wild animals", are not capable of tasting "the beauties offered by music."<sup>14</sup> Such ideas would prove very resilient. Still in the 18th century, the French philosopher Rousseau could persist in the notion that "le vrai sauvage ne chante jamais" ('the real savage never sings').<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, most scholars today would accept that "total indifference to music (any music) is exceptional" and indeed that there seems to be no society without music.<sup>16</sup> Rather, every people has its own preferred kinds of sound- and music-making. Barbarian music, when ancient texts agree to give it any credit, is often portrayed as disconcerting. For the Romans, the Barbarian, because of his isolation from civilization, is close to nature and thus prefers sound tools which have not been modified by human hand: "some Barbarians" blow into conches (*stromboi*),<sup>17</sup> their huge spiral-shaped shells being considered suited to use as rudimentary horns before the invention of the metal trumpet. The Scythians, meanwhile, reportedly use *pletra* made of goats' hooves.<sup>18</sup>

Should a Barbarian people turn out to know something of music, it is naturally considered as a cause for surprise, as it is by Strabo in considering the Dardanians, neighbours of the Thracians,<sup>19</sup> who "live in a wild state to the point of living in holes made under their manure stack" but who "still are interested in music; they play it on *auloi* as well as stringed instruments". However, it must also be said that these are Barbarians who are living in close contact with the Greeks.

10 Herodot, *Historiae* I.132.

11 Hartog 1980.

12 The Symposium of the Seven Sages, 5 (Plutarch, *moralia* 150 D).

13 Plutarch, *Apophthegmata laconica* 18.

14 Aristides Quintilianus, *De Musica* II. 5,6–11.

15 Rousseau 1768, s. v. Chant, p. 82: "quoique les

Sauvages de l'Amérique chantent, parce qu'ils parlent, le vrai Sauvage ne chanta jamais".

16 Sève 2003, 70.

17 Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus musicos* 24.

18 Pollux, *Onomastikon* IV. 60.

19 Strabon, *Geographica* VII. 5.7.

### 3 A different vision of the eastern Barbarians: a music, yes, but languid

The discourse on barbarism, although made up of recurrent stereotypes and often applied to several peoples indiscriminately,<sup>20</sup> is not uniform. We can observe a difference between the perception of the eastern and western Barbarians, as the former are considered more uncouth while the latter are wilder because the western limits of the Empire are regarded as the domain of savagery and obscurantism (resistance to wider knowledge).

The musical portrait of the eastern Barbarian is generally less negative because, living closer to Greek civilization, this Barbarian knows urban civilization. Athenaeus points out that “several Barbarians also negotiate to the sound of the *aulos* and of the zither in order to soften the heart of their enemy.”<sup>21</sup> Plutarch takes care to state that the king of the Parthians and the king of the Armenians “offered each other parties and feasts where shows from Greece were often introduced” because both kings knew Greek and it is even said that Euripides’ *Bacchantes* was played in front of the Parthians.<sup>22</sup> But to live close to the Greeks is not enough: music produced by these peoples corresponds to the supposed faults of Eastern people (Parthians, Syrians or Phoenicians): effeminate, corrupt, soft and perverted. For instance, the Syrian king Sardanapalus, paragon of luxury and vice, lives surrounded by men and women dancing to the sound of a softening music.<sup>23</sup> It paints a vivid picture of the ravages of *truphè* (luxury) among Eastern peoples.

The conquest of the Greek East (Macedonia, Asia Minor) towards the end of the Republic coincides with the introduction of the harp into Rome (Fig. 1),<sup>24</sup> appearing in Latin vocabulary as *sambuca*, *chordae obliquae*, *psaltria* just after the conquest,<sup>25</sup> and also the lute *pandura*; both are eastern musical instruments.<sup>26</sup> The Greeks start to distinguish Greek instruments from ‘foreign’ instruments, the latter sometimes retaining their Barbarian names, as noted by Strabo.<sup>27</sup> The conquest also leads to the import from the Eastern world of many slave musicians in Rome, in sharp contrast to the Barbarian West which, according to Cicero, was unable to produce a single well-read slave.<sup>28</sup>

20 Schmidt 1999, 332 notes the lack of real differentiation between Barbarian peoples.

21 Athenaios, *Deipnosophistae* XIV. 627c.

22 Plutarch, *Crassus* 33.

23 Dio of Prusa, *Discourses* IV. 106; LXII. 6.

24 Several oriental populations are associated with the harp: the Egyptians of course, but also the Parthians and the Troglodytes (on the Red Sea) who “played the four-string *sambyke*” (Athen. XIV. 633f).

25 Vendries 1999, 111–116 and 217.

26 On the lute amongst the Parthians: Duchesne-Guillemin 1984–1985, 23–28.

27 Strabon, *Geographica* X. 3.17.

28 The prosopography of slave musicians in Rome demonstrates the preponderance of eastern names: none has a Celtic name. See Cicero, *epistulae ad Atticum* IV. 16.7: the island of Britain “offers no hope of booty besides slaves amongst whom I think you should not expect to find any that are literate or musicians”.



Fig. 1 Imported from the East: the harp in Roman art. Woman with harp. From Boscoreale, Villa rustica; Stuttgart, Württembergischen Landesmuseums.

Athenaeus acknowledges an eastern legacy in terms of music theory, when he explains that Lydian and Phrygian harmonies “come from the Barbarians”.<sup>29</sup> The theoretician Aristoxenus of Tarentum already knew that in his own time – during the 4th century BCE – theatres were becoming ‘Barbarian’ because of the musical mixes that arose between Greek and Eastern traditions.<sup>30</sup>

The expansion and opening up of Rome to the East, through the conquest of Asia, Anatolia and Egypt, has musical and therefore also moral consequences: the enrichment of the palette of sounds marks the abandonment of the masculine music that was supposedly symbolic of Rome’s heroic origins. This musical transformation is deprecated by the moralists who regret the lost ‘purity’ of the old music. And that is perhaps why the harp came to be rejected in Rome by the élite, because of its Eastern connotation; for this instrument, like the lute, and unlike the Greek lyres, seems to have remained very marginal.

29 Athenaios, *Deipnosophistae* XIV. 625e.

30 Aristoxenos, *Historia harmonicae* XIV. 632b.



While the existence of music amongst the Eastern peoples is admitted, some musical practices still continue to be viewed as peculiar: for instance, among percussion instruments, drums are used only by the Parthians and the Indians<sup>31</sup> – whereas Greeks and Romans use the tambourine instead – and for them such drums occupy the place of horns in warfare.<sup>32</sup> This comes as a surprise to the Greeks and Romans. Eastern ignorance of the use of horns in warfare is part of a wider ignorance of the rules of war: the Parthians “do not know how to fight in line and close, nor to besiege or take cities”;<sup>33</sup> their drums struck “with hammers” produce “deafeningly loud sounds such as a mix of wild howlings and thunder.”<sup>34</sup> Sometimes the uses of a music make it suspect, as when music is used to accompany the bloody rituals of the Carthaginians, descendants of the Phoenicians, with human sacrifices described by Plutarch: “the entire space in front of the statue [of the god Baal] was filled with the sound of the *auloi* and of the tambourines (*tympanoi*), so that no one could hear the screams” of the murdered children.<sup>35</sup>

#### 4 Sound production among the Celts and the Germans: a music close to noise

The Barbarian West offers a peculiar aspect since its distance from the Mediterranean and Greece implies the absence of any theatrical tradition. This does not help its relationship to music. The most distant peoples (Germans and Britons) apparently lack music of any sort: German music is completely absent and there is not a single mention of any horn in Tacitus’ *Germania* – a sign of the greatest savagery. And if these Barbarians even try to make music it immediately recalls the noises of the less melodious animals: the emperor Julian states that he has seen Barbarians “from beyond the Rhine [...] sing wild poems (*agria melè*), which recall the cawing of husky birds.”<sup>36</sup> There is no mention of any music amongst the Britons described in Tacitus’ *Agricola*. Their position in the ‘Far West’ of the known world and their unsophisticated state seem tacitly to preclude the knowledge of any form of music.

It is upon the Gauls that ancient authors have focused, making them the sole people for whom we have any detailed information regarding their sound-making and musical practices. Of these authors, the Greeks are our prime source for Gallic trumpets (notably

31 Quintus Curtius, *Historiae Alexandri Magni* VIII. 11.20–21.

32 Quintus Curtius, *Historiae Alexandri Magni* VIII. 14.10.

33 Junianus Justinus, *Epitoma historiarum Philippicarum* XLI. 2.7.

34 Plutarch, *Crassus* 23.

35 Plutarch, *De superstitione* 13 (*Moralia* 171). This theme has been adopted by Flaubert in his novel *Salammbô*.

36 Julian, *Misopogon* VII. 1.

Polybius and Diodorus). Julius Caesar mentions such things only once, and without offering any description.<sup>37</sup> Polybius, on the other hand, provides an informative picture of the sounds heard during the Telamon battle, between Celts and Romans in the plain of the River Po: “the quantity of horns and trumpets was innumerable<sup>38</sup> and there was also a cheer so vast and loud when this entire army began shouting its war song, that not only the soldiers’ instruments, but also the surrounding places that were echoing, seemed to shout”<sup>39</sup> Celtic horns are described by Diodorus as “resounding and Barbarian”, probably alluding to the *carnyx*.<sup>40</sup> The zoomorphic character of the *carnyx* attested by the notice of a lexicographer<sup>41</sup> – it is the sole Celtic music instrument known by its name – and the remains of *carnyces* discovered at Tintignac (Corrèze, France) have confirmed the terrifying aspect of such ornament.<sup>42</sup> The Gauls are often depicted as having a “frightening appearance” (Diodorus) and the Cimbrians seen by Plutarch wear helmets figuring the “open mouths of strange and formidable animals.”<sup>43</sup> In these conditions, how could their music not be strange?

In depictions of the battlefield, Barbarian horns are shown symbolically rather than as strict portraits of musical instruments, and indeed the *carnyx*, because of its especially emblematic character, is often sufficient to symbolize Gallic identity. The horn of the Barbarians does not, it seems, have the same function of structuring and ordering the battlefield as the Roman *tuba* has.<sup>44</sup> It is meant to motivate the warriors and to provoke fear amongst their enemies, yet apparently not to deliver coherent signals of the kind that the Romans used.<sup>45</sup> When shown on Celtic coinage, horns are associated with Celtic leaders (Fig. 2),<sup>46</sup> whereas in Roman art they appear only in the context of the Triumph, and specifically of Barbarian submission. Already on Greek coins from Aetolia, minted after the victory over Brennus’ *Galatae* at Delphi in 279 BCE, the *carnyx* that lies on the floor is crushed by the personification of Aetolia, while the horn even has its mouth shut in order to show that its cannot sound any more. In Roman iconography, meanwhile, the *carnyx* is the sole Barbarian horn ever shown: it is either portrayed being destroyed by Roman chariots, or set on top of trophies (captured weapons, armour and insignia).<sup>47</sup>

37 Caesar, *De bello Gallico* VII. 81.3 (with Vercingetorix) and VIII. 20.2 (Gauls calling the assembly with trumpets).

38 The theme of the multitude can be applied to the literature of the Barbarians: cf. Schmidt 1999.

39 Polybius, *Historiae* II. 29.68.

40 Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica* V. 30.

41 Eustathius, s. v. *carnyx*.

42 For archaeological testimonies on the *carnyx*, see Roncador 2009 for the *carnyx* of Sanzeno in north Italy, and Maniquet 2011 for the *carnyces* of Tintignac in Gaul.

43 Plutarch, *Marius* 25.10.

44 Aristides Quintilianus, *De Musica* II. 4; Vegetius, *Epitome of Military Science*, II, 22 on the respective rôles of the *tubae* and *cornua* and the relationship between sound signals and insignia.

45 On Celtic trumpets: Vendries 1993; Vendries 1999 and Vendries and Clodoré 2002; for archaeological testimonies on the *carnyx* see again Roncador 2009 for the *carnyx* of Sanzeno in north Italy, and Maniquet 2011 for the *carnyces* of Tintignac in Gaul.

46 Hunter 2009.



Fig. 2 Roman coin showing a Barbarian horn presented in association with leadership. 2nd century BCE.



Fig. 3 Roman horns on Trajan's Column, Rome. From a modern bronze cast preserved in the Musée des Antiquités Nationales, St-Germain-en-Laye. Marble original, 113 CE.

On the columns of Trajan and Aurelius in Rome, only Roman horns (*tubae* and *cornua*) are shown (Fig. 3), ever-present during fights against the Dacian or German Barbarians, whereas the horns of the Barbarians themselves are nowhere represented. Sometimes, curiously, triumphal reliefs representing the Dacian wars ascribe the *cornyx* to the Dacians, which thereby becomes a generic symbol of the Barbarian. The multiplicity of Roman horns on Trajan's column offers a fine illustration of Quintilian's words on Roman military superiority: "the brighter the sounds [of the horns], the more the glory of

the Roman armies dominates in war over all others.”<sup>48</sup>

Besides the sounds of horns, other expressions of sound are related to military activity. When the sources evoke first of all the fights between Rome and the Celts, the sounding and clinking elements are all put forward: the crash of weapons against shields (Titus Livius; Dionysus of Halicarnassus), the small bells attached by the Celts of Scotland to the bottoms of their spears (Cassius Dio),<sup>49</sup> the shouts and the war songs of the Germans (Tacitus). According to Tacitus,<sup>50</sup> in order to sing their *barditus*, the Germans “who are essentially seeking to emphasize the roughness of the sound and the huskiness of their roars” place their shields in front of their mouths in order to make their voices resonate. Singing and sound-making amongst Barbarians thus seems to be being defined as an acoustic but non-musical phenomenon, which is to say noise rather than music. In the value system of the Ancients, noise thus becomes a defining attribute of the Barbarian and a defining element in Barbarian practices:<sup>51</sup> their geographical marginality is then doubled by a cultural marginality. In the *Vita Homeri*, roars characterize the Barbarians, in opposition to the quiet of the Greeks.<sup>52</sup> Already for Homer, the Barbarian is exemplified by noise, and Xenophon describes Cyrus’ Persian army as moving forward with great noise.<sup>53</sup> Plutarch several times uses words such as *kraugè* and *thorubos* to evoke the hullabaloo of the Barbarian armies. The otherness of the Barbarians is thus measured by the way they produce sounds. The latin term *carmen* or the Greek *melè* are applied to songs, whereas the term for music (*mousikè*) is never used to define the sounds of Celts or Germans. It seems however that the absence of music has one advantage, for Tacitus: total ignorance of music, in his view, offers the Barbarian a defence against easy pleasures, when he praises the purity of customs of the Germans who eschew those shows and feasts which are leading to moral corruption in Rome.<sup>54</sup>

Such discourse on Barbarianism and music represents in a sense a warning to those peoples of the Greek world who appear to ignore the beneficial effects of music. Polybius tells that in Arcadia citizens of Kynaitha are the only ones *not* to cultivate music, which has led to the introduction of disorder and has made their nature rough.<sup>55</sup>

47 Desnier 1991.

48 Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* I.10.14

49 Cassius Dio, *Historia Romana* 77.12.

50 Tacitus, *Germania* III. 2. See Speidel 2004, 111.

51 Schmidt 1999, 29–30, 46–47, 88–89, 157–159.

52 Pseudo-Herodotus, *De vita Homeri* 149.5. Quoted in Schmidt 1999, 157.

53 Xenophon, *anabasis* I. 7.4.

54 Tacitus, *Germania* XIX. 1 and XXIV. 1: the only type of permitted spectacle consists in making young men jump with weapons in their hands.

55 Polybios, *Historiae* IV. 21.5–12. This story has since become famous and is used by Rousseau in his *Dictionary of Music*. Rousseau 1768, under *musique*.

## 5 From 'noise' to 'music' thanks to Greek influence: when the Gauls become 'good savages'

For Posidonius, who visited southern Gaul in around 100 BCE, the Hellenization of the Gauls who had enjoyed contact with Greek culture allows some mitigation of the Barbarian condition. For Julius Caesar such mitigation brings with it a realization that the Gauls can indeed be assimilated.<sup>56</sup> For him and others after him, however, the same cannot be said of the Germans; and that is why the Rhine will in future become an ideological as well as a political frontier between Civilization and the Barbarian.<sup>57</sup> Strabo also notes how Barbarians from Iberia can be transformed: the Turdetans, he writes, are "entirely converted to the Roman lifestyle"; the Celtiberians "have adopted the Italian lifestyle"; the Cavares "deserve no longer to be called Barbarians"; the Gallic peoples living around Marseille "have abandoned war and are turning to citizenly activities". In contrast to Cicero, of course, Strabo is writing at a time when pacification is starting to take effect, at the beginning of the Principate during the reign of Augustus (from around 27 BCE to 14 CE): such Barbarians are no longer to be pushed aside, now they are to be integrated.

The evocations of encounters with music by the anonymous 1st-century Greek poet 'Pseudo-Scymnus'<sup>58</sup> and of the poetic and musical activities of the Gallic bards (*bardos* or *mousikos*) by Diodorus Siculus<sup>59</sup> or Ammianus Marcellinus<sup>60</sup> at last offer us the opportunity to set aside sounds of war and the sphere of noise. Descriptions of the bard singing poems to the accompaniment of the lyre have been corroborated by the discovery at Paule, in modern Brittany, of a stone statue of a lyre-player, which has been dated to the 2nd century BCE: a time when trade between Brittany (or Armorica as it then was) and the Mediterranean region is well documented (Fig. 4). Found in an aristocratic settlement continuously occupied for several centuries, this exceptional document seems to confirm knowledge of the lyre amongst bards active within the milieu of the Celtic aristocracy. The celebration of the bard in the form of a stone statue, preserved in the settlement along with other ancestral portraits, seems to borrow a form of Mediterranean commemoration that Y. Menez identifies in the *lararia* (shrines to the *lares*, the protective deities) of the houses of Pompeii, where images of the ancestors were preserved.<sup>61</sup> This statue thus begins to allow us to nuance the Roman image of a Gallic music that

56 Caesar, *De bello Gallico* VI.

57 Thébert 1995, 222.

58 'Pseudo-Scymnus,' 183–186.

59 Diodorus Siculus V, 31.

60 Ammianus Marcellinus XV, 9.

61 Four stylistically similar statues have been found on the site: each is anthropomorphic and dates from

the 2nd or 1st century BCE. The statue with the lyre wears a *torc* (penannular neck-ring) and, perhaps, a diadem. None comes from a sanctuary. Menez sees evidence of a family-based ancestor cult among the leading Gaulish aristocratic families, as part of a process of elevating the dead to heroic status. Cf. Ménez 1999.



Fig. 4 Celtic statue of a lyre player. Saint-Symphorien-en-Paule, Côtes d'Armor, Brittany, 2nd century BCE.

only sounded 'noisy'. It is consistent with the statements of some ancient authors who consider the Celts to be Greek-lovers who are breaking from barbarism thanks to Greek influence: and the figure of the bard with his lyre may be taken to represent this 'Barbarian wisdom':

## 6 A metaphorical image of the civilizing influence of music on Barbarians: Orpheus charming the wild animals

During the early part of the Empire, while the integration of the Barbarians is not yet expressed in the same terms as the building of the Empire and of its provinces, Roman iconography continues to invite an allegorical interpretation of Rome's political domination over the Barbarian world. The wild animals charmed by Orpheus become a metaphor for the Barbarians' submission to Civilization: the cithara player is placed at the centre, shown from the front or in three-quarters view, while the animals, placed

at the periphery, in repose, extend their legs to express their submission. This image, which exists only in Roman iconography, proved highly popular in mosaic compositions of the Imperial period, especially in the West and during the 2nd and 4th centuries CE. The choice of Orpheus as a topos to represent Civilization dominating Barbarianism stemmed from the literature, where comparisons between animals and barbarism were frequently made. Some have said that there is a “real identity with nature” because Barbarian and beast alike represent something that has to be fought and dominated.<sup>62</sup> There are several conspicuous examples of such association in the literature:<sup>63</sup> Diodorus says of the Ligurians that they have “the vigour of wild animals” and that the Libyans “have the lifestyle of wild animals”; Seneca, regarding the Germans and the Scythians, affirms that “all the nations whose savagery makes them independent resemble lions and wolves.”<sup>64</sup> The shouts of the *Ambrones* of northern Germany evoke the “hootings of wild animals”<sup>65</sup> while the howling of other Germans is called *barritus* in reference to the trumpeting of the elephant.<sup>66</sup>

Eventually the music that characterizes the civilized world allows the pacification of the ‘animal’ by using the same method for “the men of savage customs very close to the state of animals.”<sup>67</sup> Music’s educative and ethical virtues, praised everywhere within the Empire, can thus be applied, with much the same methods and success, to the Barbarians as they can to the wild animals, since the Barbarian is demonstrably close to the animal not only because of his physical aspect but also because of several other traits, such as the wearing of animal skins and furs.<sup>68</sup> For Macrobius “even the wildest characters and the fiercest hearts are forced to yield to the influence of harmony”, and that is why Orpheus and Ambion symbolize the power that singing has over the Barbarian, who, like the animals, lacks reason, “because they were the first to use poetry and music to soften the wild peoples.”<sup>69</sup> Whether applied to the wild animal (*theria*) or to the Barbarian, one may often observe this same dichotomy in various forms of discourse on ‘otherness’, and indeed rhetorical reference to ‘wild nature’ has been used (and abused) on many occasions during more recent times, in relation to indigenous peoples.<sup>70</sup>

So, thanks in part to the myth of the musician Orpheus, “*pax romana* came to coincide with *pax musicalis*.”<sup>71</sup> On the reverses of Imperial coins minted in Alexandria under

62 Dauge 1981, 605–606.

63 Stern 1973, 65, no. 54, gives other literary references. See also Garezou 1994, 104.

64 Seneca, *De Ira* II. 15.4. Dauge 1981, 605 considers that this book is “a typical example of this system of correlations”. On the theme of the bestiality of Barbarians: Schmidt 1999, 29–35.

65 Plutarch, *Marius* 20.2–3.

66 Ammianus Marcellinus XVI. 12.43 and XXVI. 7.16.

67 Aristides Quintilianus, *De Musica* III. 8.17–20.

68 On this stereotype of Barbarianism as applied to the Gauls, Germans and Scythians: Besnier 1873–1919 [1905] s. v. *Pelles*, 373; Lavergne 2002, 219.

69 Macrobius, *commentarius in Ciceronis somnium Scipionis* II. 3.7–8.

70 Thomas 1985, 50.

71 Garezou 1994, 104.



Fig. 5 Orpheus plays the lyre to wild animals. Coin of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus. Alexandria, 164 CE (Paris, Cabinet des Médailles).

Antoninus Pius, and then in 164 CE under Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus,<sup>72</sup> we can see Orpheus playing the lyre to the wild animals (Fig. 5). Here he appears as “the symbol of the superior man who knows how to master human passions around him to create concord”, following the teachings of the philosopher Frontinus found in a letter to his pupil, the young Marcus Aurelius.<sup>73</sup> The symbolic value of the figure of Orpheus as musician cannot have been lost on the prince, and its wider use can only have reinforced his political reputation, civilizing, in effect, the Barbarian world.

We have no idea of the way in which imported Roman music was perceived by the indigenous peoples involved, and the question of its acculturation has never been addressed by historians:<sup>74</sup> nevertheless, in each city the sounds of trumpets and *tibiae* must have resounded in the forum, in front of temples and during processions, and the iconography shows that the *tibicen* was even enlisted to celebrate the rituals of indigenous divinities. The integration of Graeco-Roman musical culture was no doubt slow, and would have remained incomplete even in those annexed territories that became

72 On this coin: Stern 1973, pl. XXXII, 1 (Antoninus) and 2 (Marcus Aurelius); Stern 1980, pl. XIII, 12 (Marcus Aurelius); Poole 1892, no. 1372 (Lucius Verus) and pl. XI.

73 Marcus Cornelius Fronto, *epistulae*. (Loeb ed., 71–75). The same notion can be found in the case of Chinese emperor Fou Hi, who would have fixed musical rules in order to tame wild animals and to bring peace amongst civil servants: Duchemin 1960,

145.

74 Only Chr. Goudineau briefly raises the question (Goudineau 1993, 106): “Les formes culturelles antérieures, architecture, musique, poésie, peinture etc. [...] se sont effacées devant la nouvelle culture, reconnue comme supérieure” (‘Previous cultural forms, architecture, music, poetry, painting, etc. [...] have faded before the new culture, [which is] recognized as superior’).



provinces of the Roman Empire. When Philostratus mentions the alarm expressed by the inhabitants of the small city of Hispala in Spain, under the Empire, when first discovering actors wearing masks and *cothurnes* (the half-length buskin boots favoured by tragedians) his anecdote may serve to remind us that theatrical practice and music are profoundly linked only to urban society. Familiarity with, and taste for, theatre and music in the Roman style was therefore not necessarily shared by everyone in the Empire.

## 7 Conclusion

Within the frameworks developed by the Greeks and the Romans, the Barbarian peoples remain at the frontier of the civilized world precisely because of their lack of musical culture (*amouisia*) or their improper use of music (*kakomouisia*).<sup>75</sup> This view does not seem to have changed much over the centuries, since stereotypes of Barbarians exist until the end of Antiquity. Thus Greek and Roman discourse on Barbarism remains unfixed and undefined in chronological terms. In describing the sound effects produced by horns during the Barbarian wars of the 4th century CE, we find the writer Ammianus Marcellinus employing much the same clichés.<sup>76</sup> This dual vision of music thus contributes to the delineation of two markedly different soundscapes, one Barbarian and the other Roman; and for the Romans ‘noise’ always carries a negative connotation. It is sign of disorder (noises are often ominous), of rupture (as on the occasion of the fall of an emperor) and sometimes of transgression (notably in the noises that accompany Dionysiac processions).

The Ancients’ perspectives on the music of the Barbarians, in this game of comparisons, call to mind the composer Hector Berlioz’s unsympathetic opinion of the music of the Chinese during the 19th century: this people who, he says, “n’a pas la plus légère idée de l’harmonie” (‘who do not have the slightest idea of harmony’). It leads him to conclude that “Les Chinois et les Indiens auraient une musique semblable à la nôtre, s’ils en avaient une, mais ils sont encore à cet égard plongés dans les ténèbres les plus profondes de la barbarie” (‘the Chinese and the Indians would have a music similar to ours, if only they had such a thing, but they are still, from this point of view, submerged in the deepest darkness of Barbarism’).<sup>77</sup>

75 See Aristides Quintilianus, *De Musica* II. 5.

76 Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae* XXIX. 5.39.

77 H. Berlioz 1854, quoted by Schaeffner 1968, 309.

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1 After Melini 2008, 39. 2 After De Lagoy 1849,  
pl. II, 15. 3 Photo: C. Vendries. 4 Ménez 1999,

485, fig. 28. 5 After Stern 1980, pl. XIII, 12.

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RICARDO EICHMANN, MARK HOWELL AND GRAEME LAWSON are archaeologists with shared research interests in ancient music history, musical instruments and performance. Between 2008 and 2013 they combined within Topoi Area C-III *Acts* to develop new avenues in music archaeology and archaeoacoustics research, connecting ancient sound and music to space, the history of knowledge and the history of science. The contributors, who are all colleagues drawn from the membership of the International Study Group in Music Archaeology (ISGMA), Berlin, represent a variety of viewpoints, from Egyptology to archaeology, prehistory, musicology, art history and philology.

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