SYMPOSIUM CUMANUM 2016

Music in the Time of Virgil

Organized by Timothy J. Moore, Washington University in St. Louis

Villa Vergiliana, Cuma – Bacoli, Italy
June 22 - June 24, 2016

ABSTRACT

Sponsored by
Vergilian Society
Washington University in St. Louis
Harry Wilks Study Center

With the support of:
Presidenza del Parlamento Europeo
Consolato Americano di Napoli
American Academy in Rome
Association of American College and University Programs in Italy
Regione Campania
Provincia di Napoli
Città di Bacoli, Comune di Monte di Procida, Comune di Pozzuoli
Dipartimento Studi Umanistici, Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II
Dipartimento Studi Umanistici, Università degli Studi di Salerno
MOISA: International Society for the Study of Greek and Roman Music and its Cultural Heritage
Dionysius of Halicarnassus came to Rome in about 30 BC, and spent much of the next two decades researching and writing his massive *Antiquitates Romanae*, a history of Rome from legendary times to the first Punic War. It was in twenty books, of which the first nine survive complete, together with substantial parts of Books 10-11; of the rest we have only fragments. His main aim, as he tells us, was to reconcile his fellow-Greeks to Roman domination by showing that they were not barbarians; they were, in fact, fundamentally Greek, and Roman civilisation was a direct continuation and a worthy successor of the culture which Greeks had pioneered. No doubt he hoped that his message would be accepted and welcomed by educated Romans too, and that it would encourage them to identify with Hellenic models of cultural excellence.

Music is among the manifestations of Greco-Roman culture to which Dionysius sometimes refers, but he does not treat it as a separate topic to be discussed and anatomized in its own right. His descriptions of musical performances and institutions emerge, one by one, out of their narrative contexts, and are embedded in his accounts of mythical and historical episodes. I propose to examine a selection of these passages; and as well as commenting on interesting or problematic details, I shall offer some thoughts about the ways in which Dionysius uses them in the service of his overall project, and the extent to which his strategies are persuasive. Secondly, even though they are presented as depictions of events in the distant past, I shall also ask how much light they shed on Roman musical practices in his own and Vergil’s time. He himself asserts in some of these passages that he is basing his conclusions not only on the evidence of written sources but also on his personal observations in contemporary Rome, and argues that in these particular contexts he is fully justified in adopting this procedure.
Since as early as the second century CE the verses of Vergil have been consulted in order to foretell the future. Books would be opened and an individual line chosen at random as a guide for prophecy. Clyde Pharr asserts that by the 16th century Vergil had become ‘Virgil’ to remind us of the wand, the *virga*, of magicians, and he was endowed with supernatural qualities. Though subsequent ages have grown more sanguine about his powers, a certain degree of Vergilian bibliomancy has never left us. The ‘sortes Vergilianae’ were frequently referenced by the British novelist, Graham Greene, and appear in other works of fiction by Robert Louis Stevenson and, most recently, the Irish writer, Barry McCrea.

However, what if we regarded the ‘sortes’ as more of an aspiration rather than a premonition? This may explain why a Brazilian composer should choose to set some lines from the Fourth Eclogue, not to herald, but to hope for, the demise of a military dictatorship. José Antônio de Almeida Prado had only returned from self-imposed exile one year earlier, but in 1974 he risked the ire of the junta by setting lines that hail the dawn of a golden age and, presumably, the return of Justice to the earth. Though he might have answered a charge of sedition by claiming he had merely been naïve in his setting of a long dead poet, he also anticipated any objection in the way he treated Vergil’s original text. He opens and closes his arrangement by assigning individual syllables to sixteen separate voices, so that the entire line may only be re-assembled and heard when everyone combines for a complete performance. The middle of the piece is, by contrast, sparsely scored with only two voices interweaving the word ‘virgo’.

Whether because of admiration for his art or the censors’ inability to comprehend his true purpose, Almeida Prado escaped prosecution for ‘tempting Fate’ amid the end of the Third Military Government. Sadly, he and the country had to wait another five years before the Fourth Military Government of General Ernesto Geisel allowed the transition to representative democracy. Thereupon, Almeida Prado flourished in the new republic, eventually gaining recognition as the nation’s greatest living classical composer. He died in 2010.

This paper explores not only the political background to both Vergil’s verses and Almeida Prado’s music, but also provides a detailed analysis and critique of the choral work itself. Sound and printed illustrations are provided.
The Dog that Didn’t Bark: Musical Similes in Vergil’s Aeneid

Similes in Vergil’s Aeneid constantly evoke multiple readings and multiple ways of reading. Yet it is striking that these highly visible totems of intertextuality generally avoid straightforwardly self-referential scenes: images of human artistry are rare, and vignettes of music nearly non-existent. The singing swans in the pair of similes describing Messapus’ contingent among the Italian troops (Aen. 7.698-705) gives a vivid sense of an alternate reality, in which similes engage readers with the interpretive process partly by depicting actions that explicitly resemble the building blocks of the Aeneid itself. What does this unique musical vignette add to its context(s)? How would the Aeneid’s poetic texture change if there were more similes like this? This simile stands out because it describes singing soldiers (ibant aequati numero regemque canebant, 698) in terms of swans’ songs (canoros / dant… modos, 700-701).

A Homeric antecedent, a simile of birds from the Catalogue of Ships (Il. 2.459-66), describes sound in more general terms: the birds produce a racket rather than a song (κλαγγηδόν, 463), and the Greek soldiers’ noise comes from their feet, not their voices (465-66). Thus, Vergil’s repeated references to song are a pointed addition. According to Servius, the swans evoke Ennius: he linked his ancestry to Messapus, who thus forms a linchpin of “Vergil’s extended meditation on the tradition of epic poetry, and his own place in that tradition” in the catalogue in Book 7 (Malamud 1998: 99). While these songs deepen the intertextual richness of this passage, the animal and non-professional singers do not overlap with Vergil, and music is otherwise absent from the Aeneid’s similes. This silence marks off some boundaries of Vergil’s intertextuality: similes, which could be described as Intertextual Ground Zero, steadfastly avoid comparisons that create a direct likeness between other songs and the Aeneid.

Nella poesia didascalica latina Lucrezio e Virgilio, pur trattando temi impoetici come la filosofia epicurea e l'agricoltura, trovano occasione per toccare il tema della musica in ampi passi.

Lucrezio nel De rerum natura (vv. 5,1379-1411) spiega l'origine della musica con l'imitazione della natura-modello (uccelli, vento) da cui l'uomo avrebbe ideato gli strumenti a fiato. Questo passo fa parte della trattazione della civiltà umana, di cui la musica, specie strumentale, rappresenta una delle ultime e più nobili tappe assieme a poesia e danza, una conquista umana e razionale lontana dal divino e dal mito, fonte di gioia e progresso, rappresentata da una festa collettiva in primavera: è uno dei passi lucreziani più sereni, exemplum della vera voluptas di Epicuro (5,1433).

In Virgilio la musica pervade l'episodio di Orfeo nel finale del IV libro delle Georgiche (vv. 453-527) in una digressione mitologica. Grazie al canto e suono della lira, il cantore commuove la natura-spettratrice, ottenendo di scendere nell'Ade per salvare Euridice, ma invano. La musica rivela un potere soprannaturale, espressione di sentimenti dolorosi ed individuali. Anche in Virgilio c'è un richiamo agli uccelli, ma per accentuare il pathos nella similitudine con l'usignolo, allusivo al mito di Filomela (georg. 4,511 ss.).

I due autori mostrano opposti approcci alla musica: nell'interpretazione della sua origine e natura (razionale o divina-mitica), nell'uso (sociale o individuale), nello spirito (laico o funebre-religioso), degli stati d'animo (lieto o doloroso) e negli strumenti (a fiato o a corde). Rispetto al repubblicano Lucrezio le differenze di Virgilio (pur epicureo in gioventù) sono intenzionali, forse influenzate dal diverso clima politico e culturale augusteo.

Entrambi gli approcci mostrano l'interesse dei poeti romani per la musica sull'esempio dei Greci, ma sentimentale più che tecnico, consapevole del suo valore culturale e dell'influsso psicagogico.
Musical Themes in Decorations of Private Art During the Augustan Age

After the battle of Actium in 31 BC, Augustus assumed absolute power, and launched a program of moral renewal and return to the traditional religion. Within this context Apollo symbolized the new attitude and became the official divinity of the empire.

This Augustan Apollo was not the god archer, violent and avenger, but rather a god who was able to conciliate and keep the peace over the entire empire through music and culture. Thus, Apollo playing the kithara, or just the kithara itself became the symbols of Augustus’s power and his aureum regnum. In order to consolidate his power, the emperor also employed an especially developed figured language, which penetrated all levels of Roman society at his time.

The visual aspects of Augustan propaganda can be traced in the iconographic themes employed in public art, in the decorations of private houses, and in the objects for daily use. This paper will examine drinking vessels of the terra sigillata type, which belong to the last category. These drinking vessels were produced in several workshops located near Arretium (Arezzo). They were made of red glazed clay shaped in moulds, and their decorations include musical scenes and characters ranging from symposium and eroticism to dance, satyrs and maenads, winged Genii and Victories.

The study of these music scenes raises several questions concerning the meaning and function of musical elements and their interpretation in the context of the political propaganda; their relation with the iconography of official art; the re-use and re-interpretation of the iconographic themes coming from the Greek world; the reciprocal exchanges and influences between the terra sigillata and other decorations existing in private context, such as on silver vessels, engraved gems, but also included in architectural elements (frescoes and clay decorations).
‘Clamorque virum clangorque tubarum’: The Destructive Trumpet in Vergil’s Aeneid

Music often embodies the harmony of the society in which it is produced. Scholars have often linked music and musical harmony with sociopolitical harmony (e.g., Vance; Hardie 2007; Power: 95, 220). This appears to have been especially true in the Augustan period, where poets such as Horace and Vergil, labelling themselves vates, believed in the “regulatory and civilizing effect” of music (Hardie 1986: 16). Yet music could also lead to discord and disharmony, even death. Bartsch has discussed the potential for art to spur, rather than contain, violence in Vergil’s Aeneid; this too is true of music, which appears throughout the Aeneid (itself a song). In particular, Vergil frequently refers to the blaring of trumpets (tubae and others), marking the beginnings and endings of battles, of contests, and of human life. I argue that music, specifically the music of these brass instruments, plays a significant role in highlighting the themes of destruction and renewal, chaos and order that figure so prominently in the Aeneid.

This paper will begin by looking at Homeric and earlier Roman precedents of trumpet music to establish a basis for understanding what is distinctive about the way Virgil describes and refers to the sound of trumpets. Vergil’s depiction of the trumpet reflects Roman attitudes and social practices regarding brass instruments. As Ziolkowski informs us, the Romans harbored negative feelings towards the trumpet, since they associated it with war and death, events too frequently experienced in the first century BCE. Yet Vergil paints the chaos of war and destruction, highlighted by musical signals, as necessary to the renewal of civilization, culminating in Rome and its pax Romana. Vergil’s representation of the sound of trumpets is one of the ways that the Aeneid is (at least partly) aligned with Augustus’ political and ideological agenda.

Select References

Musica rustica: The Nature of Ancient Roman Pastoral Music

While the poetry of Vergil’s Eclogues has received considerable deliberation in recent scholarship, the nature of the musica rustica (or pastoral music), alluded to throughout these poems, has been overlooked to some extent. The association between notions of ‘the bucolic’ and music is particularly evident, not only in the lyrical style of bucolic poetry (including the works of the earlier Greek poets: Theocritus, Moschus and Bion) but also in the strong reference to ‘shepherd-musicians’ across a range of ancient literary and visual texts. Vergil especially, conjures up this image of the ‘shepherd-musician’ and clearly associates music with the pastoral experience in the Augustan period. Vergil’s third eclogue itself refers specifically to the practice of wagered musical contests between shepherds (Verg. Ecl. 3).

The presence of the syrinx (Pan-pipe) was extremely common in pastoral poetry, largely due to its strong symbolic connection with its mythical inventor, Pan, the Greek god of shepherds and the woodlands. Varro however, also notes the use of the Roman bucina (a Roman lip-vibrated aerophone or ‘brass instrument’) in herding swine, most notably in the form of “having them gather at the sound of the horn… [so] that they might not become lost when scattered into wooden country” (Varro. Rust. 2.4.20). This source indicates that pastoral music may have also had significant practical applications in the agricultural sphere.

With particular reference to the Eclogues of Vergil, this paper will consider the representation of Roman ‘shepherd-musicians’ and the nature of their pastoral music in literary and visual sources, in order to call further attention to this area of study.
War Music: The Acoustics of Trauma on Virgil's Italian Battlefield

The battlefield of the *Aeneid* is full of noises: the crash of weapons, the moans of the dying, the victory cries of the triumphant and, amidst it all, even music. Recent scholarship has paid attention to the visual nature of Virgil’s battle narrative (Rossi 2004; Smith 2013), but far less to its strongly auditory dimension. Conversely, new work in Musicology and Sound Studies offers productive models for understanding the aural spaces of warfare, whose components may range from music to violent noise (Doughtry 2015). In this paper, I take as a case study a section of particular auditory richness towards the end of *Aeneid* 9 (473-777) to consider what affective and poetic work is done by the soundscape of Virgil’s Italian battlefield.

Drawing on philological methodologies as well as the interdisciplinary insights discussed above, I argue that Virgil creates an acoustic theatre of war that situates the reader in a disconcerting space between ordered, intelligible music and traumatic noise. His blurring of these boundaries renders more complicated the poem’s self-conscious definition of itself as a *carmen*: into the ordered musical voice the epic claims for itself is brought a world of sound that hovers at the edge of music but creates a landscape far more violent, troubling, and unstable.

My argument focuses on the lament of Euryalus’ mother (9.473-502), Numanus Remulus’ taunting of the Trojans based on their exotic musical tastes (590-637), and the death of the lyre-player Cretheus (774-777). In these closely-knit scenes, traditional and identifiable musical modes are conjured up (sometimes very oddly, such as the characterization of Numanus’ taunts as “singing,” *canentem* 622), only to be brought into counterpoint with the disordered sounds of battle or even, as in the case of Cretheus, completely destroyed. Virgil’s exploration of these uncomfortable spaces between music and noise creates an acoustic, as well as a visual, poetics of trauma.

The Deadly Rattle of Delia (Tib. 1.3.24)

This paper concerns percussion in Virgil’s time, stemming from two passages in Tibullus Book 1. Song is commonplace in Augustan poetry, but drumming instruments are rarer, notwithstanding the cymbals of Cybele’s followers (e.g. *Matris quae cymbala*, Verg. *G.* 4.64; *crepitantiaque aera*, *G.* 4.151), much discussed in various contexts (e.g. Paschalis 1997:120-1). However, I examine another exotic sub-category, shaken percussion.

I propose that the bronze instrument, likely a *sistrum* (‘rattle’), which Delia carries at Tib. 1.3.23-4, *quid mihi prosunt | illa tua totiens aera repulsa manu*, in the description of Isis’ rites (the ‘Isia’? Harmon 1986:1931), corresponds to the *sistrum* carried by Cleopatra in her guise as Isis during the Battle of Actium, as at *Aeneid* 8.696 and Propertius 3.11.43. If Tibullus 1 is post-Actium (Lyne 1998), the passage from 1.3 may attain martial overtones. Of course the passage, like its counterpart Propertius 2.33.1-4, aims to curse the sexual abstinence of the Isia (cf. Lee-Stecum 1998:110-11). However, ‘the slight extension of meaning’ (Murgatroyd 1980:109) necessary to make *repellere* mean ‘push away’ rather than ‘strike’ here is telling.

The same phrase *aera repulsa* is used later in Tibullus 1 to denote cymbals which disrupt witches’ spells, specifically drawing down the moon (1.8.22). The result in this Marathus poem is retrospectively to assimilate Tibullus’ condition to witchcraft, which also problematises Delia’s Isis rituals. The figure additionally replays the clanking chains of the Osiris passage in Messalla’s triumph-poem (*pulsa sonent*, 1.7.42). I finish by adducing the various bronze love-magic objects of Theocritus 2 (*τὸ χαλκίον*, 2.36, ὁδὲ ῥόμβος ὁ χάλκεος, 2.30 and the refrain’s ἰὔγξ), all strangely absent from *Eclogues* 8; the only bronze object in the *Eclogues* is, mystifyingly, the staff of Mopsus (5.90), modelled on Daphnis’ ([Theocr.] 9.23-4, which contains no metal). Perhaps this staff too could serve as a musical instrument.

Works Cited


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Horace's Lydian Remix: Anatolian Music Appropriation in the Age of Augustus

The exotic opulence and musicality of Lydia pervade archaic Greek lyric poetry. The "Lydian" and "Mixolydian" (mixed Lydian) modes in Greek music are conspicuous products of this intensive period of appropriation of Anatolian music by archaic poets and musicians. When Horace pioneered Latin lyric poetry almost six centuries later, he aspired to create “song remixed with Lydian pipes” (Lydis remixto carmine tibiis, Odes 4.15.30). Horace's poetic wooing and denunciation of lovers named for Lydia (Lydia and Lyde) are a clue to this connection, and—I argue in this paper—manifest his frustrated desire to engage anachronistically with archaic lyric poets’ eastern muse. Could Horace have integrated aspects of Lydian music or poetry into his lyric corpus in more than name alone? The few extant fragments of Lydian poetry show that Lydian poetry was not numerically metrical but was composed of paired accented half verses similar to old Latin Saturnian meter, a poetic form that Horace disparages (Epistle ii.1.158). This paper frames Horace’s project to remix ancient Anatolian music within the context of the Augustan regime’s propagation of Phrygian music and the Phrygo-Trojan heritage of Rome.
Pantomime and Satoshi Miyagi’s Medea

What was it that made pantomime so wildly popular, so much so that even Augustus found it mesmerizing? Pantomime was not, of course, the street performance that we think of today, but what seems to us a strange mix, with a notoriously effeminate silent masked male player (the "pantomime") at center stage, in some sense "acting" and "dancing" the part, while other male and female players, notionally off stage, spoke and sang the libretto, performed the music, and at times added an additional "actor." Exactly who did what, in what way, and where, remains controversial. The paper here does not attempt to solve those controversies, but does, as a foundational move, provide a succinct review of primary evidence, with suitable attention to the fact that such entertainments were not always fit within tight parameters, nor likely to have been static over time. (Hall/Wyles 2008, Garelli 2007, Lada-Richards 2007, Leppin 1992.)

The resulting image of pantomime, even if hazy or partly unstable, provides sufficient particulars to support the central paradox: what was it about the silent movement by one to the voice(s) and music of others that made the entertainment so attractive, especially given the availability of tragedy, comedy, and mime? The whole simply doesn't seem to add up to a sort of theater that could fascinate Augustus (and Trajan) no less than Caligula and Nero, that led to repeated riots (but cf. Slater 1994), and that swept the eastern Mediterranean by storm when it was allowed to become part of traditional festivals.

In order to explore the question, we take as comparandum the evidence for certain types of Japanese dance-drama (cf. Smethurst 2013). For purposes of this 20-minute presentation, I will focus on an amazing contemporary play, Satoshi Miyagi's Medea (2011), which incorporates into Nō theater elements of Japanese Bunraku. Miyagi's piece is structured as a play within a play, in which the members of a 19th-century Japanese men's club receive a fresh translation of Euripides' Medea and decide to enact it by reading it aloud performatively (the "Speakers") and selecting female servants (the "Movers") to act out, through gesture and dance movements, the Euripidean drama; to the side (but notionally offstage) are other servants who add music, rhythm, chant, and aria-like song. Costuming for Speakers and musicians is dark, unobtrusive; for the Movers at center stage, exuberantly colorful, with exotic features (e.g., the Medea Mover is dressed as a foreigner from Korea). The Speakers (including Medea) are all males; the Movers (including Jason) are all females forced to act the part, roused to movement by the male voices but powerfully embodying the semiotics of the dance themselves. The subject matter is the traditional Euripidean material, emotional and dramatic but not a surprise to the audience: the play is written such that it assumes knowledge of the plot line to the story of Medea. The complex whole is curiously effective. As the audience will be able to glean even from the short video clips I provide, the mix of these elements is spectacular — moving, even thrilling.

At its core, there are several aspects to this play analogous to ancient pantomime — Speakers, Movers, role reversals along several planes (gender reversals, the fact that dancers "speak" through movement etc.), dramatic costume, masked expression, emotive music and rhythm, traditional mythological material — and I expect that many in the audience will have an "aha!" moment of understanding simply from the review of ancient evidence and viewing the performance clips. But the paper takes its final five minutes to explore the hypothesis that, both here and in ancient pantomime, an essential part of the effect derives from the strongly gendered nature of the entertainment. One need not invoke Lacanian desire or Aristotle's views on tragedy (Smethurst 2013) to see the fascination and wonder provoked by what I term an ecology of indirection and role reversal in combination with the powerful egoism of a central star performer.
Remembering Augustan Performers

This paper will consider the evidence for musical performers during the late republic and the early principate as roughly contemporary to the writings of Vergil. Its angle is decidedly epigraphical and prosopographical, aiming at creating a backdrop for the event's consideration of musical performers and performances as relevant to Vergil.

The time period in question is particularly interesting for such a study, as it is only from the late second century BC onwards that we get to encounter the commemoration of musical artists through Latin epitaphs (with the mime Protogenes as arguably the earliest example), and only from the mid first century BC that we get to encounter statistically meaningful numbers. At the same time, the evidence that emerges commemorates male and female artists alike, covering a remarkable range of hugely diverse art forms (from mime and pantomime to singing, from musical to artistic).

Lead questions of this paper include: (i) what do we know about musical performers during the late republic/early empire from the Latin inscriptions, (ii) how (and why) do musicians and other performers get commemorated in the Latin inscriptions, and (iii) how do their memorials map on to other sources that are available for the same time period?
Musical Themes in the *Aeneid* of Vergil. Archeological Evidence in Campania During the Augustan Age

This paper will present the musical context of the *Aeneid*. The poet mentions public buildings for spectacle and entertainment, such as theatres and amphitheatres. He refers also to musicians or singers and their musical instruments, and gods and mortals dancing. Some musical themes/motives are contemporary, while others result from Aeneas’ or Virgil’s narrations of past events or similes. Music and songs sound for various purposes: for entertainment at a symposium, for war, in athletic games, or in religious ceremonies.

References to music and musical instruments such as *citharae*, trumpets and horns (*tubae, bucinae, cornua*), *tibiae*, *tympana* and cymbals will be compared with a selection of their representations on contemporary Roman art in the region of Campania. Wall paintings, reliefs and other objects are decorated with these musical themes, in cities and locations in the area of Vesuvius (e.g. Pompeii, Herculaneum, Boscoreale, Boscotrecase, Oplontis and elsewhere). The use of these musical instruments is also confirmed by the remains that are found in the region (e.g., fragments of *tubae, bucinae, cornua, tibiae*, and *cymbals*). The relationship between written sources, artifacts and real instruments is evident.

This presentation aims to help us to create an image of the “soundscape” in Campania during the time of Vergil and Augustus, combining all information: written references, visual arts, and archeological finds.
Marsyas in the Time of Vergil: Shifting Views of Rome’s Musical Past

This paper explores how the near-contemporaries of Vergil viewed Rome’s musical past, through the case-study of Ovid’s Marsyas (Barker, 2014).

The myth of Marsyas, the satyr who discovered the aulos and then fell foul of Apollo in a musical contest, was a myth told in many iterations. However, there was a shift between 5th-century Athens and Ovid in what aspects of the myth were emphasised. Ovid emphasised the punishment of Marsyas in gruesome detail.

Previous arguments have explained this shift as being part of a broader tendency for moralising myths in Augustan Rome, or that the myth, transferred from Athens, became more 'Roman', and the emphasis of the punishment is witness to this (Rawson, 1987; Small, 1992).

I argue that the shift of emphasis can be seen as part of a wider rewriting of Rome's musical past. This rewriting, seen in Horace, Epist.II.130-8; 156-63 when compared to Livy, 7.2.3-4 and the material culture (Cerqueira, 2014), emphasises Rome's musical past as originating in bucolic simplicity (e.g. Ovid's Syrinx; Landells, 1999). It emphasises that these musical origins declined into the morally dangerous music of the pre-Augustan age.

Working within this paradigm, Ovid's tale of Marsyas makes perfect sense. Marsyas starts as a bucolic satyr, yet, through the discovery of music and the ways in which he develops it, Marsyas falls into musical decline and punishment. Ovid's myth perfectly mirrors Horace's 'history'.

This ‘bucolic decline’ though, is only one view of Rome’s musical past, as shown by Livy. I finish by offering my thoughts on how Vergil most likely viewed his musical past, at a time when various options were available.
The amoebaean ‘singing competition’ is often thought of as the most representative form of pastoral song within the tradition of ancient bucolic poetry. Yet a reexamination of the role of shared song in Theocritus’ bucolic Idylls reveals that competition is not as central a characteristic of Theocritean pastoral as one might expect with Vergil in mind. Id. 1 and 7 establish shared enjoyment as the primary motivation for song exchange, while Id. 4, 6, 9, and 10 each individually complement this view. Id. 5 and the pseudo-Theocritean Id. 8 are the only true bucolic ‘song contests’ in the Idylls (Id. 6 rejects initial competition for shared pleasure in song), and these each have specific reasons for their competitive bent. In reality, it is Vergil who instills the idea of competitive exchange so deeply into the idea of pastoral song. This can be seen in numerous ways. Not only does the Eclogues have a greater number of explicitly competitive poems (Ecl. 3, 5, 7, 8) than Theocritus’ work, Vergil also makes far greater use of competitive vocabulary (certare/certamen, contendere, etc.) than does Theocritus, who does not often use words such as ἐρίσδειν (outside of Id. 5) to point to competitive strife within the bucolic landscape. Moreover, the idea of the ‘stake’ takes on a new importance in Vergil’s pastoral, whereas many of the so-called ‘stakes’ in the Theocritean poems are δῶρα or γέρεα given in appreciation for shared song. Vergil’s increased focus on competition and winning possession in the Eclogues, vis-à-vis Theocritus, has implications for ‘competition’ over the possession of Italian lands and localities in the 40s/30s BCE (e.g. Ecl. 1, Ecl. 9) and points to a palpable anxiety over Roman occupation of Italian spaces and identities at this time. Thus, Vergil brings about a new centrality of the idea of competition through song within pastoral, in order to promote his particular political and ideological aims.
Music, Sensuality and Stagecraft in the Pseudo-Vergilian Copa

The thirty-eight line poem Copa, preserved in the Appendix Vergiliana, opens with the memorable description of a female tavern-keeper dancing ‘tipsily’ and ‘sexily’ (ebria...lasciua) to the accompaniment of a castanet (ll. 2-4). Punctuated by the music of the tibia, chordae and fistula (ll. 7, 10), her performance sets the tone for the narrative which follows, transporting the reader to the world of the famosa taberna with its rich sensorium of sounds, sights, tastes and smells. It is a curious introduction to a poem that has intrigued and perplexed scholars for generations. How are we to make sense of it?

This paper will argue that the musical imagery of the Copa is crucial to our understanding of the poem and its much-disputed literary context. Although I do not propose a solution to the intractable problems of authorship and dating, I do aim to demonstrate a connection between the poet’s treatment of his subject matter and the historical phenomena of female musical performances in the time of Vergil. The association of music, wine and female sexuality is an important trope of Augustan elegy and finds close parallels in the works of Horace, Ovid and Propertius. These passages have been widely commented on for their depictions of life inside the taberna, and yet they also, I suggest, resonate powerfully with the cultural aesthetic of the Roman mime – an extremely popular genre of theatrical entertainment under Augustus, which regularly featured musical performances by female dancers in highly eroticized roles. By exploring the characterisation of the copa from these different yet complementary perspectives, I hope to draw attention to some new pieces of evidence, both literary and iconographical, which can aid significantly in our interpretation of the poem.
Two musicians in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* sing of love, violence, and reversal of fortune. In their songs, they violate the boundaries of poetic and musical genres and play with the traditions of previous poems about their songs. The first, better-known musician, Orpheus, begins, after the loss of his wife Eurydice, to sing of “boys beloved by gods and girls struck by forbidden love” (*pueros...dilectos superis, inconcessisque puellas ignibus attonitas*, 10.152-4). Orpheus notes that in adopting this subject he has changed his tune from a previously more bombastic one, in which he formerly sang of Giants and thunderbolts, to a “lighter” lyrical tune (*nunc opus est leviore lyra*, 10.152). The second musician is more unlikely, Polyphemus the Cyclops. In *Metamorphoses* 13, the Cyclops, like Orpheus in Book 10, has changed his tune: instead of being the monster of Homeric epic or the simple shepherd of pastoral, Polyphemus is now a lovelorn singer who plays on his pipes (*harundinibus compacta ... fistula centum*, 13.784). Ovid’s Polyphemus, like his literary predecessors in Euripides (*Cyclops*) and Theocritus (*Idyll* 11), crosses generic boundaries and confounds various types of song, as he woos his sea-nymph Galatea. Both Orpheus and Polyphemus appear in Vergil’s work as well. This paper examines three aspects of the songs of highbrow Orpheus and the comical Polyphemus in the *Metamorphoses*: their consciousness of their changing tunes, the parallels between their effects on their environments and audiences, and the violent aftermath of their performances. While the more famous Orpheus fails at his biggest poetic challenge (retrieving Eurydice) and ends as a victim of violent revenge, the amateur Polyphemus also fails in love, but is powerful enough to inflict violent revenge on his rival.
Iopas and Crethus, two singers-to-the-cithara who appear in the Aeneid (1.740–47; 9.774–77), have attracted a good deal of scholarly discussion, though virtually all of it tends to treat these musicians in ways notably abstracted from actual music and musical culture: they are (meta)literary constructs, “figures of the poet,” and their performances are essentially occasions for intertextual engagement with Homer, Apollonius of Rhodes, Lucretius, and Vergil himself. In my presentation at the Symposium Cumanum, I shall try to restore to these characters their properly musical status and identity. I propose that Iopas and Crethus not only serve as prompts for poetic allusion, but that Vergil, in describing their personae and performances, draws in a sophisticated fashion from mytho-historical musical—and specifically citharodic—lore, as well as the living musical world of his own time. The semantically rich nexus of musical-cultural associations evoked by these citharodic figures is, I suggest, as significant as their textual allusiveness, both to the specific episodes in which they appear and to the broader program of the Aeneid.
Vergil's *Eclogae* display many variants of the 'bucolic agon' of Theocritean origin, in which two rival singers face each other in a singing competition (*Ecl.* 3, 5, 7 and 8). But if most scholars nowadays agree that, despite its high undeniably literary features, references to contemporary folk music can still be found in Theocritean poetry, scholarship on its Roman counterpart have focused almost exclusively on the high degree of literacy that characterizes Vergil's poetic world, concentrating the inquiry on the 'pastoral' as a literary form and on its thematic and formal relationship with its Greek antecedents as well as with other literary genres.

In this presentation I will adopt a different angle of approach to this repertoire, focusing on the model of the bucolic singing competitions within Vergil's *Eclogae* and on its dramatic potential (which, according to some sources, even inspired their theatrical enactment in Rome), in order to discuss possible reflections of folk music in Vergilian poetry.
This paper will argue that Virgil uses suppressed musical imagery in the *Georgics* and *Aeneid* to create ironic effects that draw on the use of musical imagery in Greek tragedy.

References to music in tragedy often illustrate a contrast in moods or states: by a common trope, wedding songs become dirges; songs of death are presented as unholy or joyless travesties of hymns. Lyric passages enact shifts in the emotional value of music by expressing ecstatic or hopeful moods that contrast dramatically with disaster that follows. References to pastoral music are a special case of this larger tragic strategy: in lyric passages that evoke pastoral settings, the music of the syrinx (reed pipe) or lyre creates an atmosphere of serenity that heightens the effect of violence and suffering by contrast.¹

In the *Georgics* and *Aeneid*, Virgil creates ironic effects by using vocabulary associated with the pastoral music of the *Eclogues* (particularly forms of *harundo*) to refer to non-musical activities in contexts that activate musical associations.² In the *Georgics*, passages that advise piping water to flocks and honey to sick bees contain echoes of the musical piping of shepherds in the *Eclogues*, thus both highlighting and disrupting the exclusion of art and pleasure from the world of the *Georgics*. In the *Aeneid*, Virgil describes violence in the pastoral landscape in language that evokes pastoral music.³ The contrast between the literal and metaphorical meanings of the words intensifies the transgressive nature of this violence.

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Works Cited


¹ This use of musical imagery can be seen in Sophocles’ *Philoctetes* and in Euripides’ *Alcestis*, *Electra*, *Ion*, and *Iphigenia at Aulis*, as well as the *Rhesus* attributed to Euripides.

² On the use of *harundo* to signify the pastoral genre, see (e.g.) Smith 1970 and Barchiesi 2006.

Music, musical instruments or musicians appear in nearly every book of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* and play a role in a wide variety of episodes. The world of the poem is one of violent flux in which the poet portrays the *tibia* as dovetailing with this violence. Of the five dozen times Ovid mentions either pipes or lyres, the *tibia*, or its synecdochic synonym *buxus*, is explicitly mentioned only eight times by the poet, and in seven of eight instances the instrument is directly connected with arguably some of the most gruesome violence in the poem (III.533; IV.30, 369, 761; VI.386; XI.16; and XIV.537). Ovid’s epic predecessor, Vergil, had only sparingly made use of the instrument, usually for purposes of mockery, because of its association with luxury, softness and pleasure. In contrast, Ovid transforms the instrument from one of life’s pleasures into a vehicle for violent death and destruction, and as such makes it entirely at home within his poem. Scholars such as James, Feldherr, and Segal have explored important aspects of the grisly slayings associated with the *tibia*, but none have connected the presence of the instrument as a catalyst to the violence. This paper is a close reading of the episodes in which the instrument appears, largely in the order of the text, to show that the *tibia’s* music, and even the presence of the instrument, spurs some of the most graphic transformations in the *Metamorphoses*. In this way Ovid transmutes the instrument from an accompaniment to soft, luxurious living into a symphony of harsh, violent death.
Sappho and Augustan Melody

Scholarship in the field of ancient Greek music is advancing our understanding in lively fashion, particularly since the early 1990s, yet much of the archaic period of Greek lyric poetry or song is still (and may long remain) obscure. This has ramifications for our understanding of Roman poetry of the late Republican and particularly the Augustan period. Due to our lack of written sources for Greek music prior to the Classical period, the Augustan poets’ relationship to Aeolic song is (necessarily) explored largely through poetic rather than musical or instrumental avenues of inquiry. Recent explorations of Sapphic ‘music’ are also still a comparative rarity. And yet our corpus of Sapphic lyric is, miraculously, growing, with spectacular papyrological finds in 2004 (P. Köln inv. 21351 + 21376) and most recently in 2014 (‘The Brothers’ Poem’ + ‘Kypris’). I would argue that the most recent finds, together with other examples from our extant Sapphic corpus, afford us insight into a melodic feature of Aeolic lyric whose phantom presence is discernible – faint, yet discernible - in certain lyric poems from the late Republican and Augustan periods.

Building on the work of Greek music theorists (Barker 1984, 2007; West 1992 and Creese 2010 among others), the work of lyric specialists on the recent Sappho papyri (in particular Stehle 2014-15), and my own researches into the structure and sound of older Sapphic lyric and the new material, I will explore the relationship – however indirect, distant in time, and difficult to reconstruct – between Aeolian and Augustan melody, and argue for a novel feature recoverable from both.

Select Bibliography

Philodemus’ treatise *De musica* marks an important step in the adaptation of Hellenistic doctrines concerning the ethical aspects of music into a Roman context. As it seems, his discussion focuses on the dichotomy between the psychagogic and the didactic potential of musical performance. While Stoics like Diogenes tend to accord to music a didactic function *qua* music, Philodemus emphasizes the irrational character of pure music as opposed to the rational impact of words. Obviously, his polemic closely parallels the debate concerning the common notion that poetry has cognitive as well as non-cognitive components. According to Martha Nussbaum, Stoics like Poseidonius esteemed poetry exactly because of its non-cognitive aspects. Philodemus, however, denies that poetry can be useful *qua* poetry, aligning himself with a strand of Stoic doctrine emphasizing the didactic aspect of poetry. Just as song and poem are inseparable in Graeco-Roman thought, the discourses on music and poetry seem to be closely interrelated in Augustan times.

The degree to which Augustan poets draw on Philodemus’ theories is a common topic of modern scholarship. It has, however, rarely been asked how far the Augustan discourse on music is resumed in later literature. With the singer Teuthras, who entertains Hannibal at a banquet in Capua, Silius Italicus has created one of the most interesting echoes of Vergil’s Iopas in later literature. The auto-reflexive potential of his appearance has been emphasized in various studies. In my paper, I will expand on this approach and propose to read the passage in the context of ancient musical theory as mirrored in Philodemus’ work. I will try to show that the surprising arrangement of the scene can be understood much better by taking into account ancient ideas on the impact of poetry and music on the human soul. It will become clear that Silius shares the assumption of a beneficiary psychological effect of poetry, but exposes at the same time the dangers inherent in “pure music”. By aligning himself with the position advanced by Philodemus, Silius creates a model of ideal reception cautioning the reader against a non-cognitive approach to poetry. This view is also prominent in other scenes of Silius’ poem, in which the advocacy of rationalism plays a central role.
References to music (singing or playing an instrument) appear in more than a quarter of Horace's *Odes*. Such references bracket both collections in a way that underscores the difference between them. In 1.1.32-4 and 3.30.13-14 music relates to Horace's aspiration to join the ranks of lyric poets and his pride at being the first Roman to do so. In 4.1.22-4 and 4.15.30-32 music is deployed in praise of others, Venus in 4.1 and heroes of the Roman past in 4.15. I wish to focus on a cluster of poems in which music and eros are combined. In these poems the musical performers are women (with the exception of the elegiac serenader Enipeus in 3.7.30). Musical skill is presented as a form of erotic attractiveness, as with the lyre-playing scortum Lyde in 2.11.22 or, more conspicuously, Horace's current partner Chloe in 3.9.10. Conversely, the aging Lyce's lack of attractiveness is reflected in the failure of her song to entice Cupid (4.13.5-6). In two odes (1.17 to Tyndaris and 4.11 to Phyllis), Horace invites a woman to join him for a private musical performance; here lovemaking is subordinated to musical enjoyment. In the latter poem it becomes clear that the song Phyllis is to sing is Horace's own composition (4.11.34-5). Phyllis is thus the erotic counterpart to the chorus of boys and girls taught by Horace to sing the *Carmen Saeculare* (4.6.43-4). It may be significant that these two references to Horace as music teacher appear in *Odes IV*, perhaps reflecting his enhanced status in Rome following the performance of the *Carmen*. It is somehow fitting that 4.11, which is addressed to "the last of my loves" (31-2), spells out the connection between music and eros that is implicit in earlier poems.
In European Musical Theatre of the modern age, Dido is the imperishable symbol of a woman with many dimensions (Cosulich, 1986/87). The transposition in dance of her myth, since the XVIIIth century, has confirmed the possibility of countless translations into languages which confirm the value of a current and universal character. Mark Morris’ choreography (1989) of Henry Purcell’s music for Dido and Aeneas (first staging in 1689) moves between race and gender. It mixes, in the roles, men and women into an indefinite and mixed gender (Acocella, 2009). Dido is interpreted by a man; her identification with the Sorceress seems to stage the modernity of a woman with a dual character. Solitude is in the center of Morris’ construction. In the movements of the Queen he mixes Eastern and Western movements and ancient pantomime into a gender neutrality which seems to recall Aeneid 569-570 (...Varium et mutabile semper/Femina): here, the use of the neuter recalls Morris’ Dido (where the renunciation of femininity seems to be a possible way of reading ). Does Morris’ awareness of the Latin source and the propensity to a more “Vergilian” Dido (Alonso, 2012), allow us to speak about a kind of “choreographic intertextuality” in such a different dimension of the tale? How are the core points of Vergilian drama “translated” into dance, through music? Which elements are directly taken from the ancient pantomime of the Vergilian age?
Vergil’s Linus (*Ecl. 6.67*): A Musical Genre’s Swan Song?

Within the literary tradition Vergil’s Linus is an anomaly: nowhere else is he a pasteur, nor is he anywhere else given (in)direct speech (with one exception). Normally he is taken to be the personification (e.g. Hes. fr. 305 M-W; Pi. Fr. 128c) of the so-called Linus song (Hom. *Il*. 18.570; Hdt. 2.79) and the associated cry of grief *ailinos*. He is variously considered the inventor of (*inter alia*) the alphabet, lyric, and epic, and the author of Orphic poems. Scholarship emphasizes Linus’ role within Vergilian bucolic as a form of ritualized speech, marking “the emergence of voice from play” (Habinek 2005.138, 238), or a meditation on singing and writing in the wake of the Hellenistic/Roman shift from performance to reading culture (Ebbeler 2010), thus ignoring the musical origins of the Linus song. By contrast, this paper seeks to probe Linus’ portrayal and his (reported) song for Vergil’s knowledge of the song’s characteristics and performance.

My argument proceeds in three steps: first, I argue that by Vergil’s day the Linus song had been reduced to a relic and that Vergil therefore cannot have had first-hand knowledge of it. However, by improving upon older accounts of the Linus song’s nature and contents (e.g. Alexiou 2002.55-58; Lambin 1993.143-148) we see that Vergil had a thorough knowledge of technical aspects of the song’s performance that he could not have found in his literary predecessors Callimachus and Theocritus, such as the presence of a chorus (cf. 64: *Phoebi chorus*). Second, I show that Vergil’s Linus song and indeed *Eclogue 6* as a whole, both in its enunciative form and through its allusions has close ties to the satyr play. Third, I relate Vergil’s satyr-like Linus to the discussion of music in Plato’s *Symposium* and show that in *Eclogue 6* music and love are intimately connected.
Musical Settings of Elegy as Depicted by the Augustan Poets

The nature of poetic performance in the Augustan period still calls for extensive research. It is, for instance, disputed whether poetry was mainly set to music or recited, and whether poetic genres were in some manner associated with modes of their performance. At any rate, the image of music found in Augustan poetry seems to confirm the link between the genres and specific performative practices; for example, according to Horatian depiction, lyric emerges as a distinctly musical genre. However, such metapoetic images might have actually been drawing on the Greek performative traditions and referring to literary topoi rather than describing contemporary practice. There is also a third possibility: some images of poetical performance were invented by the Augustan poets themselves along with generic enhancements and experiments on the genres inherited from Greece, which is frequently referred to as “fictionalized performance”. In my paper I’m going to focus on the way the musical enactment of elegy is depicted in the works of Vergil, Ovid and Propertius. The poetical imagery referring to music will be analyzed and its function in the generic characteristics assessed. It will be discussed whether elegy was considered a musical genre and how its original performance influenced its image in the Augustan poetry. The meaning of the distinctive elements of this imagery, such as funesta tibia/tuba and the most frequent literary contexts will be interpreted. Finally, it will be argued that the musical depiction of elegy seems to be inconsistent and an attempt at explanation will be made.